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**UNIVERSITÄT
BERN**

Mission Statement University of Bern





The Senate of the University of Bern, pursuant to Article 3 Paragraph 2 and Article 36 Paragraph 1 Section C of the University Act (UniG) of 5 September 1966, hereby resolves:

General

The University of Bern is committed to the highest standards in fulfilling its mission as set forth in the law and its Articles, both through compliance with obligatory principles and by creating the conditions that will allow it to meet the diverse and changing demands made of it in a flexible and differentiated fashion.

The standards that guide the University are derived equally from the European university tradition to which it is bound and from the insights and demands of the present day. While committed to being and remaining a *Universitas litterarum* in its essence, it also strives to develop and enhance its own standing in a process of continual renewal.

The University sees itself, domestically and internationally, as a partner for all institutions devoted to the same or similar objectives.

In light of a growing range of tasks and challenges that far exceed the capabilities of any individual institution of higher education, the University of Bern recognises the need for coordination among educational institutions throughout Switzerland. Given a level playing field, the University is confident that it has the strength to declare and assert its identity within a comprehensive, collaborative system designed to promote competitiveness.

The commitment to partnership implies a commitment to active cooperation wherever it will enable or further performance at the highest standard, as well as a readiness to act for the benefit of the

system as a whole or, where appropriate, to refrain from actions in the interest of division of labour.

The University of Bern believes strongly in the importance of the BENEFRi network. It intends to take full advantage of the opportunities this cooperative framework offers, bringing them to life by entering into additional conventions for specific disciplines and further cooperation agreements.

The University devotes special attention to its relationship with teachers and teacher training. A further area of special importance is its relationship with Bern University of Applied Science, in respect of both the division of competencies and the distinct natures of the two institutions, and of collaboration in pursuit of shared aims.

The University of Bern makes stringent demands of itself and its people and is willing to review its own performance regularly and apply the results of such reviews in practice.

It undertakes to make responsible, appropriate and economical use of all available resources and to ensure that its planning and control system is appropriate to its role as a university, circumspect and effective.





People

All members of the University of Bern community, without regard to origin, sex or other conditions unrelated to the mission of the University, must be provided with the best possible circumstances for their own development.

Lecturers, young people and students should experience the University of Bern as an identity-forming entity (Universitas) made up of teachers and learners, joined in a quest for knowledge and understanding even beyond the boundaries of the individual disciplines, and as a community sustained by mutual affection and respect to which they adhere out of conviction.

Since the selection and appointment of professors is an essential factor in sustaining the quality of the University, it will spare no effort to remain attractive in every respect and able to attract and retain the scholars it wants.

For their part, the professors are expected to display a high degree of scholarly aptitude, initiative, pleasure in dealing with young people, a gift for teaching, collegiality, a sense of responsibility, and a general willingness to dedicate themselves internally and externally to the goals and values to which the University of Bern is committed and to upholding its overall reputation.

Young academics have a right to structured and differentiated counselling and support, to goal-



oriented guidance in research and teaching, to adequate space for their own research, to the making of contacts and promotion of mobility, to recognition for their research and teaching performance and opportunities to take on responsibility commensurate with their rank, and to the pursuit of prospects within and beyond the University of Bern.

Well-prepared students should be provided with instruction of high academic quality in a form that is stimulating and supportive in every way. Instructors assign the same importance to teaching as to research or any other services.

Overall, students must choose the University of Bern not simply because it is nearby, but because it is exceptionally welcoming and attentive to their needs. In pursuit of this aim, the University is committed to becoming a regular and frequent choice of foreign students as well.





Scholarship and academic disciplines

All academic disciplines, each in its own way, are equally committed to the search for truth and fundamentally „worthy“ of the university. The University of Bern must choose from among the broad spectrum of available disciplines. The choice should be representative and comprise theology, the humanities and social sciences, law and economic disciplines, medicine (including veterinary medicine) and natural sciences.

The selection is based on academic criteria as well as social need and coordination at the national level within Switzerland, and in acknowledgement of a broadly understood cultural and humanitarian obligation.

The quest for scholarly knowledge and acknowledgement of a cultural obligation imply a concern for those disciplines and fields of research whose findings do not lend themselves to immediate practical application.

