

OFFICE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Guidelines on equal opportunities in recruitment procedures



Contents

Introduction	
Equal opportunities and quality assurance	3
Players	
The Election Committee, Office for Gender Equality (OGE) and the faculties' gender equality delegates	5
The different phases of the recruitment process	
Legal bases and recommendations	6
Structural Committee	6
Job advertisement	7
Composition of the Election Committee	8
Selection procedure	9
Consultation and list compilation	13
Legal bases	14
Appendix	
Example of synopsis	16
Example of criteria for assessing applications	17
Example of assessment criteria for candidates' presentations	18
Example of Committee interview procedures	20

Introduction

Equal opportunities and quality assurance

The University of Bern considers implementation of real gender equality one of its key objectives. In its 2021 Strategy, it has set itself the aim of, among other things, having an appropriate percentage of both genders at all levels. In addition, it strives to ensure that «everyone actively implements real gender equality [...]» (2021 Strategy, chap. 5.8). In the University of Bern's 2017-20 Gender Equality Action Plan, the University has set itself the target of reaching a 25% share of female professors by 2020.

At professor level in particular, the aim of an «appropriate percentage of both genders» is far from being reached. In recent years, it has been possible to increase the percentage of women - the current figure being just under 18% of associate and full professors - however, this is still low and well below the target figure of 25%. A good and fair recruitment process is an important starting point for creating equal opportunities and increasing the percentage of female professors. The following principles in this context are stipulated in the Recruitment Regulations:

Employment procedures are always conducted in accordance with the principles of transparency, correctness and comprehensibility.

Candidates shall be selected on the basis of their quality and potential and shall be justified.

The report to the Executive Board of the university shows the selection procedure carried out in a comprehensible manner. Minority motions and proportions of votes shall be included.

The Office for Gender Equality shall be involved in recruitment procedures. It must be provided with the necessary information.

(Recruitment Regulations, Art. 21)

The University of Bern's 2017-20 Gender Equality Action Plan comprises recruitment related measures and seven other fields of activity:

www.gleichstellung.unibe.ch

Further reading on equal opportunities in appeal proceedings:

Färber, Christine. Ulrike Spangenberg (2008):

Wie werden Professuren besetzt? Chancengleichheit in Berufungsverfahren. Frankfurt/New York: Campus.

Färber, Christine. Ute Riedler (2011):

Black Box Berufung. Strategien auf dem Weg zur Professur. Frankfurt/New York: Campus.

These Guidelines provide an overview of the legal bases connected to the recruitment procedures at the University of Bern, in particular based on the Recruitment Regulations and the Gender Equality Regulations. They also include recommendations/information on the different phases of a recruitment procedure which are intended to increase equal opportunities. The transparency and quality of recruitment procedures, i.e. the fair and sound assessment of all applications received, also increase equal opportunities, while ultimately achieving the objective of finding «the best person» for a professorship. In the appendix to the Guidelines, there are examples of the different tools such as a synopsis, lists of criteria and the Committee meeting procedures, all of which can be adapted to suit the specific subject-related context.

Since the first edition of these guidelines, a lot has happened at the University of Bern, which has made a new edition necessary. For example, there have been several revisions of the Recruitment Regulations, which has led to new regulations relevant to the quality of employment procedures. In addition, guidelines on conflicts of interest and abstentions as well as guidelines on job sharing in professorships have been adopted. Some new services, such as counselling and coaching services for dual career partners, are also to be mentioned in this updated version of the guidelines.

The Guidelines are directed at everyone who is involved in recruitment processes, which is exactly what is called for by the 2021 Strategy. It stipulates that equal opportunities must be actively implemented by everyone.

Players

The Election Committee, the Office for Gender Equality (OGE) and the faculties' gender equality delegates

All Committee members have the duty to promote and guarantee the transparency of recruitment procedures and with it equal opportunities. In this regard, the Chair of the Election Committee has a particularly important role to play. The Chair manages the process and in this capacity has decisive influence on the framework conditions and the «culture» of a procedure.

At the University of Bern, there is always a representative of the Office for Gender Equality acting as an observer without voting rights in all recruitment procedures starting at the structural phase. The OGE must therefore be provided with all the necessary information for its involvement before the start of a procedure (cf. Recruitment Regulations, Art. 21[4]). Following the procedure, the representative of the OGE draws up an accompanying report which is sent to the faculty and the Executive Board of the University together with the Committee's report and the application for recruitment.

