

Statistics on Diversity in Research

## The proportion of immigrants in Norwegian academia continues to grow

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**In 2018, 29 per cent of the researchers and academic staff at Norwegian universities, university colleges, health trusts and research institutes had an immigrant background. The numbers have doubled since 2007. About 80 per cent of the researchers with an immigrant background are internationally mobile researchers with higher education from abroad. Norwegian higher education and research institutions have a high share of immigrants in the workforce. The largest group of immigrants in Norwegian research comes from Germany, followed by Sweden and China. The highest share of immigrants and descendants of immigrants is found in temporary positions such as postdocs and research fellows, and in natural sciences and engineering and technology (STEM-fields).**

### Immigrants overrepresented among researchers

The proportion of researchers in Norway with an immigrant background has increased considerably since 2007, when they accounted for 18 per cent of research personnel at Norwegian universities, university colleges, health trusts and research institutes. In 2018, immigrant researchers accounted for 29 per cent. In the statistics on Diversity in Research, immigrants are defined as persons born outside Norway, with two foreign parents. The majority of the immigrant researchers, about 80 per cent, are internationally mo-

The statistics on Diversity in Research provide an overview of immigrants and descendants of immigrants among researchers and academic staff in Norwegian research and higher education in the years 2007, 2010, 2014 and 2018. In addition, some information about technical and administrative staff with higher education is included. The statistics are compiled by NIFU and Statistics Norway in collaboration. The complete Statistics on Diversity in Research is available in [NIFU's R&D statistics bank](#).

ble researchers, who come to Norway with a higher education degree, and several also with a PhD degree. Immigrants are overrepresented among researchers, compared both to the total population and employed persons, where the proportion of immigrants was between 16 and 17 per cent in 2018.

### Descendants of immigrants are underrepresented

There are few descendants of immigrants, or Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, among the research staff, compared with the general population. Descendants accounted for 0.5 per cent of researchers in 2018, compared with 0.4 per cent in 2007. In 2018, descendants of immigrants accounted for 1.2 per cent both of all employees in Norway and of the general population, and 3.6 per cent of students. The proportion of descendants among students has increased from 1.3 per cent in 2007. The age distribution is one reason for descendants having a low rate of researchers. Among those 20-40 years of age, 48 per cent of the descendants are 20-25 years old compared to 27 per cent in the general population.

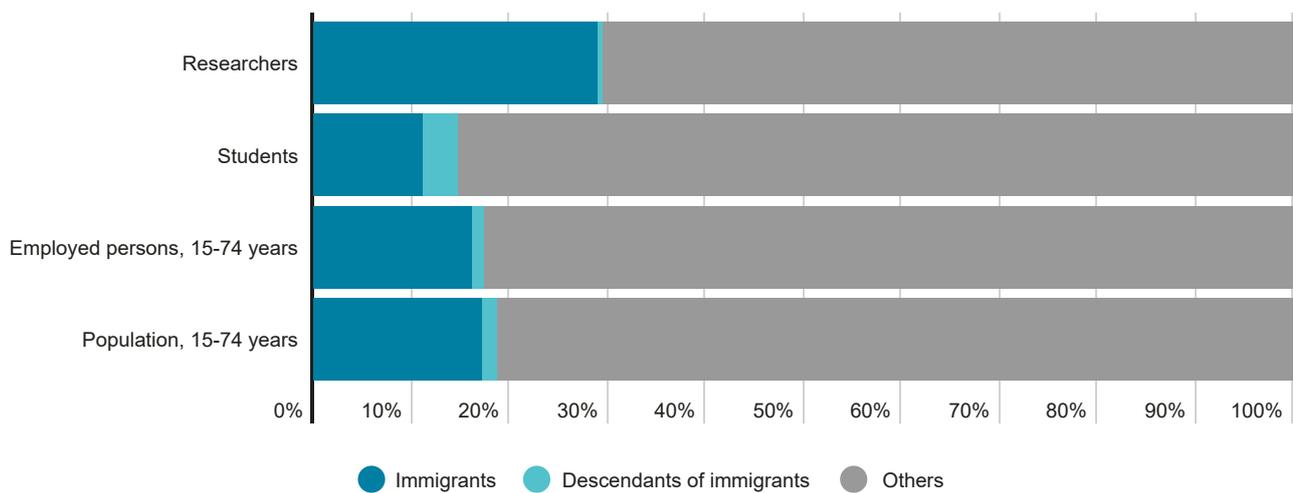


Figure 1 Population and immigrant status: 2018.  
 Source: NIFU/Statistics Norway, Statistics on Diversity in Research. The statistical basis for figure 1 is available in [NIFU's R&D statistics bank](#).

