

# Welcome to the University of Bern

Information for New Employees of the University of Bern  
[www.personal.unibe.ch](http://www.personal.unibe.ch)



## Dear New Member of Staff

We are pleased to welcome you as a new member of staff at the University of Bern and very much look forward to working together.

The University of Berne is one of ten cantonal universities in Switzerland. The university has approximately 17,400 students and employs over 6,900 people in around 160 departments and clinics. It is one of the largest employers in the Canton of Berne.

The central objective of the University of Berne is to offer the highest quality in teaching, research and services. In an international market place Berne strives to position itself as a highly attractive place of education. A key factor in its success lies in the university's well qualified and motivated staff.

The aim of this overview is to give you a brief summary of the most important information concerning your employment, as well as your obligations and duties as an employee. Further information can be found on the homepage of the university's human resources department ([www.pers.unibe.ch](http://www.pers.unibe.ch)). In addition, both the staff in the secretariat of your department and the human resources department are willing and able to answer your questions.

We wish you a successful and enjoyable start at the university.

The Personnel Department

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## Introductory event for new employees

The introductory event "University of Bern at a Glance" is held twice a year for new administrative staff members and employees in research and teaching. The purpose of the event is to introduce you to the University of Bern and provide key information about the facilities and services on offer. You will also have the opportunity to meet and connect with other new staff members. More details and dates are available [here](#).

## Employee Mission Statement

The University of Bern strives to promote a better balance between work/studies and family/private life. The following websites provide key information on work-life balance at the University of Bern, including useful tips and contact points.

[Balancing career and family at the University of Bern](#)

[Flyer "Balancing career and family at the University of Bern" \(in German\)](#)

## Work-Life Balance

The University of Bern strives to promote a better balance between work/studies and family/private life. The following websites provide key information on work-life balance at the University of Bern, including useful tips and contact points.

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## Employment

### Period of Employment

Employment is either temporary or permanent. For employees in qualification functions and for assistant professors the maximum period of employment is as defined in the University Ordinance.

### Probationary period

Employees are normally given a probationary period. This lasts for a maximum of six months and as a rule cannot be prolonged. Notice of termination can be given in writing during the first month, either by the employee or by the university as employer, with a 7 day period of notice. During the remainder of the probationary period, one month's notice from the end of a month can be given. If no notice is given during the probationary period, the contract of employment becomes binding.

### Job description

A job description containing the employee's duties, skills and responsibilities will be made available by the line-manager.

### Termination of employment

Either the employee or the university as employer can terminate the contract of employment with a 3 month period of notice from the end of a month (exceptions which are applicable to teaching staff can be found on the homepage of the human resources department). If both parties agree, shorter periods of notice are possible. Notice must be given in writing.

Should important reasons apply, a contract of employment may be terminated by both parties without notice.

### Protection against dismissal

After completion of the probationary period the university may not terminate a contract of employment in the following circumstances

- during military, civil or civil protection duties (providing the duty lasts longer than 12 days) in the 4 weeks preceding and following
- during a period of full or partial inability to work due to sickness or accident, namely for a period of 60 days between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year of employment; between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> year of employment for a period of 150 days; and from the 10<sup>th</sup> year of employment for a period of 180 days from the start of the inability to work
- during a period of assistance abroad directed by the relevant government department and approved by the university
- during pregnancy and in the 10 weeks following the birth

### Retirement

Retirement due to reaching pensionable age commences at the latest by the end of the month in which the employee reaches the age of 65 years.

## Working hours

### Normal working hours

Working hours in the case of persons with 100% employment amount to 42 hours per week or 8 hours 24 minutes per day.

### Record of hours worked / annual record of hours worked

All members of staff are required to keep a written or electronic record of hours worked, with the exception of the personnel categories listed below. The human resources department provides an excel table for this purpose. The record is based on the model 'annual record of hours worked', see the [University of Bern's regulations on annual record of hours worked](#) (in German).

### Waiver of record of hours worked

Categories of staff not required to keep a record of hours worked are the following: teaching staff, senior assistants, doctoral students, medical doctors, and as a rule academic assistants. All employees are required to keep a written or electronic cumulative annual record of free days taken in respect of leave, absences due to military, civil or civil protection duties, illness, accident or holiday, offset against their annual leave entitlement.

