Bern University
of Applied Sciences



Bachelor of Science in Agriculture – International Agriculture specialisation

▸ School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences HAFL

Agriculture with a future

How can we sustainably feed a growing world population in the future? Urbanisation, climate change, poverty and changing dietary habits pose enormous challenges for agriculture worldwide. Stakeholders from the private sector, research, and government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are all seeking viable solutions for the future of agriculture. This is precisely where the BSc in Agriculture specialising in International Agriculture comes in: It trains specialists who have a holistic understanding of agricultural systems and value chains and who help to shape sustainable solutions.

What makes our degree programme unique

The BSc in Agriculture specialising in International Agriculture is unique in Switzerland: It combines in-depth agricultural expertise with a global perspective. True to the motto 'learning by doing', we focus heavily on practical, hands-on experiences in the programme. In Problem-Based Learning (PBL) lectures, you work in groups to tackle specific real-world problems and develop solutions similar to those needed in your future professional life.

International work experience

One of the specialisation's highlights is the six-month international internship. There, you will work alongside local partner organisations, gain valuable insights into local agricultural practices and carry out scientifically sound research as part of your bachelor's thesis.

Collecting data at a llama and alpaca farm in Peru





Assessment of maize plants in Cambodia

A friendly atmosphere and an inspiring environment

Study on a campus surrounded by nature in Zollikofen, just minutes from Bern. Enjoy modern facilities, close-by accommodation possibilities and a wide range of sporting activities, all on the edge of the forest. It's the perfect balance between study and leisure.
Close contact with lecturers, researchers and experts from the private sector and international cooperation means you can engage in direct dialogue on current topics and projects. At the same time, you're already building your professional network – an ideal foundation for your future career.



Loïc Wüthrich, Product Manager at Ecorobotix
"The biggest benefit of my degree in International Agriculture is the languages – I use English every day, my team works across Europe, and I travel a lot for work. Thanks to my internship, I feel at ease when I arrive in a new environment and have to find my feet."

International experience is in demand

Tomorrow's working world needs professionals with international experience, vision and the ability to develop solutions to a wide range of challenges. With a BSc in Agriculture specialising in International Agriculture, you'll find exciting roles in a variety of sectors – both abroad and in Switzerland:

- Companies with an international portfolio
- Applied agricultural research and consultancy
- International development and cooperation projects and organisations
- Management of agricultural businesses, etc.

The BSc in Agriculture specialising in International Agriculture also provides you with an excellent foundation for a master's degree. This opens up additional opportunities for you, particularly in an international context.

Your degree programme looks like this

A solid theoretical and practical foundation is a prerequisite for this degree programme: If you've completed an apprenticeship in agriculture (or a related profession) with a Federal VET Diploma and hold a Vocational Baccalaureate Certificate, you can enrol directly. If you have an Academic Baccalaureate Certificate, you must undertake a one-year preparatory work placement on a farm in Switzerland before starting your degree. This enables you to combine theory with practice and thus gain a better understanding of complex interrelationships.

In the first year of studies, you will acquire a broad foundational knowledge of agriculture, covering plant and livestock sciences and agricultural economics, with a focus on Switzerland. You will also develop general skills that are important for your future career, such as business administration, private law and project management.

From the second year onwards, you will begin the subject-specific modules of the International Agriculture specialisation, studying other countries' agricultural practices and use of natural resources. The main areas of study are:

- Crop production in the tropics and subtropics
- Global livestock science
- Interactions between arable farming and livestock farming
- Management of natural resources and climate change adaptation
- Economic viability in the rural sector and international value chains
- Macroeconomics and development policy
- Innovative, participatory research and consultancy
- Project management and intercultural communication



Sabrina Jauss, Regional Expert for Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in the Import Promotion Desk project at sequa gGmbH
"The internship, which is superbly organised by BFH-HAFL, is a unique opportunity to get a taste of the profession and gain personal experience. With the Problem-Based Learning method, I learnt how to give presentations, take part in discussions and lead structured conversations – skills which I am very grateful to have in my current role."

In the third year, you will undertake a supervised internship abroad from April to October. BFH-HAFL provides you with targeted preparation for this and supports you throughout your time abroad. You'll work for a locally based partner organisation and write your bachelor's thesis on a topic related to your practical work.

At a glance

Target audience and admissions

- Federal Diploma of Vocational Education and Training (Federal VET Diploma) in Agriculture with a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB).
- Academic Baccalaureate Certificate with a one-year preparatory work placement in agriculture.
- Other profiles: Please check the information on our website.

For prospective students who hold an FVB and have completed training in a partially related profession, or who have practical experience in agriculture, the duration of the preparatory work placement may be shortened.

Preparatory work placement

One (1) year on a Swiss farm. The preparatory work placement/internship normally begins in early August and is supervised by BFH-HAFL.

Qualification

On completion of the degree programme, you will have earned 180 ETCS (credits) and been awarded the title 'Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a specialisation in International Agriculture' from Bern University of Applied Sciences.



Elisa Bossi, Crop Production Adviser at BBZ Plantahof
"The combination of the International Agriculture specialisation, the Teaching and Advising minor, and the Certificate in Global Competence made this a very successful degree programme for me. I've learned to apply technical knowledge to agricultural production and to analyse situations from social, cultural, methodological and empathetic perspectives, too."

Duration

Full time: Six (6) semesters of study + one (1) semester of work placement abroad. Studying part-time is possible.

Teaching languages

Foundation level: German, French
Specialisation in International Agriculture: English –the ideal preparation for working internationally and in multicultural teams.

Tuition fees

Detailed information on tuition fees can be found at:
bfh.ch/fees

Fees info

Applications and application deadline

The start date of the degree programme is in September each year. Apply online at bfh.ch/hafl. The application deadline is usually the end of April.

More information at: bfh.ch/hafl

Further information

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Contact

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