Currently, the number of descendants of immigrants among the academic staff is considered too low for a presentation of statistics on diversity, beyond some key figures. In the statistics on Diversity in Research, we must, for the time being, merge immigrants and descendants of immigrants.

Of the 190 descendants of immigrants among the researchers in 2018, about 40 were employed in permanent positions (tenure), including physicians who participate in R&D at the health trusts and researchers in the institute sector. The other 150 were employed in temporary research positions or recruitment positions. In addition, there are 100 descendants of immigrants employed in technical and administrative positions at universities or university colleges. The majority of these were women. In 2007, there were 30 descendants of immigrants among the personnel in permanent positions and about 60 in temporary research and recruitment positions.

### Germans constitute the largest group of immigrant researchers in Norway

A new feature in the latest update of the statistics on Diversity in Research, is information about country or region of birth<sup>1</sup>. The largest group of immigrant rese-

archers in Norway come from Germany, and the numbers have increased from 640 in 2007 to 1,339 in 2018. Swedish researchers were second largest group (823 researchers in 2018), but the proportion has decreased from 11 percent in 2007 to 8 percent in 2018. Researchers from China are the third largest group of mobile researchers in Norway, followed by researchers from the UK, Denmark and India. In 2007, 44 per cent of the researchers came from the six largest countries, while in 2018 this applied to 38 per cent of the researchers. The number of researchers from India, Iran and Italy had the largest percentage growth during the period.

The gender balance varies among researchers from different countries. We find the highest proportion of women among researchers from Finland, over 60 per cent in all years, followed by Poland and Russia, where more than half of the immigrant researchers are women. Almost half of the researchers from Sweden and Denmark were women. All years combined, one third of the researchers from India were women, where we see the largest proportion of male researchers. From the United Kingdom as well, only one third of the researchers were women. More men than women come from Iran, but here the proportion of women has increased significantly during the period, from 20 per cent in 2007 to 40 per cent in 2018.

1. For descendants, country of birth will refer to their mothers' country of birth.

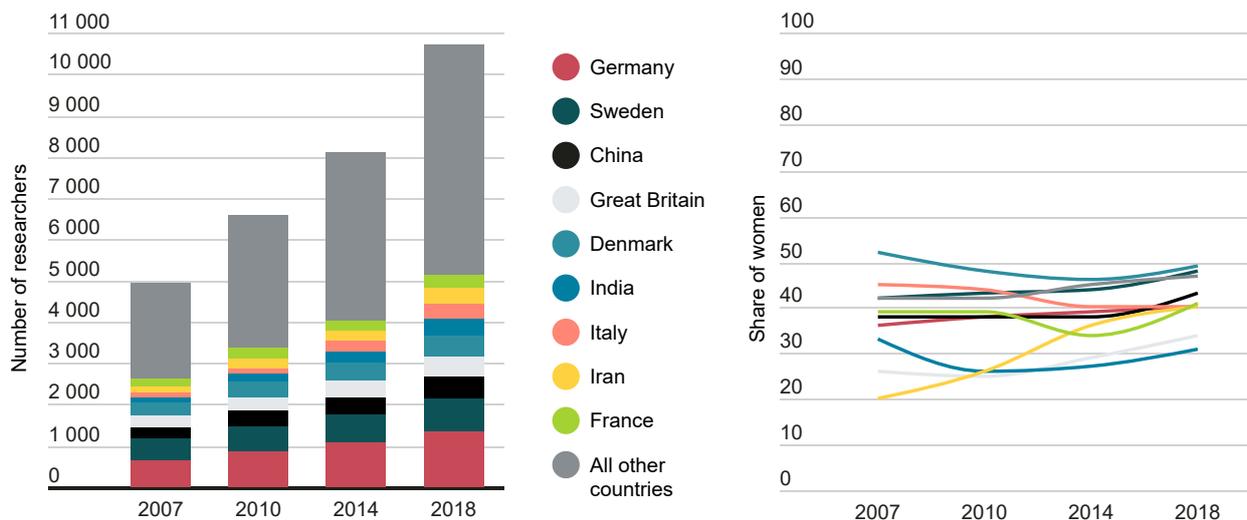


Figure 2 Researchers by country of origin. Number of researchers and share of women among researchers with an immigrant background: 2007, 2010, 2014, 2018. Source: NIFU/Statistics Norway, Statistics on Diversity in Research

### Half of the researchers in temporary positions have an immigrant background

In 2018, researchers with an immigrant background accounted for 31 per cent of the researchers and academic staff at Norway’s universities and university colleges, compared with 19 per cent in 2007. In total, 21 per cent of the staff in permanent, tenured positions at the higher education institutions were immigrants or descendants of immigrants in 2018. In temporary positions, such as researchers, postdocs and PhD students, however, employees with an immigrant background accounted for 48 per cent. Especially among postdocs there is a high proportion of immigrants that are internationally mobile researchers. In this group, about 75 per cent of the men and 66 per cent of the women are from a country other than Norway.

