

University of Bern fundraising guidelines

Based on Article 39 (1) lit. b of the Law of September 5, 1996, governing the University (UniG)

the Executive Board of the University of Bern has decided on the following guidelines:

1. Introduction

The University of Bern conducts teaching and research for the benefit of the general public. These activities are funded publicly and by means of competitive research contributions. Financial support from private individuals, foundations, companies, and organizations supplement the public funds and help the University to achieve and enhance its leading positions. The University welcomes and encourages private support.

These guidelines describe the framework conditions and procedure for fundraising and sponsoring. They apply to activities performed on behalf of the University by its employees or organizational units.

These guidelines do not cover funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), EU framework programs, or the Commission for Technology and Innovation CTI, research contracts or cooperations, revenue from licenses, or services such as expert reports, analyses, or medical examinations.

2. The institution

The University of Bern is constituted under Public Law and is politically and religiously neutral. It is unreservedly committed to the freedom of research and teaching.

The role of the University is to act as an independent expert on behalf of and for the benefit of the general public. The knowledge it acquires serves society, politics, economy, and culture. In doing so, it helps strengthen the foundations of our democratic society.

Situated in the capital city and with strong regional ties, the University achieves leading positions in selected fields and enjoys global recognition. It offers a broad range of subjects and is developing a reputation for specific areas of focus as well as for interdisciplinary research.

3. UniBE Foundation

In order to position fundraising in the best possible way for the institution, the University of Bern founded the UniBE Foundation in 2021. Its purpose is to encourage innovation, excellence and future potential at the University in the context of its duties and activities, specifically in research, teaching and continuing education.

The UniBE Foundation is the central point of contact and coordination for fundraising at the University.

The UniBE Foundation should be included in all strategic and major fundraising activities.

The Foundation's services shall be appropriately remunerated.

The University and the UniBE Foundation jointly draw up regulations required for their cooperation.

4. Objectives

Private funding boosts and accelerates the University's development in line with its strategy, while sponsoring supports its marketing objectives. Philanthropic funding enables additional services in specific research areas, supports early-career researchers, generates innovation, and enhances the role of Bern – and Switzerland as a whole – as a center of business and knowledge.

A. Principles and framework conditions

5. Principles

Fundraising is entrenched in the University's overall strategy and is conducted in compliance with the following principles in particular:

- The University ensures that the funds entrusted to it are put to effective, appropriate, and proper use.
- Cooperation with individuals, companies, and institutions is always in accordance with the Swiss legal system and in compliance with all of the relevant legal provisions.
- Fundraising complies with ethical and professional standards.
- In the field of medicine, the guidelines of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences entitled "Collaboration between the medical profession and industry" also apply.
- The University is subject to the principle of public disclosure. It discloses its contracts in accordance with the Swiss Freedom of Information Act unless this conflicts with public or private interests.
- The University aims to conclude long-term contracts with its supporters.
- The University acknowledges its sponsors unless the donor does not wish this.

6. Terminology

Fundraising refers to the systematic and structured activities involved in looking for resources, generally financial support.

Philanthropy refers to private, voluntary work for a non-profit purpose:

Donations (charitable contributions, endowments, grants, unrestricted grants, and contributions à fonds perdu) are voluntary donations in the form of monetary payments or contributions in kind from private individuals, companies, foundations, and other organizations. They serve the public interest. Donors can request that the funds be used for a specific purpose.

Sponsoring refers to monetary payments or contributions in kind from companies requiring a service in return. Sponsoring serves to achieve marketing objectives and is usually subject to sales tax.

Bequests (legacies) are gifts (donations) of money or tangible assets left to the University by an individual in their will without the University holding the legal status of an heir. In the case of **inheritance**, the University is appointed as an heir. Conditions may be placed on bequests and inheritance.

7. Forms and types of fundraising partnership

7.1 Partnership principles

With its liberal legal basis, the University is able to set up viable and forward-thinking initiatives in dialog with its supporters. Supporters can make a pivotal impact in the University's areas of focus.

As part of its constructive partnership with foundations, the University offers up its capabilities for research and development in pioneering projects and allows foundations to achieve their individual aims. Together, the University and foundations foster current academic discourse on niche topics and are raising their profile by delivering pertinent results.