All disciplines should be equally supported under conditions allowing the units involved to genuinely fulfil their missions, with adequate prospects and on a stable foundation, and to make an outstanding showing in both domestic and international competition.

While high quality standards must always be maintained in all respects, the differing work methods and goals of various disciplines must also be taken into account. Differential performance mandates with different weightings must be applied: one set of standards for explicitly research-intensive departments with only a few students whose interest is primarily in the science itself, another for departments whose main purpose is to prepare a large number of students directly for a career, and yet another for departments providing an extensive service repertoire.





Teaching

A well-thought-out programme of instruction drawing inspiration from the lecturers' own research must convey solid, up-to-date academic knowledge. It must also elicit scientific curiosity, make students familiar with various scientific methods, and generally introduce them to scientific questioning and reasoning.

An introduction to scientific questioning and reasoning also implies contemplation of the conditions, possibilities and limitations of each discipline and of science itself.

Interdisciplinary study programmes and courses are especially useful in tearing down borders and furthering the interconnectedness of the academic community in light of the increasing dissolution of boundaries between disciplines. The University of Bern considers these programmes to be of great importance and vigorously enables and supports them.

Reasonably structured courses of study should lead to graduation within acceptable periods while also awakening a thirst for lifelong learning among students.

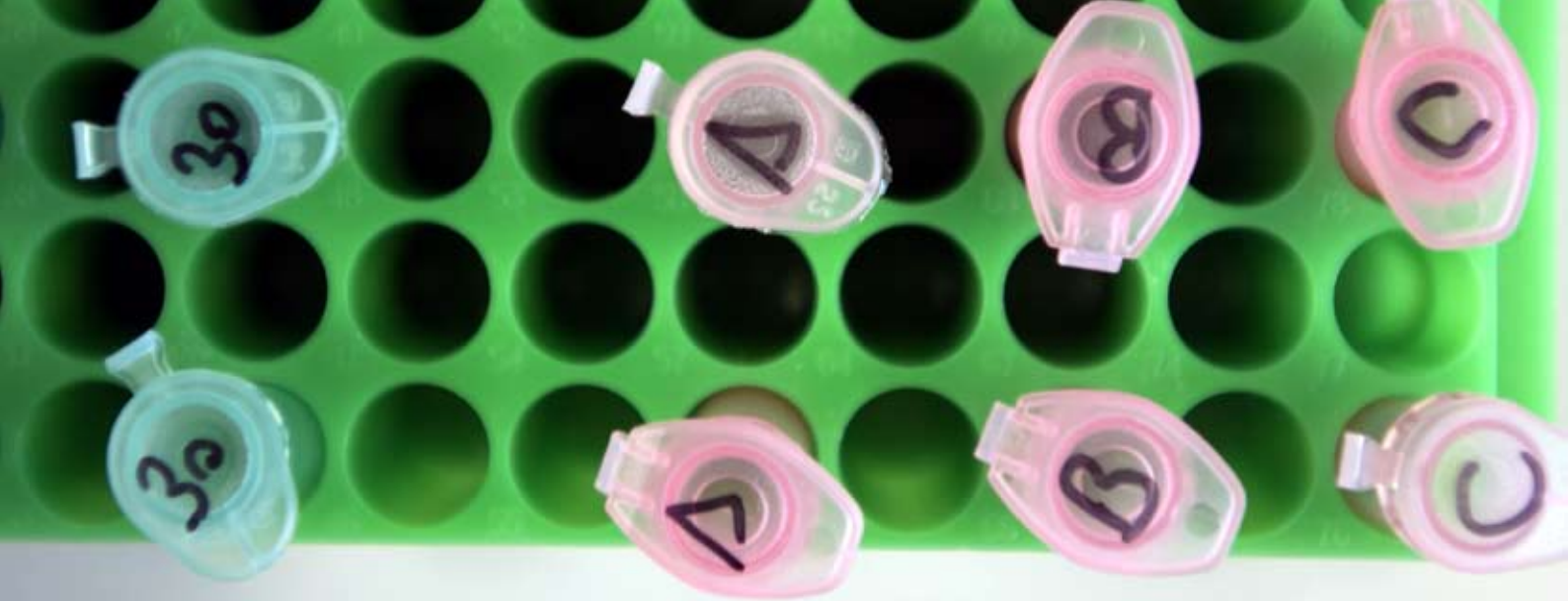
The University of Bern encourages mobility for its students and is committed to removing any obstacles.

