

Issues at stakes – Norway

A couple of current issues

The Ministry

- A particular focus on specific opportunities and urgent challenges
 - The digital transition
 - The geo-political situation
 - Research-based knowledge to be disseminated and used more quickly
 - Changes in external funding/allocation of private funding
 - Increased need for cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration
- Zero growth in funding

Forskerforbundet

- Short-term and instrumental approach
- High quality in science a premise, but absent
- The researchers' perspective also absent (“No research without researchers”)
- Need for increased, long-term investment in research
- Must focus on researchers' working condition – key points: secure time for research, sustainable, long-term funding, and attractive career paths

From excellence to access?

FROM

- Quality
- Basic research
- Excellence

TO

- Applied research – mission-driven, solving today's problems
- Speed up transition from research result to innovation, solutions
- Open and accessible to all

Cuts in the Higher Education and Research

- Annual cuts of 0,5-0,8% for all state agencies in the period 2015-2022
- The cuts were abolished from 2023 by the current government – but replaced by more targeted cuts
- Last eight years: 24 billion NOK in the higher education sector alone
- Negative consequences more and more obvious:
 - Pressure on quality in research and teaching
 - Hard to maintain small, but still important academic disciplines (Humaniora, social sciences)
 - Cuts in both research time and preparation time for teaching
 - Several institutions in process of downsizing
- Key question: Must we just accept that research and knowledge are losing the political prioritization battle against other sectors?

Academic Career Paths – Some Wins

- Temporary employment from 17.5% in 2018 to 12.1% in 2023 among academic staff
- New University and College Act with regulations
 - Postdoc is more explicitly defined as a qualifying position
 - Minimum three-year period
 - Obligatory to have a career plan and be able to develop an independent researcher profile
 - Institutions must provide access to career guidance
 - PhD students receive an extension for absences under 14 days as they are entitled to by law
 - More flexible career paths: possible to apply for a transition between the three career paths leading to professor, docent, and researcher

Scientific Career Path – Never Finished

- In Norway :
 - Only 1 in 3 young researchers and 1 in 5 postdocs would recommend a research career to others.
 - 1 in 3 permanent academic staff are considering leaving academia.
- It is still widespread use of temporary employment
 - Especially among externally funded
 - Almost 1/3 of all employees at universities and colleges
 - Looking at all scientific staff, the figure is 43.3%
- Scientific staff work an average of 46 hours a week
- Time for research and preparation of teaching is reduced

- Congress in October 2024
 - A new board with a leader and deputy leader for 2025-27 will be elected
 - A work program for the period and a revised value platform will be adopted
- Membership recruitment
 - Forskerforbundet currently has appr. 25,900 members
 - Goal of 30,000 by 2030.....