Pursuant to the Recruitment Regulations, the representative of the OGE always works alongside «a person from the faculty who is entrusted with aspects of equal opportunities and gender equality» (Art. 22[3d]; Art. 27[3d]). This practice is intended to ensure that gender equality issues are also represented by a person with appropriate expert knowledge. This person would ideally be a high-ranking Committee member (professor).

The short video «Female professor wanted» contains concrete tips on equal opportunities in recruitment procedures.

https://www.unibe.ch/university/portrait/self_image/equality/focuses/recruitment_procedure/index_eng.html

(cf. film still on the title page of this brochure. Illustration: Martine Ulmer)

The different phases of the recruitment process

Legal bases and recommendations

Jobsharing: In addition to the «Guidelines on Job Sharing for Professorships at the University of Bern», the OGE has published an information sheet. This gives further information on central issues in dealing with job sharing.

https://www.unibe.ch/university/portrait/self_image/equality/focuses/recruitment_procedure/index_eng.html

Assistant professorships with tenure track: The University of Bern wants to increase the proportion of assistant professorships with tenure track in order to be able to offer young researchers good career prospects. Half of the newly filled professorships should therefore be filled as assistant professors with tenure track.

On the subject of active recruitment of female professors, cf.

Wölki, Marion; David, Michaela (2015): Aktive Rekrutierung von Wissenschaftlerinnen als Bestandteil eines wertschätzenden Berufungsmanagements an der Universität Konstanz. In: Peus, Claudia; Braun, Susanne; Hentschel, Tanja; Frey, Dieter (Hg.): *Personalauswahl in der Wissenschaft. Evidenzbasierte Methoden und Impulse für die Praxis.* Berlin/Heidelberg, pp. 251-260.

The following section takes a closer look at the individual phases of the procedure, legal bases as well as recommendations/central questions to guarantee equal opportunities.

Structural Committee

Every time a professorship is created or has to be filled, the faculty shall compile a structural report for the attention of the Executive Board of the University. The work of the Structural Commission is based on the template for structural reports. In addition to the profile and tasks of the professorship to be filled, strategic considerations are also important here.

At least one person of each gender must be represented on every structural committee. Furthermore, a person from the faculty who is entrusted with equal opportunities and gender equality aspects must be on every structural committee. As a general rule, the OGE also participates in structural committees. If not, it has the right to comment on the structural report. (Recruitment Regulations, Art. 22[3]).

In 2015, the University of Berne enacted «Guidelines on Job Sharing for Professorships at the University of Berne ». These must be taken into account.

The following central questions may be helpful:

- *Are the objectives of the University and the faculty relating to increasing the proportion of women taken into account in the Structural Committee?*
- *Is the job description formulated broadly yet still clearly?*
- *Do female academics also meet the job description?*
- *Is there a possibility of holding the professorship based on a job-sharing arrangement or on a part-time basis, and is this included in the structural report?*
- *Is the job description formulated in such a way as to include gender research of the relevant department?*

Job advertisement

The job advertisement defines what the professorship entails and the requirements for applicants, particularly in relation to teaching, research, supporting junior staff and the acquisition of third-party funding.

Job advertisements shall be expressly aimed at both women and men. If women are underrepresented in the department concerned, they shall be expressly encouraged to apply in the job advertisement. (Gender Equality Regulations, Art. 7[1])

Recruitment committees shall expressly invite women to apply, in order to counter the under-representation of female professors. (Gender Equality Regulations, Art. 10 [2])

- *Is the job advertisement formulated in an open and broad manner (and not already tailored to certain people)?*
- *Is the job advertisement widely publicised?*
- *Is the job advertisement formulated in gender-neutral language?*
- *Is the opportunity of performing the job part-time or based on a job-sharing arrangement explicitly mentioned in the job advertisement?*
- *Is the advertisement also published on job sites/in databases specifically aimed at female academics and are potential female candidates encouraged to apply?*
- *Has it been clearly defined who gives what information to the candidates? Are the responsibilities, e.g. in the dean's office, clearly specified, so that one person performs administrative duties relating to recruitment procedures over an extended period and corresponding know-how can be acquired?*
- *Are candidates informed of the schedule of the procedure? Is there by any chance also an information sheet available to applicants?*

The following job sites/databases are aimed explicitly at female academics:

Femdat, the jobnetwork for women in academia
www.femdat.ch

Femconsult, the portal of recruitment for female scientists
www.gesis.org/cews/femconsult

Job advertisements: In addition to gender equitable language, it is important to avoid gender stereotypes when writing job advertisements. Studies show that women tend to regard requirements as mandatory and are therefore more cautious than men when it comes to applications. Cf.