### Breaks

Employees are entitled to take a 15 minute break both in the morning and afternoon. The breaks count as work time but are to be taken at a time convenient to the functioning of the department. The employee's lunch break should last at least 30 minutes.

### Night-Time and weekend work

As a rule working hours take place from Monday to Friday. Work undertaken voluntarily at weekends or on public holidays is to be compensated by equivalent free time taken in the same calendar year. In exceptional circumstances managers can request employees to work at night-time and weekends. Employees are then entitled to financial compensation. Details can be found on the homepage of the human resources department. Night-time and weekend work, when required, is defined as at the following times:

- between 20.00 und 06.00 a.m.
- Saturdays between mid-day and 8 p.m.
- Sundays and public holidays between 6 a.m and 8 p.m.

### On-call duty

On-call or stand-by duties may be required, as determined by the duty rota. On-call and stand-by time are administered and compensated separately.



## Remuneration

### Determination of salary

Each function, assessed on the value of work provided, is assigned to a salary classification from 1 to 30. Individual remuneration is determined on the basis of previous employment and experience on an increment scale of 1 to 80 (plus 6 entry levels). The Swiss National Fund determines its own scale of remuneration for those positions it finances.

Doctoral candidates and postdocs receive a flat rate salary.

### Salary increments

A salary increase within a salary classification is determined by a scale of salary increments. It is dependent on individual performance and conduct and is based on the formal employee performance appraisal. A salary increase is not automatic. The governing council (*Regierungsrat*) stipulates a general salary level increase, within the constraints of the resources available, for functions without performance appraisals.

### 13<sup>th</sup> paid month

A salary for a 13<sup>th</sup> month is paid half in June and half in December. If employment is commenced or terminated during the course of the year, the employee is entitled to a proportionate payment of the 13<sup>th</sup> month's salary.

### Social allowances

Social allowances consist of family and child care allowances. These are paid in 12 monthly instalments. If the basis for entitlement to social allowances changes or ceases, the human resources department must be notified immediately. Current regulations determining social allowances can be found on the homepage of the human resources department.

### Family allowance

Employees with children are entitled to receive family allowances. A child allowance of 230 CHF per month is payable for children up to the age of 16, and an educational allowance of 290 CHF per month after the age of 16 until completion of the child's education; however payment ceases when the child reaches the age of 25. If a child is unable to work, child allowance is payable until the child reaches the age of 20. Family allowances are paid in full, irrespective of level of employment.

### Childcare allowance

If an employee is entitled to at least one family allowance, then a childcare allowance is also payable. This is calculated according to the number of children eligible: 250 CHF per month for 1 child and an employment level of 100%; 180 CHF per month for 2 children; 110 CHF for 3 children and 40 CHF for 4 children. In the case of more than 4 children, no childcare allowance is payable. Childcare allowances are adjusted according to level of employment.

## **Loyalty premium**

Employees are eligible for a loyalty premium after 10 years of service, and every 5 years of service thereafter. This consists of paid leave amounting to 11 working days. The loyalty premium can also be paid out in whole or part as respective salary (without social allowances).

## **Social and cultural contribution**

An amount of 1% of gross salary is deducted from employees for social and cultural purposes and for university sports.

# **Public Holidays, Holiday and Leave entitlement**

## **Public holidays**

The following days are work-free public holidays:

- 1<sup>st</sup> und 2<sup>nd</sup> January
- Good Friday and Easter Monday
- Ascension Day, Whit Monday
- 1<sup>st</sup> August
- 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> December
- Afternoon of 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> December

Entitlement for part-time employees is adjusted according to their level of employment.

## **Holiday entitlement**

Employees have the following holiday entitlement per calendar year:

- 32 working days for trainees
- 28 working days up to and including the calendar year in which they become 20
- 25 working days up to and including the calendar year in which they become 49
- 28 working days from the beginning of the calendar year in which they become 50
- 33 working days from the beginning of the calendar year in which they become 60

For employees in salary classification 19 and above, the age limit is set 5 years earlier. Entitlement for part-time employees is adjusted according to their level of employment. There is no holiday entitlement during a period of unpaid leave.



**Work-free days**

A minimum of 20 days off must be taken each calendar year; either by virtue of holiday leave entitlement (at least 10 days must be taken per year) or from accrued time calculated on the basis of annual working time.

If the entitled days off have not been fully taken (at least 10 days of the holiday leave balance, at least 20 days in total), the insufficiently used days shall expire without compensation at the expense of the holiday leave entitlement per the end of the calendar year concerned.

