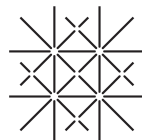


# Quality Strategy 2014–2017



## Quality Culture

At the University of Basel, quality in teaching, research and service provision is assured and developed based on the concept of a lived **quality culture**. For the University, a “quality culture” involves continually reflecting on targets, procedures and implementation as well as regularly examining and evaluating the results in these three areas.

A quality culture is chosen based on the understanding that the University is an organization run by **people** who teach and research independently, but who can only fulfill the University’s social mandate by joining together and receiving support through appropriate **governance**. Therefore, the success of a university depends on the promotion of creativity and innovative strengths across all units. However, constant reflection is also required so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified and steps can be specifically initiated to strengthen strengths and eliminate weaknesses. This continuous reflection is assured at all levels of the University through a coordinated interplay of **processes**, governing committees and instruments that is explicitly defined and clearly communicated. As an institution, the University serves the interests of the general public and respects the dignity of mankind and creatures alike. The University Management is ultimately responsible for monitoring quality culture across all units in terms of the aims and mandate of the University as a whole.

This Quality Strategy 2014–2017 is based on the University’s **Strategy 2014**. It illustrates the measures with which the University aims to achieve the qualitative targets of Strategy 2014 by 2017. The relevant implementation steps will be further developed in mid-2014 and presented in the form of a schedule.

# Principles

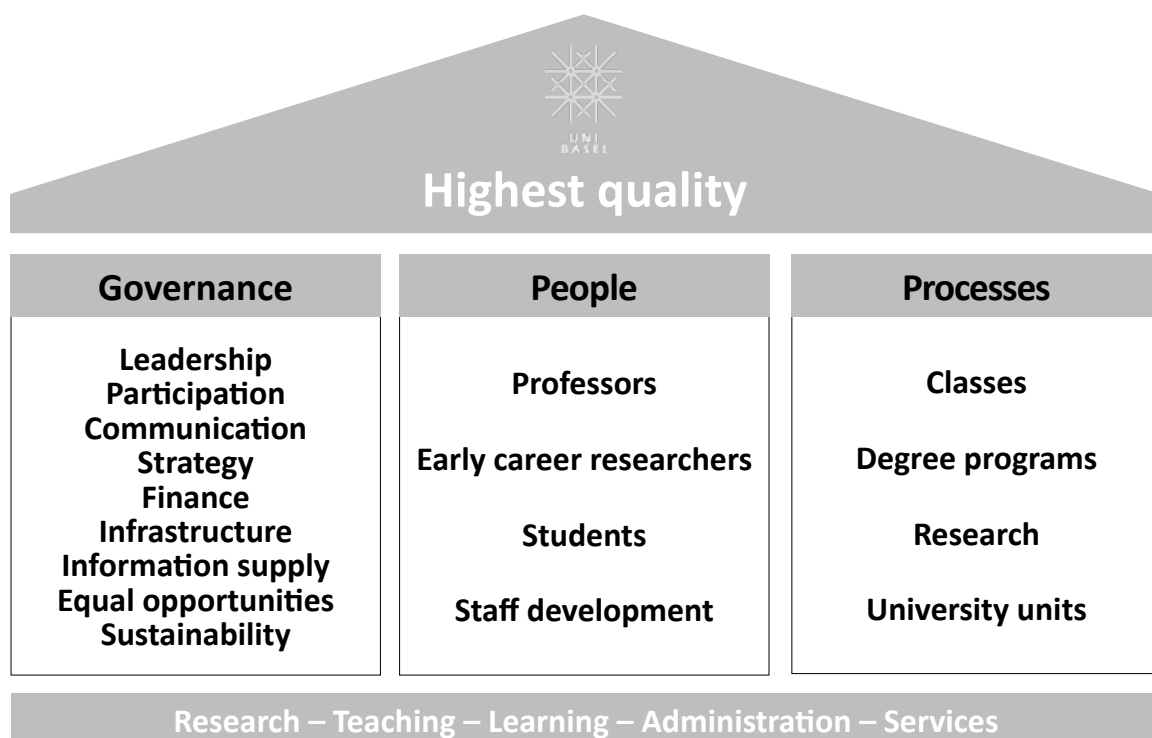
The quality culture of the University of Basel is defined by the following five principles:

- > **Objective: Highest quality in individual and institutional processes**  
The primary focus is on university-wide pursuit of quality, in which research, teaching, learning, administration and service provision are always performed and developed with the greatest individual and institutional professionalism.
- > **Route: Targets, planning, implementation, examination and assessment**  
To achieve this objective, targets must be defined, courses of action developed, the intended results realized and the outcomes examined and evaluated.
- > **Procedure: Competencies through learning and exchange**  
The essential factor here is to establish individual and institutional competencies at all levels – coupled with the participation of the relevant parties – through continuous learning and exchange among the stakeholders.
- > **Standard: International standard of processes**  
The University orients itself toward leading international institutions through benchmarking and collaboration.
- > **Special attention: Equal opportunities and sustainability**  
Particular attention is paid to equal opportunities and sustainability.