Hentschel, Tanja; Horvath, Lisa K. (2015): Passende Talente ansprechen - Rekrutierung und Gestaltung von Stellenausschreibungen. In: Peus, Claudia; Braun, Susanne; Hentschel, Tanja; Frey, Dieter (Hg.): Personalauswahl in der Wissenschaft. Evidenzbasierte Methoden und Impulse für die Praxis. Berlin/Heidelberg, pp. 65-82.

The presence of women and female professors in particular on recruitment committees and as chairs is very important to female applicants. They often describe sitting opposite to only men in a job interview as a lasting impression. Corresponding minimum requirements relating to the composition of recruitment committees are now included in most tertiary institution acts and are specified in detail at tertiary level, but often inadequately in the form of non-binding provisions. Cf.

Färber, Christine (2006): Gleichstellungsorientiertes Qualitätsmanagement in Berufungsverfahren – Ergebnisse einer Studie zur Berufungspraxis in Deutschland. In: Wer sind die Besten? Chancengleichheit in Berufungsverfahren. Bern: Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, S. 33ff.

Composition of the Election Committee

Following the approval of the structural report by University Management, the faculty shall set up an Election Committee. The latter shall examine the applications in respect of the requirements specified beforehand.

As in the structural committee, at least one person of each gender must be represented in the recruitment committee. In addition, a representative of the OGE and a person of the faculty entrusted with gender equality and gender aspects is involved.

The chairperson of the committee shall not be a member of the subject area concerned.

If members of the commission have an employment relationship with each other, the circumstances shall be disclosed and substantiated.

(Recruitment Regulations, Art. 27)

- *Are the members of the Committee independent, i.e. are e.g. non-professorial teaching staff or student representatives not in a relationship of dependence on other Committee members?*
- *Are there female Committee members also at the level of professorships?*
- *Was the faculty member entrusted with equal opportunities and gender equality issues determined before the Election Committee's first meeting, in other words, during the structural phase?*

Selection procedure

In a multistage process, the Election Committee examines applications in respect of formal requirements and academic credentials, didactic suitability, managerial skills and other prerequisites.

Interruptions or reductions in employment due to maternity and family responsibilities must not discriminate against applicants. (Recruitment Regulations, Art. 31[3])

As many suitably qualified female candidates as possible shall be invited in areas in which women are underrepresented. (Gender Equality Regulations, Art. 8[1])

During the committee's work, the guidelines «Ausstand und Befangenheit in Anstellungsverfahren von Professorinnen und Professoren» about bias and abstention in recruitment committees must be followed.

a) First screening of applications

In a first step, the Election Committee views the applications and makes a shortlist of candidates. Depending on the professional culture, they will be asked to submit papers for assessment.

- Are the Committee members informed about the process stages (e.g. in the form of a sample process)?
- Do Committee members have access to a synopsis without prior ranking? (cf. appendix: synopsis)
- Are the criteria and indicators for assessing the applications and papers clearly defined, and was the weighting based on hard and soft criteria (cf. appendix: criteria for assessing applications)?
- Has it been considered that some seemingly objective criteria can come across as gender-specific?
- Are all applications examined individually in the first round?

The applicant's age is often listed in general overviews which are compiled about candidates and used as a selection criterion by recruitment committees. In this respect, a gender-based assessment of age is rarely made (such as a deduction in time spent at home looking after children). Instead of the candidate's age, their «academic age» and academically productive periods should be generally considered. Cf.

Färber, Christine (2006): Gleichstellungsorientiertes Qualitätsmanagement in Berufungsverfahren – Ergebnisse einer Studie zur Berufungspraxis in Deutschland. In: Wer sind die Besten? Chancengleichheit in Berufungsverfahren. Bern: Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, S. 40.

Where the topic of mobility is concerned, it has been shown that partnership, in particular the dual career situations, can make mobility more difficult or even impossible. Cf.

Dubach, Philipp. Iris Graf und Heidi Stutz (Büro BASS Bern) (2013): Doppelkarrierepaare an Schweizer Universitäten. Evaluation der 3. Phase des Bundesprogramms Chancengleichheit von Frau und Mann an Schweizer Universitäten (2008–2011/2012).