The largest group of postdocs in 2018 came «group 1» countries, i.e. the EU / EFTA, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Group 1-countries accounted for a total of 40 per cent of both men and women, see figure 3. At the same time, 35 per cent of the male and 27 per cent of the female postdocs came from «group 2» countries, primarily non-English-speaking countries outside Europe. The Norwegian postdocs were thus a minority, as a quarter of the male and a third of the female postdocs did not have an immigrant background.

In 2007, half of the male and close to 60 per cent of the female postdocs had no immigrant background, so

there has been a major change in where the postdocs are recruited from. In 2007, most foreign postdoctoral fellows also came from “Group 1” countries, and there were few women from “Group 2”-countries (11 per cent). The number of male postdocs from «Group 2”- countries has more than tripled between 2007 and 2018, and the number of women from these regions is more than four times as high.

### More researchers are recruited from abroad to fields of R&D with a skewed gender balance

Medical and health sciences, technology and engineering and natural sciences had the highest number of immigrants and descendants of immigrants among their researchers and academic staff in 2018. Natural sciences had the highest proportion of immigrants and descendants of immigrants.

If we look at the proportion of immigrants and descendants of immigrants by field of R&D and gender, we find interesting differences in the distribution. In disciplines with a low proportion of women, such as natural sciences and engineering and technology, the share of researchers with an immigrant background is higher among women than among men, see figure 4. In medicine and health sciences, where the majority of the researchers are female, it is the other way around. In this field, most immigrants and descendants of immigrants are male.

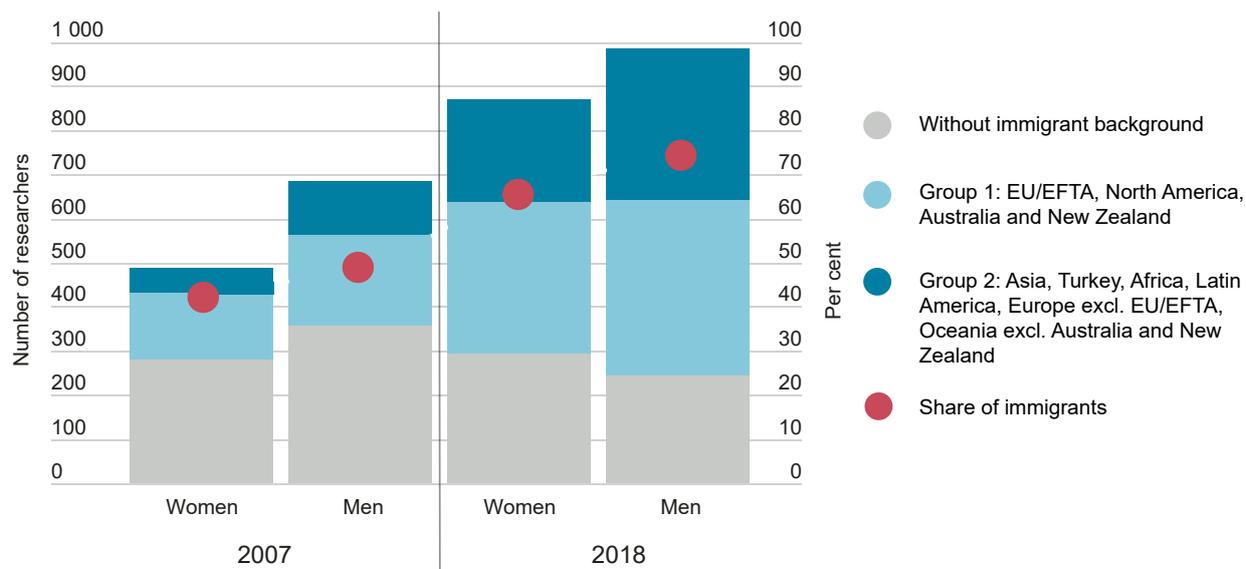


Figure 3 Region of birth for postdocs by gender: 2007 and 2018.  
Source: NIFU/Statistics Norway, Statistics on Diversity in Research

The proportion of immigrants and descendants of immigrants among women has been significantly higher than the equivalent for men in natural sciences in both 2007, 2010, 2014 and 2018. This might imply that departments within fields of R&D with a low proportion of women to a greater extent have recruited

women from abroad in order to increase the proportion of women. An alternative explanation might be that the number of qualified Norwegian women in these fields is low, or that those qualified do not apply for open positions. However, at present we know too little about the underlying mechanisms here.