In its partnerships with philanthropists, the University cultivates fertile ground for sustainable innovation. Every bit of financial support is unique and aims to find valuable responses to social and academic challenges.

Companies are important partners for the University. Their contributions support innovation and development at the University and help to secure its place at the heart of the local business community.

The University strives to gain national and international recognition for commitments and to secure them for the long term.

7.2 Fundraising recipients

Donations help support the following:

- Research projects
- Endowed professorships
- Infrastructure: devices, equipment, laboratories, libraries, seminar rooms, buildings, clinics
- Positions: members of scientific staff, post-doc positions, other jobs
- Support for early-career researchers: grants, graduate schools
- Teaching: study programs, teaching contracts, lecture courses, modern forms of knowledge transfer

Donations and sponsoring help support the following:

- Publications: printing subsidies for academic publications, other publications
- Prizes: research prizes, teaching prizes, subject prizes, competitions
- Outreach: symposia and specialist conferences, anniversary celebrations, public lectures, distinguished lectures, exhibitions, science communication

Support can be exclusive.

7.3 In particular: endowed professorships

Endowed professorships are professorships which are supported in large part by funds from private individuals, foundations, or companies.

Endowed professors are usually appointed for a minimum of ten years, while assistant professorships of six (four plus two) years can be agreed.

Endowed professorships can be named after the donor if the latter provides the majority of the funding.

- If the donor is a foundation or individual or the professorship is being named in honor of a deceased person: "Donor name" professorship of "(description of area of teaching)"
- If the donor is a company: "Professor of "(description of area of teaching)", endowed/funded by (donor)

The contractually agreed name is used for the duration of the funding.

In the filling of endowed professorships, the partner is entitled to be represented on the faculty structural and electoral commission without voting rights.

Endowed professorships are supervised by the Executive Board of the University of Bern. The Executive Board of the University of Bern may delegate a person to the Structural Committee and/or the Selection Committee. An Advisory Board may also be appointed.

7.4 Fundraising methods

The following potential fundraising methods are permitted: applications for government grants, donations, public-private partnerships, sponsoring, crowdfunding, and one-off or repeat donations, bequests, inheritance, and capital campaigns.

B. Arrangements at the University

8. Principles

Fundraising at the University is arranged in accordance with the following principles:

Every fundraising agreement must be made in writing.

The agreements stipulate the particulars of the partnership in detail; in the case of sponsoring, details of the services provided in return must be given.

Grant letters issued by foundations meet the formal requirements.

Partial funding is possible if the remaining funding has been secured. In the case of seed financing, the University must endeavor to obtain follow-up funding.

The University reserves the right to refuse any funding it is offered. In cases of doubt, the Executive Board of the University of Bern shall decide.

9. Role of the UniBE Foundation

Funding is generally accepted by the UniBE Foundation if it amounts to CHF 500,000 or more.

This regulation also applies irrespective of the amount if a framework agreement provides for acceptance by the UniBE Foundation, a business relationship already exists between the donor and the UniBE Foundation, the funding is offered directly to the UniBE Foundation or if a corresponding order has been issued by the Executive Board of the University of Bern to the UniBE Foundation.

The following, in particular, are exempt from this rule: donations whereby the donor requests acceptance by the University or another organization which is affiliated with the University.

The acceptance of funds by the UniBE Foundation for the benefit of the University takes place in accordance with the relevant agreement between the UniBE Foundation and the University. The Foundation's expenses shall be appropriately reimbursed.

The UniBE Foundation does not accept any sponsorship contributions for the benefit of the University.

10. Services of the University

10.1 Acknowledging donors

The University takes donors' requests into account, as far as it can, keeps them updated on their funding's progress and guarantees transparency on how the money entrusted to it is used.

The University can express its appreciation in the following ways in particular:

- Acknowledgment and expressions of thanks, in person and via the University's communications channels
- Inviting the donor to special events
- Erecting commemorative plaques in a University building (the Executive Board of the University of Bern shall be informed)
- Naming the donor on the University's donor board in the main building, at the discretion of the Executive Board of the University of Bern
- Naming lecture theaters or buildings after the donor, at the discretion of the Executive Board of the University of Bern

Donors have the right to document the support they provide in their own publications and to use this in their own communications.

