



Bern University  
of Applied Sciences

# Code of Conduct

## Code of Conduct of Bern University of Applied Sciences

Adopted by the University Board on 16 August 2022

2 With this Code of Conduct, members of the BFH<sup>1</sup> mutually commit to an appreciative, respectful and honest behaviour towards each other and towards the public. The Code of Conduct is based on the BFH Guiding Principles and is supported by a basic humanistic understanding. It was elaborated as part of a broad participatory process involving all members of the university. Valid for all members of the BFH in the performance of their duties at the university, it documents the behaviour they have a right to expect of each other.

## What we expect of each other

### Cooperation

We foster a university culture characterised by constructive, solution-oriented, and professional collaboration, as well as an error and feedback culture lived out in practice. A partnership attitude, the active participation and involvement of everyone, and a culture of sharing are important pillars of our cooperation. We encourage critical thinking, empathy and respect. We strengthen and are open to the new, overcome our prejudices and take responsibility for an open and fair culture of collaboration. Our behaviour is always respectful, even in the event of differences of opinion and conflicts.

### Responsibility

We reflect our actions and take responsibility for the consequences. We are conscious of our role-model function. Together we create conditions that allow us to enjoy individual freedoms insofar as they are in the interest of the whole and are consistent with comparable freedoms for all. We provide equal opportunities for all, while emphasising self-care and care for others. In the event of conflicts of interest and personal bias, we commit to the fullest possible transparency.

### Communication

We foster an attitude of mutual appreciation in our interactions and aspire to honest, benevolent communication that does not hurt or exclude anyone. A culture of trust and an openness to constructive criticism form the basis of our daily work and ongoing development. We welcome the diversity of our language communities and consider it enriching. We strive to understand and be understood. In public and in the political context, statements we make are supported by professional expertise. Private expressions of opinion are clearly indicated as such.

<sup>1</sup> Staff and students

## Diversity and inclusion

We attach importance to a reflective, respectful attitude in dealing with common ground and differences. We recognise, respect, and reinforce the personal uniqueness and integrity of all members of the university. We create conditions that are conducive to inclusion and ensure a climate in which open-minded and constructive interaction becomes natural. We value the diversity of perspectives in our teams and understand diversity as a key resource. We require and foster awareness of the many facets of diversity.

## Sustainability

With our activities in teaching, research and further education as well as in university operations, we promote the careful use of resources and contribute actively to sustainable development as described in the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup>. We address current social challenges individually and collectively, undertake initiatives to promote a sustainable society and encourage each other to behave sustainably.

## Scientific integrity

We undertake to adhere to the rules of good scientific practice in teaching, research and continuing education. We stand for freedom of research, transparency and openness, as well as social responsibility. We draw a clear distinction between our own work and that of others, and any use of third-party intellectual property is in compliance with the relevant standards. We consistently apply the guidelines regarding the handling of plagiarism at BFH. When conducting research on humans or with animals, we follow professional ethical standards and comply with the relevant standards and rules.

## Handling of information and protection of privacy

We recognise the value of information in today's information society and undertake to adequately safeguard information we store against abuse or theft. This also applies to information and personal data entrusted to us by third parties. We acquire the necessary data expertise and follow the legal requirements as well as internal guidelines, concepts and directives on data protection and information security.

<sup>2</sup> The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are political objectives set by the United Nations (UN) to ensure sustainable development at the economic, social and environmental level worldwide: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

## What we do not tolerate

### Discrimination

We do not tolerate any statements or actions that seek to disadvantage or degrade the dignity of a person, in particular on the basis of their gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, racial attribution, origin, skin colour, language, social position, professional status, educational status, way of life, religious, ideological or political convictions, or a physical, mental or psychological disability.

4

### Sexual harassment

We do not tolerate sexual harassment, sexist behaviour or sexualised discrimination. Sexual harassment is any conduct with a sexual connotation that is unwanted by the recipient and that degrades people on the basis of their sex. This includes lewd, humiliating or contemptuous remarks and actions, the display and distribution of pornographic material, and unwanted physical contact or the exploitation of a relationship of dependency.

### Workplace bullying

We do not tolerate behaviour that systematically demeans and isolates individuals or is intended to force them to quit their job or their studies. This includes deliberate degradation, ostracism, refusal to disclose information, abusive accusations or unjustified criticism.

### Threats and violence

We do not tolerate any behaviour that causes psychological or physical harm to others. This includes verbal or non-verbal slights, humiliation, insults, threats, physical attacks or the deliberate and persistent harassment of a person (« stalking »).

### Corruption

We do not tolerate bribery, acceptance of benefits or other forms of corruption.

# How the Code of Conduct is implemented

## Support and advice

Members of the BFH who are affected by or observe non-tolerable behaviour, or are themselves unclear about the integrity of their own behaviour, may have recourse to internal and external support, counselling and procedures.

## Measures and sanctions

Members of the BFH who violate the Code of Conduct or display intolerable behaviour may be subject to disciplinary measures and, in serious cases, legal action.<sup>3</sup>

The implementation of the Code of Conduct is the joint, shared responsibility of all BFH staff. The BFH ensures that all employees familiarise themselves with the relevant regulations and supports them in implementing the Code of Conduct.

<sup>3</sup> This Code of Conduct provides general orientation. In case of doubt, the wording of the relevant statutory provisions and regulations as well as BFH-wide procedural rules shall prevail.





## **Bern University of Applied Sciences**

Falkenplatz 24  
3012 Bern

[rektorat@bfh.ch](mailto:rektorat@bfh.ch)  
[bfh.ch/en](https://bfh.ch/en)