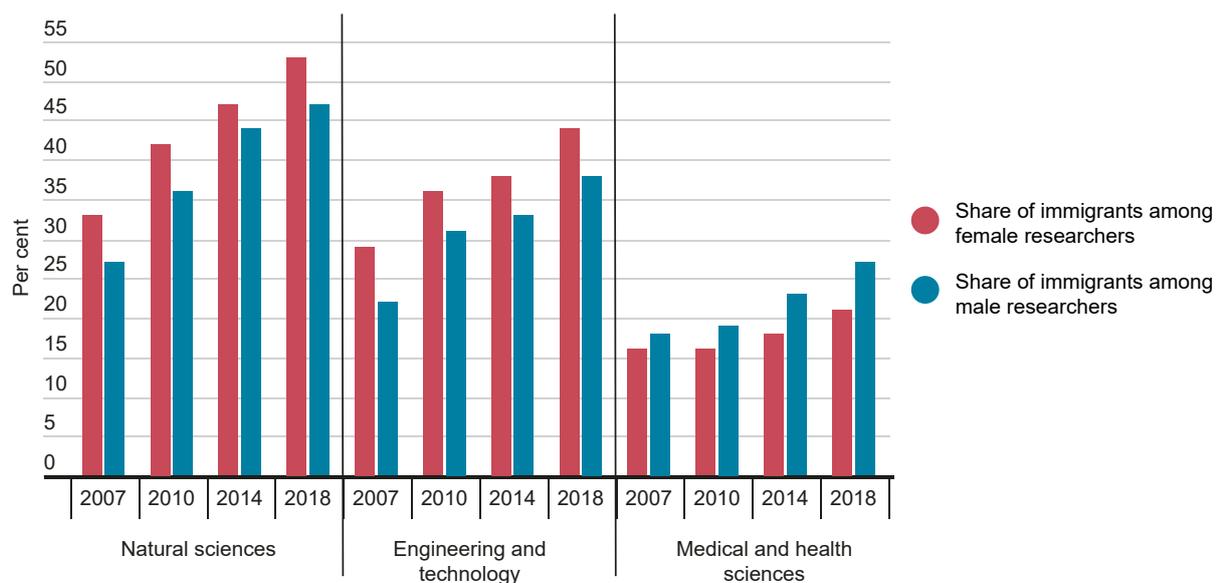


Figure 4 Share of immigrants and descendants of immigrants in selected fields of R&D by gender: 2007, 2010, 2014 and 2018.  
Source: NIFU/Statistics Norway, Statistics on Diversity in Research

## New variables in the 2018 update of the statistics on Diversity in Research

The statistics on Diversity in Research is available in NIFU's R&D statistics bank and consists of 10 main tables and 3 additional tables. All the main tables have been updated with figures for 2018. In addition, three new tables have been prepared:

- [the number of researchers in selected positions by region of birth and gender](#),
- [researchers by region of workplace, position group, gender and immigration status](#), and a separate table for
- [the universities with research staff by field of R&D, position group and immigration status](#).

For 2018, we have compiled a more detailed statistics for the largest universities, where we have looked at the distribution of immigrants and descendants of immigrants by position, faculty and field of R&D. Some of these figures can be found in NIFU's R&D statistics bank, the others will be presented in 2021.

The statistics on Diversity in Research is compiled by Statistics Norway and NIFU in collaboration. The statistics are funded by the Ministry of Education and Research, with input from the Kif-committee. More information about the statistics on Diversity in Research can be found here: <https://www.nifu.no/statistics-on-diversity-in-research/>. Here you will find links to current publications on the topic, as well as information on definitions and methods.

Information about the research personnel in Norway is extracted from the [Register of Research Personnel](#), a database operated by NIFU on behalf of the Research Council. Variables on immigration status are extracted from Statistics Norway's system for personal data (description not available in English). We have also used register-based [employment statistics](#) from Statistics Norway.

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