## Model

The principles of the quality culture are illustrated in the following model. They cover three areas:

- 1 **Governance:** Leadership, co-determination, communication, strategy, finance, infrastructure, provision of information, equal opportunities and sustainability
- 2 **People:** Professors, early career researchers, students, staff development
- 3 **Processes:** Classes, degree programs, research and University units



# 1 Governance

## Leadership

### *Key statements*

- > The University collects quantitative and qualitative information that is important for managing the University.
- > It has a quality-based funding allocation concept.

### *Implementation steps*

- > The Rectorate and Faculties are to strengthen the collection of quantitative and qualitative information so that they are able to use a greater variety of data as well as survey results.

## Participation

### *Key statements*

- > Faculty Management directly influences the management of the University through their development and structural plans and regular strategy meetings.
- > The participation of the University members and University unit managers in the quality processes is guaranteed.

### *Implementation steps*

- > The University shall transform the existing Quality Development Steering Committee (SAQE) into a Senate committee.

## Communication

### *Key statements*

- > The quality processes at the University are made known to the staff and students.
- > The University provides transparent and objective information about degree programs and grades awarded.

### *Implementation steps*

- > The University shall ensure that the quality processes at the University are made known to the staff and students. The Communications and Marketing Office shall develop a concept that can be used to make all University members – including students – aware of the key elements of the Quality Strategy and its implementation steps.

## **Strategy**

### *Key statements*

- > The Quality Strategy 2014–2017 is based on and complements the University’s Strategy 2014.
- > The Quality Strategy is designed to promote the quality culture at the University.
- > Essentially, the Faculties shall steer their strategic development using the development and structural plans.

## **Finance**

### *Key statements*

- > The University allocates funding to its units in accordance with strategic planning (University strategy and agreed Faculty development and structural plans) and operative implementation opportunities.
- > Within the scope of its financial resources, it guarantees to fund teaching and infrastructure and to make a basic contribution to research. Research and teaching activities are also financed via external funding.
- > Long-term financing is assured prior to establishing new degree programs or doctoral programs.
- > The University provides incentives for promoting quality in teaching and research.

### *Implementation steps*

- > The University shall create a simple evaluation instrument to check the effectiveness of quality-based fund allocation (matching funds, research fund, graduate programs) at certain intervals.
- > To promote quality and innovation in teaching, the University shall develop a concept for a system of teaching prizes and plan the necessary implementation steps.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Key statements*

- > The University maintains its infrastructure in the best possible state; funds for this purpose are weighted and allocated as needed.
- > The constant improvement of the quality of the technical infrastructure for teaching and research is monitored by the Investment Committee, the Information Technology Steering Committee and the University’s property planning department.

### *Implementation steps*

- > The Investment Committee is to develop an investment concept with which the existing technical infrastructure can be maintained in the best possible state and new technology of greatest strategic importance to the University can be implemented.

- > The Office of the Administrative Director shall significantly improve the building infrastructure in the coming years through new construction and conversions.

## **Information Supply**

### *Key statements*

- > The University supports teaching and research by means of appropriate, secure, economical and sustainable information and communication technology.

### *Implementation steps*

- > The Information Technology Steering Committee is to devise a strategy – in line with the national strategy – to bring the University of Basel to the very forefront of information provision and technology.

## **Equal Opportunities**

### *Key statements*

- > In accordance with its 2013–16/21 equality plan, the University of Basel pursues a strategy to ensure that the structures and processes in teaching, research, service provision and administration are free from discrimination and are oriented toward equality.
- > From 2013 to 2016, the corresponding action plan from the University of Basel will be supported by the Swiss University Conference (SUC) as part of the program to “promote equal opportunities for men and women at universities” (P4).

