



Quality management at BFH

Version of 19 November 2025
acknowledged by the FHL

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This document explains BFH's quality management and includes the underlying quality principles, cultural guidelines, strategic objectives, structures and processes.

1 Model and principles

BFH sees itself as a **learning organisation** that strives for **high quality standards**. This aspiration characterises the university’s strategy, structure and culture as well as its teaching, continuing education, research, consulting services and operations.

Integrated quality management (QM, see Fig. 1) concerns all BFH members in a *whole institution approach* and forms the overarching framework for ensuring and continuously developing quality at BFH. The QM system is aligned with the BFH Strategy and supports the systematic implementation of its objectives and the sustainable positioning of the university. It comprises quality guidelines that form the basis for a shared quality culture (see Section 2), a quality strategy (see Section 3) and central structures and processes (see Section 4) for implementation. Implementation follows the process logic of the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle in QM.

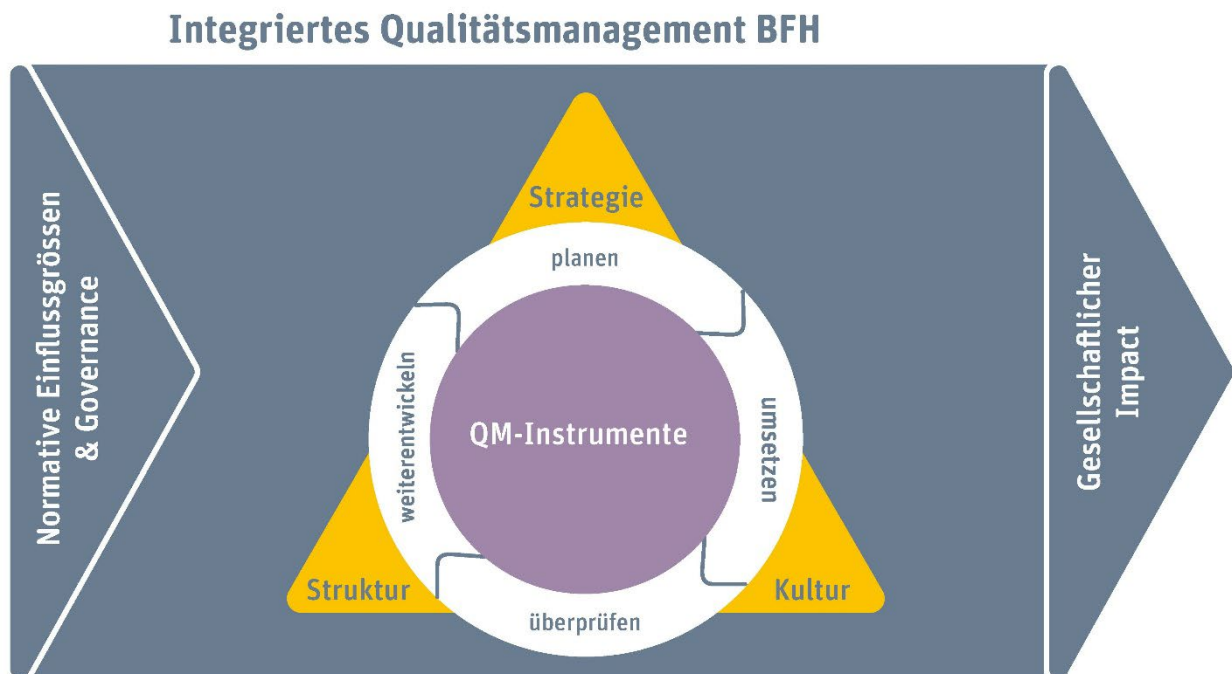


Fig. 1: Quality management at BFH

These are the main **normative influencing factors** that shape BFH’s QM and its constituent parts.