Should holiday entitlement remain unused, over and above that stipulated in the previous paragraph, this is transferred to the long-term working time account. Further details about the long-term working time account can be found on the human resources department's homepage.

Holiday is to be taken in consultation with the director of the department. Where possible the wishes of the employee are to be taken into account. Holiday is to be taken only if it is not detrimental to the functioning of the department, deputizing costs are avoided and where possible, the purpose of relaxation and recreation of the employee is maintained (unbroken period of holiday).

The director of the department seeks to ensure that employees take full advantage of their holiday leave each calendar year. Furthermore, the workload of employees is to be organised in such a manner that no excessive time balances are accrued. To the greatest extent possible, the creation of long-term working time accounts is to be avoided.

**Curtailment of holiday**

In such cases where the employee does not work for more than two months during a calendar year, holiday entitlement is calculated proportionately to the period of time worked. In any case, holiday entitlement remains at a minimum of 50%. In the case of military, civil protection or civil duties, calculation of holiday curtailment is based only on periods of absence that exceed one month.

**Sickness or accident preceding holiday**

Should sickness or accident prevent an employee taking planned holiday, then the employee is entitled to postpone the holiday. The employee is required to provide a doctor's certificate as evidence.

**Sickness or accident during holiday**

Should sickness or accident prevent an employee taking planned holiday, then the employee is entitled to postpone the holiday. The employee is required to provide a doctor's certificate as evidence.

<b>Leave</b>	Leave is defined as either paid or unpaid absence from work, agreed to upon application.
<b>Paid leave</b>	<p>Departments can authorise short periods of paid leave as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— up to 4 working days due to illness or death of a close relative</li> <li>— up to 2 working days for own wedding, registration of partnership for same-sex couples or change of residence</li> <li>— up to 2 working days for participation in a meeting of delegates of an association of government personnel</li> <li>— up to 3 working days for members of a government executive committee (board member)</li> <li>— 1 hour for a doctor's or dentist's appointment. Required time may also be granted for lengthier medical appointments.</li> </ul> <p>A maximum of 6 working days are granted per calendar year.</p>
<b>Maternity leave</b>	The employee has a right to maternity leave of 16 weeks. Salary payment is calculated on the basis of 100% of the average level of employment over the 5 months immediately preceding commencement of maternity leave. Maternity leave commences at the latest on the day of the child's birth and at the earliest 2 weeks prior to the anticipated birth date. Following the birth or adoption of a child, both female and male employees have the right upon request to unpaid leave of up to 6 months, provided this is not detrimental to the functioning of the department.
<b>Paternity leave</b>	Fathers are entitled to 10 working days' paid paternity leave on the birth of their own child.
<b>Adoption leave</b>	In the case of adoption of a child, employees are entitled to 10 working days' paid leave.

## Military, Civil Protection or Civil Duties

<b>Notification requirement</b>	Any military, civil protection or civil duties must be notified to the department and the human resources department in advance. Further information and forms are available on the homepage of the human resources department.
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## Sickness and Accident

### Notification requirement

Any military, civil protection or civil duties must be notified to the department and the human resources department in advance. Further information and forms are available on the homepage of the human resources department.

### Continuation of remuneration

Employees (excluding trainees): Remuneration will continue to be paid as a result of illness or accident as follows: 100% in the first year of illness and 90% in the second year. Trainees: For each year worked and for the current training year: one month.

If an employee is only partly unable to work, the entitlement to continuation of remuneration is extended in relation to the time worked for a maximum of one further year. If an employee's contract is temporary or under notice, then the entitlement exists only for that length of time. In the case of a temporary contract there exists the possibility once employment is terminated to continue the daily sickness allowance insurance as an individual insurance.

### Daily sickness allowance insurance

The canton provides for its employees a daily sickness allowance insurance and contributes 50% of the premium. Further information can be found under 'Information about the daily sickness allowance insurance' on the internet site of the Office of Personnel (*Personalamtes*) under the following:

[„Anstellungsbedingungen / Versicherungen / Krankentaggeld“ \(in German\)](#).

Agreements exist with the following companies for supplementary insurances:

- VISANA ([www.visana.ch](http://www.visana.ch))  
Geschäftsstelle Bern, Laupenstr. 3, 3001 Bern
- KPT ([www.kpt.ch](http://www.kpt.ch))  
Members of BSVP (*Bernischen Staatspersonalverbands*) and their families are eligible for a reduction in premium for hospital insurance. Interested parties should contact the secretariat of the BSPV ([www.bspv.ch](http://www.bspv.ch)).