### *Implementation steps*

- > The Equal Opportunities Office shall implement the equality plan in collaboration with the Equal Opportunity Commissioners of the Faculties and the Equality Committee. This plan has five thematic focal areas: (1) Equality-oriented organizational development, (2) Ensuring continuous career development, (3) Increasing the proportion of women eligible for appointment and the number of women in professorial and management positions, (4) Ensuring the compatibility of studies, career and family, and (5) Removing horizontal segregation in access to learning and vertical segregation within subject areas.
- > The University is to provide appropriate access for persons with disabilities.

## **Sustainability**

### *Key statements*

- > In accordance with the Funding and Coordination of the Higher Education Sector Act (*Hochschulförderungs- und -koordinationsgesetz, HFKG*), the University assures that its tasks and objectives are fulfilled in keeping with sustainable development.
- > The University supports sustainable social development by promoting relevant topics in teaching and research and through knowledge transfer.
- > It is committed to the respectful management of ecological, economic and social resources.

*Implementation steps*

- > The University is to promote specific projects aimed at making sustainability anchored more broadly in degree programs relevant to sustainability (e.g. the cross-faculty “Sustainable Development” interdisciplinary program, in which Bachelor’s students may acquire optional credit points).
- > The University shall promote knowledge transfer through specific projects such as working with the canton to review sustainability reporting.
- > The Sustainability Office shall develop the concepts and implementation steps for resource and environmental management.



## 2 People

### Professors

#### *Key statements*

- > In 2012, the University redefined its structural professorships and implemented a transparent evaluation and promotion procedure based on individual achievements.
- > In 2013, the University revised the appointment processes with new appointment regulations and adapted them to modern standards for assuring quality in the appointment process.

#### *Implementation steps*

- > The University shall consistently implement the new regulations for appointing, evaluating and promoting professors.
- > Courses for professional education for lecturers, particularly relating to high-quality student/doctoral student supervision and university self-administration, will be expanded.

### Early Career Researchers

#### *Key statements*

- > The University of Basel provides central support for early career researchers through the Office of Early Career Researchers' Development and locally via the faculties and departments.
- > Financial and careers advice and also contributions from the research fund provide targeted support for junior researchers in their academic career.

#### *Implementation steps*

- > The Talent Promotion Committee and the Office of Early Career Researchers' Development shall continue with the measures to promote early career researchers. From 2013, the instruments will be extended across the entire university to include defined programs for promoting doctoral students (Doc.CH (HSS) and Doc.Mobility) as part of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and reviewed by the Talent Promotion Committee.
- > The results of the evaluations carried out by members of the Talent Promotion Committee will be considered on an ongoing basis.
- > The website of the Office of Academic Career Development will be redesigned as a platform for early career researchers.
- > The Office of Academic Career Development is to evaluate the information events as necessary and adapt them to requirements.

## Students

### *Key statements*

- > The University of Basel educates its students at all three levels in accordance with the qualification framework of the SUC, with the aim of strengthening their specialist, methodological and personal profiles.
- > In addition to teaching excellence, it also offers the best possible infrastructure framework conditions for studying at Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral level and for continuing education.
- > Curricula, courses and services are further and newly developed with input from the relevant groups by means of feedback procedures, evaluations and surveys.
- > The quality standards for academic work are made known to the students and doctoral students.

### *Implementation steps*

- > The University is to increase the quality of student-teacher ratios and infrastructures for learning and teaching (e.g. implementing the results of the study on IT service integration in learning and teaching (ITSI study) to optimize the learning and teaching environment) and of aspects of "campus life" to give students the best possible education and thus to help foster a lifelong bond between themselves and the University.
- > The University shall establish internationally visible and high-quality programs at Master's and doctoral level and in continuing education that are attractive not only to Basel students, but also to those studying at other institutions. These are periodically evaluated.
- > The University is to create mentoring programs for various diversity target groups.
- > The University shall develop surveys and feedback processes for the users of central student/doctoral student services in order to optimize these offerings.
- > The University is to improve the supervision of students and doctoral students through appropriate administrative, service-related and infrastructure measures and – where necessary – by improving student-teacher ratios.

### *Implementation steps for doctoral students*

- > Establish a university-wide doctoral commission (Senate committee) made up of Faculty and group representatives as well as two external experts that will examine all strategically relevant business, in all aspects relating to doctorates, for the attention of the Rectorate.
- > New doctoral degree regulations in all faculties, which govern the core elements of doctorates, e.g. the supervision of each doctoral student by a specific doctoral commission.
- > Create courses focused on acquiring interdisciplinary skills (to be regularly evaluated).
- > Establish scholarships as part of doctoral programs.
- > Design a central doctoral-level website.
- > Collaborate with other higher education institutions within Switzerland and with foreign partners.

