

# The Young Academy of Norway



## Political Platform Introduction

The Young Academy of Norway (Akademiet for yngre forskere - AYF) articles of association state that we shall promote the values of knowledge and free research in society and contribute to a knowledge-based societal development in Norway and the world. This is further specified in [AYF's strategy](#) (2022-2026) with a focus on improving Norwegian research policy and promoting research in the public sphere and in collaboration with leading research policy actors.

To have a common and current starting point for this political work, we have developed a platform that underpins what AYF stands for and does. The platform outlines common principles and directions for AYF's work and input in the media, hearings, statements, and more. The platform is organized into four themes: Career and the Researcher Role, Research quality, Research Ethics, and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. These are the cornerstones of AYF's political work and address the main issues and challenges for young researchers today. In some cases, there is overlap between themes, but this only shows that certain issues are relevant in multiple contexts.

The first political notes from AYF were prepared in the fall of 2020. This version was revised during 2023 and adopted in two sessions at the Autumn meeting in October 2023 and the Winter meeting in January 2024.

Finally, AYF has also in some cases written political notes on specific themes or issues that respond to challenges or situations nationally or internationally. These are different from the overall platform and are therefore collected under Other Policies.

*The political platform was approved by the members of the Young Academy of Norway over two sessions, at the annual Autumn meeting and Winter meetings on the 20.10.2023 and 17.01.2024 respectively. The entire platform and additional political documents and statements may be found at [AYFs' s website](#).*

*The English version has been translated by AYF with assistance from Artificial Intelligence (AI). We have used ChatGPT to do a first translation and this have been edited by the AYFs' s staff and leadership team.*



## **Political Platform Career and the Researcher Role**

AYF believes that a job as a researcher at universities, colleges, research institutes, museums, and healthcare institutions should be an attractive career path. It is also positive that there are various types of career paths for young researchers with different qualification requirements. Regardless of the career path, young researchers must be ensured good working conditions comparable to those in the general workforce regarding working hours, salary, career development, and other conditions.

**Here are AYF's key positions:**

### **Recruitment**

The diversity of researcher roles, tasks, and careers must be highlighted for all groups in the population. This will help make the research profession more attractive and emphasize researchers as an important professional group in society.

- There is a need for increased knowledge about the added value of research competence in non-academic sectors.
- Mobility between knowledge sectors (higher education, institutes, the public sector, industry, and others) should be facilitated, and arenas and tools should be created to showcase different career opportunities.

### **Temporary Employment**

Temporary employment creates uncertainty and unpredictability, affects researchers' mental health, and weakens the recruitment of future researchers. Temporary employment can also affect researchers' freedom of expression, dissemination, and academic freedom.

- Universities and colleges must reduce unnecessary use of temporary positions.
- Institutions must treat researchers in conditional positions (externally funded/"permanent temporary" researchers) equal to other temporary employees.
- Employees in temporary research positions should have the same right to contract extension after leave or sick leave as PhD candidates and postdocs.
- Opportunities to apply for external project funds should not be seen as an alternative to permanent employment.
- Institutions must ensure that the right of first refusal is used before terminating a temporary position. This applies not only internally but to all positions in the public sector.

### **Qualification and Facilitation**

Young researchers should have the opportunity to develop relevant skills, such as project management, teaching, supervision, dissemination, research policy work, innovation, and communication. The opportunity and initiative to acquire relevant competence should be considered if not already achieved upon employment.

- The postdoc position should be limited to positions with a clear aim of qualifying for top academic positions, and candidates should be offered career support and development plans from the institutions.
- A postdoc position should last four years, with three years earmarked for R&D activities, focusing on independent research.
- Institutions must ensure that young researchers are not disadvantaged during the transition to open publishing, especially where publishing in pay-to-play journals provides significant career advantages.

### **Internationalization**

AYF supports facilitating mobility stays abroad for young researchers but believes this should not be seen as a requirement. Internationalization can also be ensured through other forms of international cooperation.

- Funding for research stays abroad for young researchers with families must cover actual expenses for school and kindergarten in the host country.

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## **Political Platform Research quality**

Research quality can be assessed based on credibility, methodological solidity, and originality. In addition, there are criteria for academic and societal relevance, while we emphasize that knowledge has intrinsic value. Research quality must consider the unique characteristics of different research areas while building on overarching principles. Poor research can contribute to distrust, and research should be evaluated according to established quality principles. Good research is characterized by a quest for knowledge, not by whose interests it serves.

**Here are AYF's key positions:**

### **Free and Open Research**

Quality is crucial for public trust in research. To ensure research integrity and respect for disciplinary characteristics, research should be as open and transparent as possible. Interdisciplinarity and mobility can be important tools for research quality.

- The public debate should be based on high-quality (or excellent(?) research; a knowledge-driven public debate is a prerequisite for democracy, and researchers, politicians, and the general public have a responsibility to contribute to this.
- Public research funding must ensure sufficient framework conditions for free research, including basic research. Free research means research free from political and commercial pressure and interference in research questions, methods, and publication of findings.
- The assessment of research quality must be non-political and is best conducted by academic and research communities themselves.
- Legislation must protect the right to freely publish research results, even when they conflict with political or commercial interests.