### Accident insurance

Canton employees are insured against accident in accordance with the Accident Insurance Law (UVG). The canton pays the full premium for occupational accident insurance, in addition to 50% of the premium for non-occupational accident insurance and the UVG supplementary insurance. Further information is available in the Canton of Berne's Accident Insurance leaflet which can be obtained from your human resources department or on the internet site of the Office of Personnel (*Personalamtes*) under the following: [„Anstellungsbedingungen / Versicherungen / Unfall“ \(in German\)](#).

## Employer's liability insurance

Employees are insured against damage they cause to third parties during the course of their work. Special conditions apply to the medical profession and to the field of clinical trials involving volunteers. The Risk Management Office of the University of Bern coordinates all insurance-related matters of the University of Bern with the insurance management of the Canton of Bern. Detailed information (including responsibilities, contact details, information sheets, etc.) is available in the Insurance Management section of the Risk Management Office.

## Pension Fund

### **Bernese Pension Fund (BPK)**

The Bernese Pension Fund ([www.bpk.ch](http://www.bpk.ch)) is a compulsory pension fund which insures canton employees against the economic consequences of old age, death and invalidity.

### **Compulsory membership**

Membership is compulsory for employees over the age of 17 whose remuneration exceeds the minimum amount laid down in the BVG. Other employees can join the Fund should they wish, provided their average level of employment is at least 20%. In this respect, the law governing the Bern Pension Fund of 1 January 2015 (Gesetz vom 1. Januar über die BPK) and the pension plan regulations (Vorsorgereglement BPK) apply.

### **Exceptions to compulsory membership**

Employees not included in the Bern Pension Fund (BPK) are those:

- in a temporary work contract of a maximum of 3 months
- whose chief work category is classified as self-employed
- as a rule, employees who, within the meaning of the Federal Law on Disability Insurance (IVG), are disabled to at least 70% shall not be accepted in the Bern Pension Fund (BPK)
- who are not permanently employed in Switzerland and have adequate insurance abroad (upon application to BPK)
- over 50 years of age and who are insured by an alternative registered pension fund (upon application to BPK)

### **Entry benefits**

Information relating to transferable accumulated benefits from the previous employer should be passed on to the BPK. Based on this the BPK will then make available to the new employee a questionnaire, a joining proposal, as well as the pension fund's conditions and regulations.

**Vested benefits**

An insured person who leaves the BPK before his/her pension is due, is entitled to a vested benefit. The relevant form is available on the homepage of the human resources department. The BPK will transfer the accrued benefit to the pension fund of the new employer or will set up an appropriate policy or savings account for vested pension benefits. If so wished the accrued benefit can also be paid out should the employee:

- leave Switzerland permanently
- commence self-employment and no longer be subject to compulsory insurance according to the BVG
- have an entitlement amounting to less than one year's contribution

**Assistant physicians**

Assistant physicians may take out an alternative BVG registered occupational insurance provided individual entry is available. The switch to BPK must occur on assuming a leading position (senior physician I) or at the very latest after ten years.

**Continuing Education**

The university encourages and supports the continuing education and training of its employees. In the case of continuing education to the benefit of the department, the department can make a financial contribution. However, usually no contribution will be made for employees whose contract runs for one year or less.

**In-house training**

The cantonal administration and the university offer courses in various subject areas. The current programme is available on the homepage of the human resources department.

**External training**

External training to the benefit of the department can be supported by financial contribution and/or through the granting of paid or unpaid leave. Continuing education and training is to the benefit of the university if it enables the employee to carry out their duties faster, more comprehensively and effectively or when an employee requires additional skills to take on new duties. Cantonal support for part-time employees is adjusted according to level of employment.

## Repayment of training costs

If the costs exceed CHF 3,000 or paid leave is longer than 10 days, the employee is required in advance of the training to agree in writing to repay the

costs. Applications, with reasons and approved by the department, are to be submitted to the human resources department for authorisation. Repayment is to be made when the employee breaks off the training for private reasons or terminates employment. Training costs over CHF 3,000 and net salary from the 11<sup>th</sup> day of leave are to be repaid according to the following formula:

- 100% in the case of prematurely breaking off the training
- 100% if the employee leaves during the training or during the first year following its completion
- two thirds if the employee leaves during the second year following completion of the training, and one third during the third year following completion of the training.