DORA Declaration:

The University of Bern has signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (the so-called DORA Declaration), calling on its employees to take its recommendations into account. Among other things, the DORA Declaration recommends that no journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, be used as a substitute for the assessment of the quality of individual publications of candidates in application procedures. Cf.

<https://sfdora.org/read/>

Also see the following on the topic of impact factors:

Osterloh, Margrit. Bruno Frey (2017):

Absurde Mess-Manie. Der fragwürdige Impact des Impact-Faktors. In: Forschung und Lehre 10/17.

www.forschung-und-lehre.de

- *Are any personal and/or professional relationships of Committee members with candidates disclosed (bias) and do biased Committee members leave the committee?*
- *Is the «academic age» considered in the assessment of suitability instead of the biological age? Are academically productive periods minus periods of bringing up and caring for children and relatives included in the evaluation?*
- *When assessing mobility requirements, are gender equality issues such as the reconciliation of work and family/partnership given due consideration (keyword mobility splitting)?*
- *Are the papers not above all assessed in terms of quantity, impact factor and journal rankings, but rather in terms of quality in particular?*
- *Are job-sharing applications assessed as openly and fairly as other applications?*

b) Reading the papers

In some departments (e.g. Humanities or Theology), a selection of candidates is asked to submit papers for assessment, on the basis of which the number of candidates is reduced even further.

- *Are candidates given clear information on the requirements relating to the papers to be submitted?*
- *Has the possibility been ruled out that Committee members could give a report on candidates' papers with whom they have personal or professional relationships?*
- *Are the papers discussed based on clearly defined criteria?*

c) Candidates' presentation and interview

Based on the Committee's interim assessment, a selection of candidates is invited to make a presentation and then discuss it with the Election Committee.

- *Are candidates given guidelines and information on the topic, structure, content, language, target group and level of complexity of the presentation and on what the interview will entail?*
- *Have the assessment criteria for the candidates' presentations been agreed by the Committee? (cf. appendix: assessment criteria for candidates' presentations)*
- *Are non-professorial teaching staff and students able to attend candidates' presentations?*
- *Does the interview follow a previously agreed structure which guarantees comparability of the interviews? (cf. appendix: structure of Committee interviews)*
- *Is the atmosphere during discussions objective, friendly and open?*
- *Are candidates asked about their contribution to equal opportunities at the University and to gender research in their department?*
- *Are either all candidates or none asked personal or family-related questions?*
- *Are candidates informed about the offer for partners (cf. topic Dual Career Couples)?*

Dual Career Couples:

At the University of Bern, partners of newly hired employees at postdoc level and above can take advantage of personal advice, coaching and assistance with job searches.

http://www.vereinbarkeit.unibe.ch/dual_career/index_eng.html

Studies have shown that answers to questions about the personal lives, partnerships or families of female candidates are weighted differently by recruitment committees than those of male candidates. Cf.

Färber, Christine. Ulrike Spangenberg (2008): Wie werden Professuren besetzt? Chancengleichheit in Berufungsverfahren. Frankfurt/New York: Campus, S. 220.

In order to assess social skills or key competencies, in some cases external HR consulting companies are engaged to perform group or individual assessments of candidates. As gender research on such employee assessments shows, they are often highly gendered. For instance, men's and women's ability to assert themselves or communication skills are subject to different connotations.

*Krell, Gertraude (2011):
Chancengleichheit durch Personalpolitik. Wiesbaden: Gabler.*

d) Assessments

In an international context, it is now common to engage external assessment companies to perform assessments of candidates. At the University of Bern, assessments are carried out in some faculties (above all Medicine and Veterinary Medicine), especially for professorships with a public service mandate.

- *Does the assessment give due consideration to gender equality issues such as the reconciliation of work and family/partnership?*
- *Did the faculty check to see if the engaged external company has expertise in gender issues?*

Consultation and list compilation

After the presentations and the Committee interviews, the Election Committee discusses and decides whether or not to include the individual candidates in the shortlist. Candidates are selected based on an overall assessment (academic track record, suitability for the position, performances in teaching, third-party funding, leadership and social skills, etc.). External comparative assessments are obtained on candidates who are considered capable of making the shortlist. On receipt of the assessments, the Election Committee compiles the final list and writes a report with an application for recruitment for the attention of the faculty and University Management.

