



Diversity Strategy 2025-2028 of Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH

Adopted by the University Executive Board on 10 December 2024

1 Preamble

Based on the objectives defined in the [BFH Strategy 2023-2026](#), the Diversity Strategy 2025-2028 forms the basis for promoting equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion at BFH. It formulates strategic priorities and actionable subgoals, which are detailed in an action plan with goals and measures including responsibilities and resources at the level of BFH and the schools.

1.1 Social context and responsibility

As a public institution and university at the heart of society, we fulfil our legal mandate and our responsibility and strive to reflect social diversity and enshrine equal opportunities and inclusion. As society evolves and becomes increasingly diverse and complex, we are called upon to develop a constructive approach and innovative answers to current challenges. Our Diversity Strategy and action plan enable us to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our involvement in this area, e.g. in the strategic thematic fields of Sustainable Development, Caring Society and Humane Digital Transformation, facilitates synergies and further developments.

1.2 Legal context and principles

The Diversity Strategy is based on legal requirements, namely the ban on discrimination in the Federal Constitution (BV¹), the Federal Act on Gender Equality (GlG²), the Disability Discrimination Act (BehiG³), and internal principles such as the Code of Conduct, the Regulations for the Protection of Personal Integrity (SPIR) and the Gender Equality Regulations (GFMR)⁴. The Diversity Strategy and the action plan are designed in such a way that they fulfil the external requirements for project funding, the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for Horizon Europe and the Federal Equal Opportunities Programme (PgB Chancengerechtigkeit).

2 Our understanding of diversity

We understand diversity holistically as a concept that recognises it as a resource, promotes equal conditions for participation and opportunities for development, and strengthens anti-discrimination. In our Diversity Strategy, we therefore talk about equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion.

Diversity is a social reality and an asset for us. We recognise, take into account and reinforce the personal uniqueness and integrity of all members of the university. We cultivate a reflective and respectful attitude in dealing with similarities and differences and promote a culture of mutual appreciation.

We value the diversity of perspectives in teams and promote diversity as a key resource in a diversity-conscious environment that aims to improve study, work and research conditions for everyone in the long term. We create equal opportunities and inclusive overarching conditions. In the process, we are

¹ Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation (SR 101)

² Federal Act on Gender Equality (SR 151.1)

³ Federal Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (SR 151.3)

⁴ [see Fundamentals of equal opportunities and diversity](#)



aware of the structures, power dynamics and inequalities shaped by social categories and approach diversity with a critical awareness of power dynamics and self-reflection.

We are actively committed to eliminating discrimination that disadvantages or diminishes the dignity of a person on the basis of social categories such as gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, racial attribution, origin, skin colour, language, social status, professional status, educational background, lifestyle, religious, ideological or political beliefs, as well as physical, mental or psychological disability.

We see implementing equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion as an ongoing process in which we pursue a holistic and intersectional approach that takes into account the intertwining of diversity dimensions.

3 Implementation and governance

3.1 Implementation

As a learning organisation, BFH promotes the development of skills and provides spaces for reflection so that diversity is professionally handled. Equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion are promoted as common issues and concerns, sustainably integrated into the organisation, processes and development of BFH and are part of a comprehensive cultural development. The relevant bodies and schools are responsible for ensuring and implementing this in research, teaching, the President's Office and services. Managers take on a special responsibility by leading by example and incorporating the topics into their leadership practice. The Equal Opportunities Office and the Equal Opportunities Committee provide advice and support.

For the period from 2025 to 2028, BFH will adopt strategic priorities and objectives in the areas of equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion. An action plan sets out measures and indicators including responsibilities and resources at university and school level. The 2025–2028 action plan will primarily be implemented using existing resources. Some measures are to be partially financed via the Federal Equal Opportunities Programme 2025–2028.

3.2 Governance and reporting of strategy implementation

BFH regularly reviews and evaluates the implementation of its objectives and measures in the action plan. The Project Steering Committee of the Diversity Working Group monitors the introduction and implementation of governance and the review process.

The responsible bodies defined in the action plan document the implementation of their measures with regard to "PgB" reporting and BFH's internal evaluation of the action plan. The Equal Opportunities Office prepares an interim evaluation after 1–2 years and a final evaluation after 3–4 years, which are also used for reviewing the strategy and reporting on the performance mandate. The Equal Opportunities Office and the Equal Opportunities Committee jointly analyse the interim evaluation and inform the University Executive Board about the status of implementation, proposing adjustments where necessary. They submit the final evaluation to the University Executive Board with a recommendation on the continuation and development of the Diversity Strategy. The implementation of the Diversity Strategy is communicated on an ongoing basis.

The Equal Opportunities Office provides annual statistical gender indicators to monitor the development and implementation of gender equality objectives. In the medium term, it should be possible to extract these specifically for BFH's organisational bodies from the BFH-wide data warehouse. The Equal Opportunities Office prepares the annual reporting for measures co-financed via the Federal Equal Opportunities Programme (PgB "Chancengerechtigkeit").



4 Strategic priorities and objectives 2025–2028

Based on BFH's strategic objective "Our university is a great place to study and work", we have set ourselves the following three priorities in the implementation of equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion at BFH. These are supplemented by actionable subgoals.

Our university is a great place to study and work

As a trilingual and diverse university, we promote equal opportunities as well as cultural and social diversity in an inclusive and non-discriminatory university environment

1. We create an inclusive university environment

2. We promote equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion among our employees and students

3. We integrate equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion into teaching and research

1. We create an inclusive university environment

- 1.1 We design our structures, rooms and services to be accessible and inclusive.
- 1.2 We create structures that make it possible to reconcile studies or professional work with family, caregiving responsibilities and non-professional activities for the benefit of society.
- 1.3 We create an open university environment in which all university members feel valued and safe, and actively counteract discrimination.
- 1.4 Our attitude towards equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion is reflected in our communications and our image.

2. We promote equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion among our employees and students

- 2.1 We implement recruitment and development in an inclusive manner that fosters equal opportunities.
- 2.2 We strive for a balanced gender distribution in all areas of BFH and promote diversity among our employees.
- 2.3 We create general conditions which improve access to all degree programmes for underrepresented groups.

3. We integrate equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion in teaching and research

- 3.1 We create an inclusive and diversity-aware teaching and learning environment that enables equal participation for all.
- 3.2 We continue to develop our training and continuing education programmes through teaching content and curricula that are mindful of diversity.
- 3.3 With our research, we contribute to the reflection on equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion.
- 3.4 We reflect equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion in our research processes and projects.



5 Best practice examples

The Doing Diversity toolbox offers a compilation of selected best practices from Swiss universities on the topics of diversity, equal opportunities and inclusion. The toolbox provides an overview of interesting projects, relevant documents and effective strategies and measures:

- [Doing Diversity toolbox](#), Gender Campus

Bern University of Applied Sciences

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