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**UNIVERSITÄT
BERN**

Vizerektorat Qualität

Quality Strategy 2026

University of Bern

Quality assurance and development as a participatory system and a culture that permeates the entire university.

The Quality Strategy 2026 was approved by the Commission for Quality Assurance and Development on March 12, 2026, and adopted by the University Executive Board on March 17, 2026. It replaces the Quality Strategy 2022 dated May 10, 2022.

This document is a translation provided for information purposes only. The text of the original German version prevails.

The University of Bern is committed to upholding the highest standards of quality across all its activities, treating quality as a cross-cutting theme in its core functions of teaching, research, and continuing education, as well as in administration and services. The University Act (Universitätsgesetz) and the University Regulations (Universitätsverordnung) govern the regular review, assurance, and development of quality in these core functions based on the principles established by the State Council.

Quality assurance and development is enshrined as one of seven functional strategies in the Strategy 2030 (Strategie 2030) and is also guided by the strategy of the Vice-Rectorate for Quality and Sustainable Development. These strategies serve as the foundation for the Quality Strategy 2026.

The Quality Strategy 2026 pursues the following objectives:

- 1. The University secures a participatory quality culture**
- 2. The quality management system supports the University of Bern in achieving its overarching goals (as defined in the strategy 2030)**
- 3. Evaluation processes are an integral part of excellent teaching**
- 4. Evaluation processes promote excellent research**
- 5. Comprehensive quality assurance and development promote closed-loop quality cycles, data-driven processes, and effective measures**

1. The University establishes a participatory quality culture

A living quality culture is based on openness, dialogue, and shared responsibility. It is essential for fulfilling quality assurance and development (QAD) tasks. The University of Bern actively encourages the participation of all university members and stakeholders in quality processes. Through the regular involvement of all university members, QAD is managed in formal committees and supported participatively in additional informal groups. Additional exchange formats as well as target-group- and topic-specific workshops enable participation in the continuous development, improvement, and review of the University of Bern's core services.

Transparent communication, regular exchange, and joint reflection make quality goals understandable and accessible, offer collective learning and development opportunities, and the recognition of good practice strengthens the shared understanding of quality. Dialogue with the public on quality through the governing bodies (e.g., Rector's Office, Heads of Faculty) complements the comprehensive understanding of quality.

2. The quality management system supports the University of Bern in achieving its overarching goals (as defined in the strategy 2030)

The quality management system is closely linked to the University of Bern's overall strategic development. Through an internal control cycle, it specifically supports and guides the implementation of Strategy 2030 and its overarching goals. The university's areas of activity are structured and evaluated according to the university's four pillars — *responsibilities, staff, cross-cutting issues, and resources*—as well as the category of *governance*. The quality management system ensures that data and evidence for decision-making are available throughout the annual process of developing the University Action Plan, Faculty Action Plans, and Center Action Plans, as well as during operational and strategic discussions, and are strategically tracked across all university organizational units.

3. Evaluation processes are an integral part of excellent teaching

Teaching evaluations serve not only as a means of accountability but, above all, for systematic and continuous quality improvement. At the University of Bern, they are understood as part of a collaborative development process between students, faculty, and the institution. Regular evaluations of courses, assessments, and degree programs—planned and supported by the QAD while taking subject-specific characteristics into account—provide valuable insights for the further development of teaching methods, learning objectives, and course content and structure. The results are reflected upon, communicated, and translated into strategic teaching development measures at various levels. In addition, faculty members are supported in the use and interpretation of evaluation data. The goal is to shape teaching as a dynamic, reflective field that thrives on feedback and continuous development.

4. Evaluation processes promote excellent research

High-quality research arises from the interplay of scientific integrity, appropriate and transparent methodology, theoretical grounding, critical reflection, and innovative capacity, as well as from suitable institutional, financial, and organizational frameworks.

Evaluation processes support this commitment by making research achievements visible, fostering transparency, facilitating feedback, and identifying opportunities for development. In doing so, they respect discipline-specific characteristics, pursue a multidimensional approach to performance measurement, and combine qualitative and quantitative methods in the spirit of responsible research evaluation. The University of Bern strives for a balance between internal reflection and external review with the aim of assessing its status, sharpening its profile, and identifying opportunities for development.

5. Comprehensive quality assurance and development promote closed-loop quality cycles, data-driven processes, and effective measures

Quality assurance and development at the University of Bern follows a continuous cycle of improvement (Deming cycle) embedded at all levels (faculties, centers, central services): Plan – Do – Study – Act.

Systematic evaluations in all areas (teaching, research, services, continuing education, and central administration), combined with quantitative and qualitative evidence, form the foundation of quality assurance and development. Findings from evaluations, accreditations, or peer reviews lead to measures whose impact is assessed, documented, and communicated. In addition, the qualifications and competencies of professors are reviewed and ensured by structure commission and election committees.

The University of Bern prioritizes transparency, traceability, sustainability, and systemic reporting of processes to embed quality as an integral part of decision-making and to contribute to continuous development as an active system designer within a learning organization.

Supplementary Principles for Quality Assurance and Development

The University of Bern's quality assurance and development efforts are guided not only by the university's internal strategic guidelines but also by national and international standards of good quality practice, particularly regarding institutional accreditation and responsible evaluations. In this way, they contribute to the transparency, comparability, and further development of the University of Bern within the national and international higher education sector.

Quality processes respect academic freedom in teaching and research and are intended as a supportive tool for promoting excellence, not as a restriction on academic autonomy. Participation, involvement, and dialogue are combined with clearly defined responsibilities and decision-making processes to ensure effectiveness and accountability.

Data-driven methods adhere to the principles of proportionality, purpose limitation, transparency, and contextualization. Quantitative indicators are always supplemented by qualitative assessments to avoid misleading incentives and to appropriately account for subject-specific characteristics.

Students are viewed as active contributors to quality and are systematically involved in appropriate quality and development processes beyond feedback mechanisms. The University of Bern also continuously reflects the limits of evaluations and governance and views quality assurance as a learning process within a dynamic, evolving academic environment.