## **Staff Development**

### *Key statements*

- > The University of Basel promotes its staff and provides them systematically with further training.
- > The University supports teachers by means of modular training courses to expand and further develop their academic teaching skills.

### *Implementation steps*

- > The Office of the Administrative Director is to press ahead with developing and creating the promotion and qualification instruments planned in the staff development concept, particularly staff workshops, devising new leadership and management seminars and networking function groups via Intervision and social media.
- > Expand and optimize welcome services and instruments.
- > Develop an offering to support newcomers to the teaching profession: “Starting out in teaching” special interest group.
- > Revise the academic teaching skills curriculum on which the training courses are based to integrate the new formats and events developed over the past few years.
- > Internal evaluation of the new “Academic Teaching Certificate PLUS” training course by the participants in the pilot groups.
- > International accreditation and possible modifications to the new “Academic Teaching Certificate PLUS” training course by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA).

## 3 Processes

### Classes

#### *Key statements*

- > The University of Basel periodically evaluates its classes according to university-wide standards. The Dean of Studies are responsible for conducting and using the class evaluations.
- > The Vice Rectorate for Teaching and Development advises and supports the Faculties with regard to devising processes, content, instruments, assessments, measures and further developing class evaluations.
- > Evaluating classes primarily helps the lecturers and curriculum managers to develop the quality of classes.
- > The results of the class evaluation form the basis for a regular, systematic dialog between parties interested in the quality of classes, i.e. students, lecturers and curriculum managers.
- > The objectives, processes and instruments for evaluating classes are periodically analyzed and further developed if necessary.

#### *Implementation steps*

- > Following a pilot evaluation (2010–2011) and basis evaluation (2011–2012) in the Faculty of Business and Economics, the basis evaluation project is to be gradually rolled out to the entire university (2010–2016).
- > Prepare process descriptions for each Faculty and/or degree program (2012–2016).
- > Conduct and institutionalize good practice interchange events (2012–2016).
- > Finalize university-wide standards for performing and using class evaluations based on the experiences gained from the basis evaluations (2017).

### Degree Programs

#### *Key statements*

- > The University of Basel evaluates its degree programs in a cycle of approximately eight years as part of the evaluation of University units.
- > Within this cycle, the degree programs are monitored by the Curriculum and Teaching Committees, the Faculties and the Rectorate using a “smoke detector” early warning system.
- > If required and/or if problems occur, the Curriculum and Teaching Committees can decide – or be commissioned at the request of the Faculties, the Rectorate or the Faculty Groups – to perform an ad hoc evaluation of their degree program.
- > If required by law, the degree programs concerned are accredited by the Swiss Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education (OAQ).

#### *Implementation steps*

- > Develop the evaluation procedure for University units using standardized surveys. Development, pilot project, assessment and improvement in 2014/15.

- > Compile a set of performance indicators for the Curriculum and Teaching Committees, the Faculties and the Rectorate and define the processes for managing the results. Development, pilot project, assessment and improvement in 2014.
- > Gradually develop a toolbox of evaluation instruments for the Curriculum and Teaching Committees, the Faculties and the Rectorate. Development, pilot project, assessment and improvement from 2015.
- > In parallel, the project for monitoring teaching will gradually develop and activate further segments of reports up to 2015. The procedure for managing the reports (interpreting the data and using the results) will be developed in regular user meetings.

## **Research**

### *Key statements*

- > The University of Basel tracks and evaluates its research achievements each year as part of the reporting performed by the Faculties and Departments regarding their publications, acquisition of external funding, academic prizes, etc. The results of international rankings are also monitored and analyzed.
- > At longer intervals, research is evaluated by external peers in conjunction with the evaluation of University units. The research conducted by Departments is also evaluated in the reports of their advisory boards.
- > The primary purpose of evaluating research is to highlight, promote and safeguard outstanding research. It is part of the self-reflection practiced by the research units and enables them to assess their current position. It is also used for reporting.
- > Research evaluation influences strategic planning at the University and its units. It helps to identify excellence and fields of research with great potential for success and those with particular academic or social relevance.

### *Implementation steps*

- > Extend the use of the performance indicators ascertained in the annual reports: Establish regular output monitoring.
- > Promote interchange among early career researchers, Department managers and universities (benchmarking).
- > Identify potential in the field of research.
- > Websites of the Vice Rectorate for Research: Transparency and accessibility.
- > Establish advisory boards for all Departments.