External:

- BFH 2025-2028 performance mandate from cantonal government
- Quality standards of the Accreditation Ordinance of the Higher Education Funding and Coordination Act (HEdA, 2015)
- Qualifications framework in Swiss Higher education (swissuniversities)
- Quality standards of the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015
- Quality principles of the European Quality Assurance (EUA), 2015

Internal:

- BFH Strategy 2023–26 and Guiding Principles
- Code of Conduct
- Diversity Strategy



- Concept BFH-Impact Model
- Personnel Policy
- Legal requirements (e.g. data protection)

2 Quality culture and guidelines

Quality is determined to a large extent by the attitude and daily actions of all BFH employees. The development of a proactively lived quality culture in an expert organisation is central to QM at BFH. The following quality guidelines shape this culture and create a common orientation framework for the university's understanding of quality and for individual and collective action.

The **culture of quality** lives from participation, responsibility and dialogue – it is a collaborative process in which excellence, willingness to learn and social impact are intertwined. On this basis, the six BFH Guiding Principles are translated into more concrete form by corresponding **quality guidelines**, which visualise how quality is lived out on a daily basis:

BFH Guiding Principle	Quality guideline
In the midst of society	Impact-driven: the purpose of the quality culture is to create added value for society and sustainable impact through our service areas.
Diverse and connective	Quality through participation and diversity of perspectives: an open quality culture thrives on diversity and multi-perspectivity. BFH systematically integrates the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders into its understanding of quality in order to further develop quality together.
Shaping and moving	Challenges, trends and continuous development: QM at BFH is dynamic and future-oriented. Processes and programmes are continuously evaluated, reflected upon and adapted. Future scenarios are developed, facilitating an evidence-based and proactive approach to change, innovations and new insights.
Responsible and enterprising	Commitment to high efficiency and quality: quality means using resources and results responsibly and creating efficient structures that offer broad scope for entrepreneurial thinking and bold action.
Anchored and interlinked	Alignment with standards, networking and benchmarking: BFH is firmly anchored in its region, in Switzerland and in international networks and aligns its understanding of quality with both national and international standards. It networks closely with industry and universities at home and abroad and utilises dialogue and benchmarking specifically to drive a process of continuous development.
Open and enabling	Lived quality culture, transparency and open dialogue: a constructive, appreciative feedback culture forms the foundation for quality-oriented learning and the further development of the organisation. Openness, dialogue and participation play a major role in BFH's understanding of quality.

3 Quality strategy

BFH formulates its quality strategy based on the quality guidelines. This strategy operationalises the quality guidelines (see Section 2.1) and is aligned to international standards (e.g. EUA quality principles) and the BFH Strategy. At the same time, it forms the basis for the sub-strategies a) teaching (education and continuing education), b) research and consulting services and c) operations (Services).

The quality strategy defines the objectives and fields of action of quality management at BFH, establishing the framework to make QM operationalisable, visible and verifiable, to continuously develop it further and to reinforce BFH's position as an attractive, future-oriented university of applied sciences.

BFH quality strategy

1. We consistently align our quality management with the BFH Strategy and recognised standards.

QM makes a measurable contribution to the implementation of the BFH Strategy and is an integral part of strategic management. We are guided by statutory requirements as well as national and international standards.

BFH's QM creates a binding framework that leaves room for schools and organisational units to determine their own subject-specific structures. Cooperation between centralised and decentralised QM strengthens our quality culture and drives forward the development of our institution.

2. By measuring ourselves against the best, we reinforce BFH's position as an innovative, high-profile and impact-driven university of applied sciences.

We make our performance and impact visible and develop quality through comparisons with good practices and, where available, relevant benchmarks. QM fosters innovation, distinction and social impact. We take into account the needs and perceptions of students, staff and external stakeholders.

3. We promote an active quality culture and a learning organisation.

We anchor the quality guidelines as principles that govern our attitude and behaviour and enable members of the university to reflect on and actively shape a quality culture. The pursuit of dialogue with respect to results, challenges and optimisation measures strengthens the shared understanding of quality. In this way, QM becomes the foundation for an organisation that is continuously learning.

4. We ensure transparency, comprehensibility and participation in all quality processes.

University members are fully involved in planning, implementation and surveys. The systematic use of feedback and evaluation tools ensures a closed-loop control between objectives and results. We consistently translate evaluation insights into improvements and promote closed PDCA cycles.