## Secondary Employment and Carrying Out of Official Duties

In accordance with the law governing personnel of the Canton of Bern, the employees of the University of Bern are, in principle, permitted to carry out other duties, such as official duties and secondary employment, however, provided that

- such duties do not adversely affect their professional duties;
- the official duty or secondary employment is compatible with their professional position;
- there is no conflict of interests;
- and the employee is not constantly and substantially absorbed by such other duties.

As with all activities outside of the employee's professional duties, secondary employment or official duties are, whenever possible, to be carried out during the employee's free time.

Employees pursuing paid secondary employment or performing official duties are obliged to inform the head of their department or institution. Any secondary employment that impinges on work time requires authorisation. Scientific staff members are subject to the provisions stipulated in the regulations governing secondary employment at the University of Bern (*"Richtlinien Nebentätigkeiten an der Universität Bern"*).

## Rights and Obligations

<b>Staff performance appraisal</b>	This takes place periodically between the line manager and the employee. Duties, skills and responsibilities are appraised, as well as aptitude, performance and conduct. If no performance appraisal takes place within a year, this can be requested.
<b>Employer's Reference</b>	An employer's reference can be requested at any time. This gives information on the nature and length of the employment as well as performance and conduct of the employee. If so requested the reference can be restricted to the nature and length of the employment only.
<b>Compensation for damages</b>	Should an employee suffer damage to uninsured property without gross negligence whilst carrying out professional duties, the department should compensate the damage in full or in part, upon application.
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Employees are obliged to remain silent regarding information acquired during work duties that by its nature or according to specific instructions should be treated as confidential. This obligation remains even after employment is terminated.
<b>Personnel / data protection</b>	Employees and their activities are subject to the cantonal data protection law.
<b>Use of IT resources</b>	All employees are subject to the University of Bern's instructions relating to the use of its IT resources. The relevant regulations, decisions and directives concerning the use and handling of IT resources of the University of Bern are available here: <a href="#">Directives / Decisions (Legal Collection / in German)</a> .
<b>Acceptance of gifts</b>	Employees are forbidden to accept gifts or other favours on behalf of themselves or third parties that are associated with or could be associated with their professional position. Exceptions are small tokens with little monetary value. Those who accept gifts or bribes will be liable to prosecution.



## Conflict and Harassment in the Workplace

### **Bullying, sexual harassment in the workplace**

The Executive Board of the University of Bern is committed to providing an environment free of any kind of discrimination. It does not tolerate bullying and combats all forms of sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination. The Executive Board has designated contact persons to whom those affected can turn. More details are available on the following websites:

[respekt.unibe.ch](https://respekt.unibe.ch)

[Information letter regarding protection from sexual harassment \(in German\)](#)

## Campus Account

### **What is campus account?**

A campus account is an electronic account that gives the students and employees of the University of Bern access to all campus-account-enabled applications using a single username and password.

### **How to get a campus account?**

University employees receive their campus account through a request submitted by the relevant account manager of the respective user group.

### **Useful links**

[Campus Account \(password, activation\)](#)

[Campus Account \(flyer\)](#)

## UNICARD

### **What is a UNICARD?**

A UNICARD is an electronic ID card in credit card format issued by the University of Bern. It serves as a student card for students and as a staff identity card for university employees.

### **Use of the UNICARD**

As well as serving as a means of identification, the UNICARD can also be used as a library card, a means of payment or an access badge.

### **How do employees get their UNICARD?**

New employees will be requested by way of a personal registration sheet to send in a photograph. In the event that a card is not yet available, it will be issued on completion of the employment formalities. The UNICARD will be sent to the head of secretariat of the respective institute, for forwarding to the

employee. Before use, the UNICARD must be signed and validated at a UNICARD validation terminal. The currently valid employment data will be printed on the UNICARD during validation.

#### Useful links

[unicard.unibe.ch](https://unicard.unibe.ch)

[UNICARD locations and UNIPRINT infrastructure](#)

## Legal Collection, Guidelines

The University of Bern is a public law entity with its own legal personality. The [Legal Collection](#) contains the legal bases of the University of Bern, as well as regulations and directives of the university and the canton in the following areas: university organisation, studies, HR, operations and quality.

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