10.2 Services provided to sponsors in return

In the case of sponsoring, the University agrees services provided and received in return with the relevant partners. The following can be agreed in writing:

- Acknowledgment and expressions of thanks, in person and via the University's communications channels
- Inviting the sponsor to special events
- Placing the sponsor's name and/or logo on websites with or without a link
- Catering partnerships
- Book tables at meetings and conferences
- Advertisements in conference publications
- Industry exhibitions
- Talks by the partner
- Granting the sponsor the right to mention the support they provide in their own communications.

The Executive Board of the University of Bern decides whether or not the sponsor can use the University logo.

11. Communication

The University shall provide transparent information on funds received through private funding. Sponsoring is indicated as such.

Communication measures are taken by the Communication and Marketing Office in consultation with those involved.

12. Restrictions

The University ensures that neither its reputation nor its credibility are compromised by donations or sponsorship. It guarantees freedom of research and teaching without reservation.

The following must be complied with in particular:

- Vested interests must be disclosed; the University must ensure that it avoids conflicts of interest.
- The choice of research methods, interpretation of research results, publication rights, rights to voice an opinion, or involvement in evaluation or procurement decisions must not be affected in any way.
- The University sets teaching standards. The rules of academic integrity must be adhered to.
- The University shall safeguard its political and religious neutrality and independence.
- The University ensures that the origins of funds it is to be given are known and trustworthy and are in line with the provisions of money laundering legislation.
- Donations are only permitted via bank transfer to a University external funding account. Direct donations to members of the University are not permitted.
- Research results may only be used and patents filed on the basis of a written agreement approved by the Executive Board of the University of Bern.
- The University does not advertise or promote the sale of products or services offered by sponsoring partners, nor does it allow sponsoring partners to advertise products or services in publications or acknowledgments.
- Partners are not permitted to use the University's name or logo when advertising or promoting the sale of products or services; they may only be used as part of an agreement and with the approval of the Executive Board of the University of Bern.
- Partners are not permitted to mark people with a supporter logo or for them to be given the role of a brand ambassador.
- Presenting sponsoring is only permitted in exceptional cases and at the discretion of the Executive Board of the University of Bern.
- Suppliers and service providers are permitted to mention the University in a neutral format, i.e. without a logo or advertising message, based on a written contractual agreement.

13. Authorities for fundraising activities

13.1 UniBE Foundation

In its capacity as the central point of contact and coordination for fundraising at the University, the UniBE Foundation is specifically responsible for:

- coordinating University members' fundraising measures.
- generally taking responsibility for endowed professorships and strategic fundraising projects. In particular, this includes supporting the search for funding, negotiations, monitoring contracts and reports, and managing relationships.
- providing services and advice to University members.
- taking measures to systematically acquire inheritance, bequests and repeat donations.

- cultivating relationships with supporters and potential target groups and coordinating fundraising communication and campaigns. All organizational units affected are involved in the activities.

13.2 Executive Board of the University of Bern

The Executive Board of the University of Bern is responsible for decisions regarding multi-annual agreements, grants over CHF 50,000, and whether or not to accept inheritances, bequests, or dependent foundations.

The Executive Board of the University of Bern decides in consultation with the faculty affected on the establishment of endowed professorships, their framework conditions, and how they are named.

Anyone wishing to found their own legal entity for the purpose of procuring funds (e.g. a charitable association) for the benefit of a University unit or field of research must obtain the prior approval of the Executive Board of the University of Bern.

13.3 Faculties, institutes, clinics and centers

As a basic principle, University members are free to launch fundraising activities for University purposes.

University members shall foster respectful relationships with supporters that are characterized by transparency, dialog, appreciation and consistency.

The UniBE Foundation shall be informed of any fundraising or sponsoring activities at an early stage.

In the case of endowed professorships and initiatives outside the scope of research funding and involving more than CHF 300,000, the UniBE Foundation and the Rector's Office must be informed before potential donors are approached.

University units can provide information on the procedure for making donations on their websites and in their publications. Providing bank details at institute or center level is not permitted.

14. Entry into force

These guidelines shall enter into force once signed by the Executive Board of the University of Bern and replace the guidelines dated July 5, 2023.

Bern, March 23, 2026

On behalf of the Executive Board of the University of Bern:

Prof. Dr. Virginia Richter

Rector

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