5. We make quality management efficient, digital and future-oriented.

We use digital and AI-supported tools to simplify processes, obtain management information and support fact-based decisions. Here, the quality of data and information is the key basis for dependable action. Where appropriate, we standardise processes, boost efficiency and create scope for innovation and entrepreneurial action.

According to the BFH Statute, **the President is responsible for the quality strategy** and reports regularly to the University Board on its results and developments. The Quality Development Office is responsible for developing and reviewing the quality strategy at the overall institutional level at BFH in



collaboration with the BFH Quality Officer and the Quality Development Committee. The heads of schools and the President's Office, consisting of the Vice-Presidents' Offices, the General Secretariat and Communications, and the Administrative Director, are responsible for the **operational implementation of the quality strategy**. To discuss the progress made in achieving the objectives and thus in quality development, and to prioritise areas requiring action, the President holds annual strategy meetings with the Quality Development Office, the Vice-President Teaching and the Vice-President Research, all heads of schools and the Administrative Director. This ensures that QM remains permanently anchored, strategically managed and institutionally effective.

4 Quality structures and processes

The quality management system comprises BFH structures and processes that ensure that quality is not created by chance, but is systematically organised and developed through clear responsibilities, coordinated processes and targeted resource planning.

An important orientation framework for QM is the **EFQM model**, which BFH has adapted to suit university-specific requirements and deploys for specific purposes. The model combines strategic orientation, clear structures and a lived quality culture and fosters a systematic approach to continuous improvement. For operational implementation, all QM tools for planning, ensuring and developing quality are further developed along the **PDCA process logic**:

- **Plan:** BFH plans its QM on the basis of relevant principles, taking into account the available resources and the measures taken.
- **Do:** quality objectives and measures are concretised and formulated as concepts, implemented and integrated. Clear responsibilities, resource management and process-oriented action ensure targeted implementation in all service and support areas.
- **Check:** the achievement of objectives is regularly and systematically reviewed in order to ensure transparency and create a sound basis for decision-making.
- **Act:** the findings from the review are concretised as measures to drive forward the further development of BFH in a systematic, impact-oriented manner.

4.1 Quality structures

The Quality Development Office works on behalf of the President to fulfil the mandate that regulates its tasks and competencies in collaboration with the committee composed of representatives of the schools. For the **operational implementation of QM**, key objectives and measures are derived, operationalised and integrated into a rolling milestone plan for the implementation of strategic measures in the Quality Development Office. This is done in consultation with the BFH Quality Officer. The Quality Development Committee – made up of the quality officers from the individual schools and units – supports this process. The quality officers build the QM in their organisational units in accordance with the framework conditions of this concept and any other guidelines issued by the University Executive Board. University members have an appropriate say in fundamental QM issues via the official participatory body, the University Assembly, and are involved in operational implementation as needed.

4.2 Quality processes

Process management ensures that quality-relevant processes are described transparently, regularly reviewed and continuously improved. The management, core and support processes are recorded in a process map and provide BFH with a clear, university-wide structure. Responsibility lies with the Quality Development Office, which provides for a coordinated further development process in line with the strategic goals. The purpose and standards are defined in BFH's understanding of the process and link the process organisation with continuous ongoing development.

4.3 QM tools

Various activities and tools (e.g. surveys, key figures, databases, strategy discussions) are used to create a broad data foundation for QM. This ensures that the desired outcomes described in the BFH impact model can be systematically evaluated and improved. It takes place both ex ante (in advance, impact-oriented concept) and ex post (in retrospect, impact-oriented implementation).

The most important **tools and data collections** are listed along the service areas a) teaching (education and continuing education), b) research and consulting services and c) operations (Services) (see Fig. 2). Many QM tools are managed centrally and implemented throughout BFH. Benchmarking takes place both in the service areas (e.g. in the graduate survey, the evaluation of consulting services and HR controlling) and in central activities (e.g. in the Controlling Cockpit and in the Staff Survey).

Aktivitäten des integrierten QM



Fig. 2: Overview of the most important QM tools at BFH