Women are generally given preference over men if equally qualified. (Recruitment Regulations, Art. 31[5])

- *Are the criteria and their weighting called to mind?*
- *Are the exclusion criteria objective, understandable and transparent?*
- *Are female assessors also considered when it comes to awarding contracts for external assessments?*
- *Are the external assessors impartial?*
- *Are the assessors informed about the criteria to be considered?*
- *Is the Committee's report formulated in gender-neutral language?*

The requirements of University Management in respect of the Committee's report are available [here](#) under Point B2.

Good to know: Relief pool for professors with supervision duties and job sharing tandems:

In 2019, a relief pool was set up from which the faculties can apply for support for newly hired professors with family responsibilities or for newly hired job sharing tandems. Professors with family responsibilities can be exempted from a course for a maximum of two years; job-sharing tandems can increase their level of employment by 10 percent each during this period.

Legal bases

[Gesetz über die Universität \(UniG\)](#)

vom 5. September 1996 (in particular Art. 12)

[Verordnung über die Universität \(UniV\)](#)

vom 12. September 2012 (in particular Art. 60-78)

[Statut der Universität](#)

vom 7. Juni 2011 (in particular Art. 9 and Art. 34[2-3])

[Reglement über die Anstellung an der Universität Bern](#)

vom vom 25. Januar 2019

[Reglement für die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern](#)

vom 14. Dezember 1994

[Richtlinien betreffend Jobsharing für Professuren an der Universität Bern](#)

vom 29. Juni 2015

[Ausstand und Befangenheit in Anstellungsverfahren von Professorinnen und Professoren - Leitlinien](#)

vom 5. April 2016

[Leitlinien zur Ausrichtung von Beiträgen aus dem Entlastungspool für Professorinnen und Professoren und Jobsharing Tandems](#)

vom 4. Dezember 2018

The legal bases can be found here:

https://www.unibe.ch/universitaet/organisation/rechtliches/rechtssammlung/index_ger.html

APPENDIX

Example of synopsis

Personal details	Theses	Other publications	Main areas of research	Study/profession	Tertiary-level teaching	Third-party funding	Language, other (awards, etc.)
Muster, Adrian (m) * 1 January 1970 ∞, no children, Swiss	- Thesis: ... - Habilitation dissertation: ...	- Monograph: ... - Monograph: ... x editorships y essays		Degree to current posi- tion	Number and different types of lectures and presentations; possibly subject areas	Third-party funding by source and year; possibly amount	
Muster, Regula (f) * 1 January 1970 ∞, 2 children, German							

Example of criteria for assessing applications

1. Formal qualifications: Dissertation, habilitation or equivalent to habilitation
2. Research (quality, methodical reflection, innovation) in the main areas of x, y and z
3. Additional main areas of research
4. Teaching experience and tertiary-level teaching (scope of teaching, further training and teaching approach)
5. Other publications (quality and productivity)
6. Reception of research
7. Third-party funding secured
8. University self-government
9. Teamwork
10. Connection with the institute/the University of Bern
11. Gender: Gender of candidate and their experience in gender research
12. Academic age

Assessment of individual points:

3 = excellent

2 = clearly discernible

1 = partly discernible

0 = not discernible

Example of assessment criteria for candidates' presentations

Presentation

- Language, rhetoric
- Interaction with the audience
- Media, aids
- Adherence to time frame

Contents

- Introduction to topic
- Structure and planning
- Hypothesis, issue and topic
- Execution
- Result
- Plausibility
- Audience-friendliness

Group discussion

- Response to questions
- Form and content of answers
- Interaction between askers and candidates
- Interaction with the audience

Overall impression

Example of Committee interview procedures

Questions of the Committee

General interest

- Motivation for applying in Bern

Research

- current research priorities
- possible research projects and third-party funding

Teaching

- Teaching concept
- How highly the candidate values teaching

Subject of xy

- Understanding of the subject in the wider context
- Potential contribution to raising the faculty's profile
- Interdisciplinary skills
- Potential contribution to extending the faculty's international networks

Junior staff

- Concepts/ideas to support junior staff
- Concepts and ideas on the advancement of women

Self-government

- Experience in self-government of universities

Miscellaneous

- other applications
- Connection to Switzerland
- Place of residence, family situation, relocation to Bern

Information for applicants

- 1) Equipment
- 2) Salary
- 3) How to proceed

Applicant's questions for the Committee

Universität Bern
Abteilung für die Gleichstellung
von Frauen und Männern

Hochschulstrasse 6
CH-3012 Bern

+41 (0)31 631 39 32

info@afg.unibe.ch

www.gleichstellung.unibe.ch

Updated version, 2019