The University will have fulfilled its educational mandate if its graduates are prepared to apply what they have learned meaningfully wherever they may be and to devote their abilities to the common good in a creative, critical and responsible fashion.

All students should be endowed with the ability to pursue an academic/scholarly career and to succeed in the job market, to argue in scientific terms and to follow scientific arguments on their own, to keep up with events in their own discipline even in the absence of guidance, and generally to think independently and systematically even in areas outside their own discipline.

Selected students in all disciplines should be given the opportunity of discovering their own capacity to do independent research, with the aim of awakening in them an enjoyment of scientific work and an awareness of science as a career option.

In light of the rapid transformations taking place in the world of science and the rise of new demands in the job market and throughout society, the University of Bern is committed to systematically intensifying its efforts in the areas of advanced and continuing education.



Research

Research at the University of Bern is conducted first of all for the sake of knowledge and understanding: knowledge of human beings and their diverse dependencies, and knowledge of nature, society, culture, and the unknown in general, to the extent that it is accessible to scientific thought. Guiding principles include a commitment to seek truth and to uphold only that which one believes to the best of one's knowledge to be true as well as a considered, ethically grounded sense of responsibility toward both human beings and living and non-living nature.

Scientific research is also continuously engaged in a search for answers to questions arising from concrete needs and concerns. Overall, the University of Bern wishes to apply its energies in a focused manner to helping solve the problems faced by human beings as individuals, as members of society and, in the broadest sense, as responsible inhabitants of this planet.

The University applies all appropriate means to make the findings and knowledge acquired by its people available to the academic community and to all interested parties to whom they may be of use.



The University of Bern is prepared to put the results of its research to economic use wherever possible, and further to undertake research on its own initiative or in collaboration with suitable partners for purposes of development and application.

All disciplines take part in research, and all are expected to conduct their work in accordance with the highest international standards.

The University of Bern attaches great importance to sustaining clear leadership in selected fields of research. It systematically creates the conditions for such leadership, in collaboration with other universities or other institutions where appropriate.





The public / society

Although science has a fundamental obligation to a worldwide community, the University of Bern must be solidly rooted in the society of which it is an immediate member and from which it receives its mandate, and in that society's institutions.

The University obtains its social mandate from the leading political authorities and is solely responsible, within the bounds of the autonomy granted it, for carrying it out. This approach is particularly intended to guarantee freedom of research, teaching and study.

Nothing does more to burnish a university's public image than a large number of diligent graduates embodying its spirit. The graduates are also the ones who directly engage in „knowledge transfer“. The university for its part has an interest in the continuing loyalty of its alumnae and alumni after graduation.

As a locus of education, research and culture, the University of Bern wishes to do all it can to enhance the appeal and magnetism of the Canton of Bern and the broader surrounding region. To this end it maintains close relations not only with the political authorities but also with the business community and with cultural and other institutions.

While always defending scientific freedom and remaining cognisant of its fundamental mandate, the University is prepared to work with the business community — particularly that of Bern — and public administration, to accept commissions from them and to put its capabilities and services at their disposal in various ways. In particular, the advanced

and continuing education opportunities provided by the University are intended to serve this purpose.

To make its efforts in research and teaching known, to raise awareness of the means and aims of science, and conversely to ensure that science is not perceived as something alien, set apart or even threatening, the University of Bern seeks dialogue with the general public in every appropriate form, particularly with interested bodies and institutions, and takes their concerns seriously.

Despite its local, regional and national roots, the University of Bern does not intend to fulfil its purpose only within narrow constraints. Rather, it will seek to contribute its specific capabilities wherever the sciences, scientific knowledge and scholarly cooperation can further the productive development of humanity under safe, just and sustainable conditions.

Adopted by the Senate on 2 February 1999

Adopted by the Governing Council on
23 June 1999