## **University Units**

### *Key statements*

- > The external evaluation of University units in the peer review procedure aids the strategic development of Departments and Faculties in teaching and research.
- > It supplements the insider's view expressed in the development and structural plans of Departments and Faculties with an independent outside perspective.

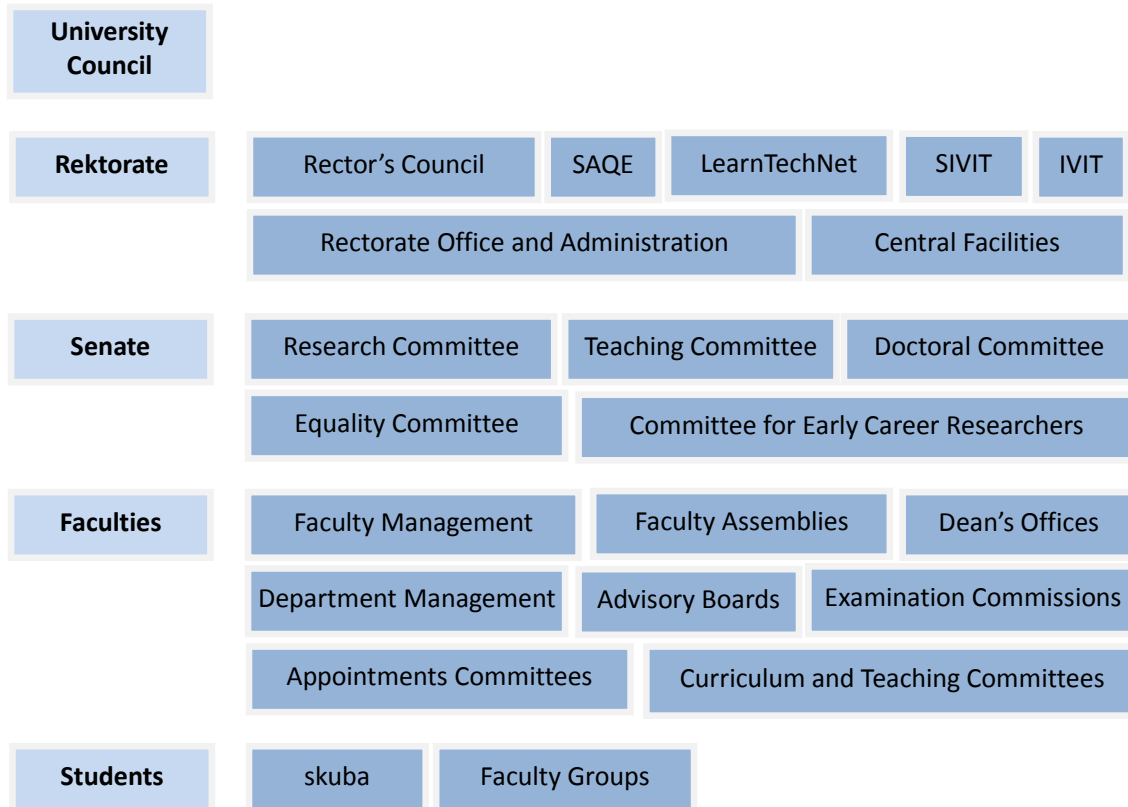
- > An external agency is commissioned to organize the evaluations and, for each evaluation, assembles a group of internationally recognized experts for the site visit.
- > The evaluation considers the research, teaching and organization of the unit under review.
- > The results of the evaluation are used to derive implementation measures that are defined in strategy meetings between the Rectorate, Faculty and Department. The Department informs the Rectorate of the status of these measures as part of its annual reporting.

*Implementation steps*

- > The evaluation procedure is to be selectively improved based on the experiences gained in the pilot evaluations. Faculty Management is to be more heavily involved in the process of evaluating Departments.
- > The aim is for all academic University units to undergo an external evaluation in an eight-year cycle.
- > Adapted criteria and standards are to be devised for evaluating the service areas.

## Responsible Governing Committees and Bodies

The following governing committees and bodies are responsible for quality development at the University of Basel at different levels:



### Contact

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The University Council passed the Quality Strategy 2014–2017 on January 23, 2014. The Strategy was developed under the leadership of Vice-Rector Alex N. Eberle and, as of August 2013, the new Vice-Rector Maarten Hoenen. The new Quality Strategy replaces the 2008 Strategy.

