

Acknowledged by the University Executive Board in October 2020

“Equal opportunities at the University of Bern”

Guidelines of the Commission on Gender Equality for the Institutional Approach to Diversity at the University of Bern

The University of Bern is committed to promoting equal opportunities and equality for all university members. It does not tolerate discrimination of any kind and, as a public-law institution, is obliged to take countermeasures and preventive action in accordance with the Federal Constitution ¹. The University of Bern strives to remove any barriers to entry and recognises the diverse needs of its staff and students. It promotes the reconciliation of university and private life.

For the University of Bern, the diverse perspectives of university members are an essential component of excellence in research, teaching and administration. As a sustainable university, it promotes research that deals with equal opportunities and diversity.

What does the University of Bern mean by “promoting equal opportunities”?

The University of Bern uses the diversity categories ² underlying the concept of diversity as a thematic analysis tool with regard to existing structures and cultures. The diversity categories serve to identify inclusion and exclusion mechanisms more systematically. An important objective is also to use an intersectional perspective to identify the entanglement of attributes that lead to unequal treatment. Based on these analyses, the University of Bern is taking measures to increase equal opportunities.

The University of Bern focuses in particular on the following diversity categories:

- Gender
- Physical and mental impairment
- Age
- Ethnic origin (language, nationality, skin colour, migration experience, religion)
- Social background and status
- Sexual orientation and gender identity

¹ Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation, Article 8, paragraph 2:

“No one may be discriminated against, inter alia, on grounds of origin, race, sexgender, age, language, social status, way of life, religious, philosophical or political beliefs, or on grounds of physical, mental or psychological disability

² “Diversity” refers to and acknowledges the visible and invisible diversity of people, their circumstances and social affiliations.

The aim of diversity policies is to draw attention to exclusion and discrimination, reduce them and respect the individuality of each person.

How does the University of Bern promote equal opportunities?

At the University of Bern, the promotion of equal opportunities as a cross-sectional issue is a management task at all levels.

The University of Bern defines verifiable objectives for the promotion of equal opportunities and implements these with a university action plan as well as measures at faculty level 3. It supports the coordination, implementation of measures and regular site assessments with financial resources.

The University of Bern sees itself as a discourse community both internally and externally, as an institution that is accessible to all members of the University, and organises internal processes transparently. It defines thematic contact points for university members who feel discriminated against or need support, and works with external bodies to facilitate access to the University. The University of Bern communicates in a manner consistent with diversity and facilitates barrier-free access to information.

³ In addition to gender and reconciliation, other diversity categories have been integrated into the faculty's equality plans.