### **Research Funding**

High-quality research depends on predictable framework conditions, including funding. It is important to use transparent criteria to assess research quality in the allocation of research funds and in appointments and promotions. The criteria must respect the unique characteristics and needs of different disciplines.

- Funding from both public and private sectors must ensure that externally funded research maintains high quality, is ethically responsible, and provides predictable working conditions over time for researchers.
- High academic quality should be a prerequisite for public research funding.
- The allocation of research resources should facilitate interdisciplinarity, but interdisciplinarity and mobility should not be goals in themselves.

### **Long-term Perspective**

Scientific breakthroughs and high-quality research require long-term and systematic work. Measures that promote long-term and predictable conditions are good means to promote quality in research.

- Time is one of the most important resources for high-quality research. Institutions must ensure continuous time for research – especially for younger researchers – by implementing measures that ensure research time is not consumed by other tasks such as teaching and administration.
- A unilateral emphasis on volume over quality has negative consequences for the quality of research.

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## **Political Platform Research Ethics**

Free and independent research is a fundamental value for a knowledge-based democracy. Research is international and complex, and different disciplines have different ethical guidelines and challenges. Everyone must be familiar with both norms within their field and applicable national and international legislation. However, research ethics cannot be reduced to rules and legislation. Ethical considerations must be made throughout the research process and are both an institutional and individual responsibility.

**Here are AYF's key positions:**

### **Training**

The most important measure to increase awareness of research ethics is open dialogue and the requirement for training in research ethics for research leaders and in researcher education.

- Institutions must ensure courses in research ethics within different research fields with updated knowledge of applicable research ethics legislation and guidelines.
- Employees in temporary research positions should have the same right to training in research ethics as permanent employees.

### **Conducting Research**

Researchers must adhere to formal guidelines on issues such as privacy and consent and other ethical issues. In some cases, these may conflict with each other. Therefore, a continuous critical debate on research ethics across research fields is necessary, as well as awareness of how research ethics norms change over time.

- Authorities and institutions must ensure established and well-known infrastructure for research ethics to protect researchers in vulnerable situations and conflicts.
- Institutions and leaders must facilitate dialogue and advice when facing challenges related to research ethics.

### **Power Relations**

Young researchers can be particularly vulnerable in the large research community, affecting their ability to highlight ethical challenges.

- Employers and supervisors must ensure that young researchers feel safe in their research practice and receive fair credit for their work.
- Co-authorship should be recognized with transparent agreements that all members of a research project are aware of and adhere to.

### **Funding**

Various interest groups, including politicians and business interests, influence research through access to funding. Young researchers in temporary positions are particularly vulnerable in the pursuit of funding and permanent positions.

- We want more funds for free research for young researchers and secure conditions for conducting research and publishing research results.



# **Political Platform**

## **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Equality, diversity, and inclusion in academia are institutional and political responsibilities and should ensure that employees have equal opportunities regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, disability, social background, and other significant personal attributes. This requires an equitable and inclusive workplace culture that both management and other employees must build over time. Equality, diversity, and inclusion in academia contribute to a broader range of academic expressions and research questions and will also improve conditions for academic freedom of expression and increase the quality and societal relevance of research.

**Here are AYF's key positions:**

### **Measures for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Institutional action plans and measures that ensure equality in both formal processes such as hiring, promotion, and research funding, and in everyday work life are necessary. Institutions must establish reporting routines for discrimination, abuse of power, and harassment, including sexual harassment.

- Institutions' strategy documents and action plans for equality, diversity, and inclusion, as well as reporting routines, should be accessible and made known to all employees and students, both in Norwegian and English.
- Leadership training should ensure competence in equality and diversity as well as an inclusive work environment at all management levels. Management and hiring committees have a primary responsibility to prevent social mechanisms from favoring or hindering candidates in hiring or other formal processes.
- Reporting procedures must protect employees both at and outside regular workplaces, for example, during conferences, fieldwork, or project collaborations. It is crucial that reports are followed up and lead to concrete changes if circumstances warrant it.

### **Improved Knowledge Base**

- There is a need for more knowledge about the significance of factors such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, belief, functional variation, and social background in academia.
- There is a particular need for larger systematic surveys and analyses of the effectiveness of measures for equality and diversity, and measures against discrimination and harassment.
- Institutions' work should be based on knowledge of multidimensional and interacting forms of discrimination to ensure an intersectional orientation of equality and diversity policies.

### **Representation**

Institutions and other actors must commit to including scientific representatives from various genders and seek diversity in committees for hiring, promotion, and research funding, as well as ensure the procedures and evaluation criteria in these processes.

- Committee work assigned to employees to meet requirements for equality and diversity must not come at the expense of research time for underrepresented committee members.
- Committees and selection panels should strive for gender balance and minority representation when nominating candidates for scientific awards.

### **Inclusion and Practical Support**

Institutions and other actors must commit to including scientific representatives from various genders and seek diversity in committees for hiring, promotion, and research funding, as well as ensure the procedures and evaluation criteria in these processes.

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