



Bern University
of Applied Sciences



Study Abroad Guide

Outgoing Exchange Students

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Studying Abroad

- 4 Are you looking for a challenge? Studying abroad will definitely be enriching and offers you a unique experience.

Studying a semester abroad during your bachelor or master studies is a fantastic opportunity to develop new skills, in and out of university, and to meet new people from all around the world.

There are many reasons and benefits to study abroad, such as:

Getting to know
yourself better

Developing intercultural
competencies

Getting insights
into a different learning
environment

Experiencing another
life style

Connecting with people
from different countries/
cultures (networking)

Gaining points towards
your Certificate
of Global Competence

Improving your
foreign language skills

Making your CV unique



Thanks to BFH you can figure out what it's like to live in a foreign country. During my unforgettable semester abroad in California, I met people from all over the world, which was a great networking opportunity. Most of all, I enjoyed the adventurous road trips into the breathtaking California desert. Looking back, I realize that stepping out of my comfort zone developed my personality and made me a more independent person than I ever was before. I would recommend everyone to do an exchange semester!

Kirusigaa, USA



In Santiago de Chile I was living in a city with the same number of inhabitants as Switzerland: 8 million people. The exchange semester abroad gave me endless possibilities, daily surprises, the chance to meet awesome people from all around the world and to see the most beautiful landscapes I ever saw. 500 days later I still think back every day about that awesome experience – I would love to go back soon. Studying abroad is more than reading articles, writing exams and collecting ECTS. It enriches your CV in a unique, personal, and educational way.

Joao, Chile



My semester at RMIT in Melbourne gave me an abundance of opportunities to enhance and develop myself. Firstly, I was able to improve my English skills and use them consistently for an extended period. I also evolved into being a more self-reliant person by having to step out of my comfort zone and settle in a new environment. Secondly, I experienced a foreign country and its culture and could live in an exciting metropolis. Finally, I made many friends who made my exchange an unforgettable experience.

Michel, Australia

Your Opportunity

6 The table below indicates in which semester students have to start planning their exchange semester and which semester they are eligible to study abroad.

Bachelor full-time students

Study abroad	Start planning and collect information	Apply online	Prepare your stay
3 rd semester (Autumn semester)	1 st semester	CW 2	2 nd semester
4 th semester (Spring semester)	2 nd semester	CW 32	3 rd semester
5 th semester (Autumn semester)	3 rd semester	CW 2	4 th semester
6 th semester (Spring semester)	4 th semester	CW 32	5 th semester

Bachelor part-time students

Study abroad	Start planning and collect information	Apply online	Prepare your stay
4 th semester (Spring semester)	2 nd semester	CW 32	3 rd semester
5 th semester (Autumn semester)	3 rd semester	CW 2	4 th semester
6 th semester (Spring semester)	4 th semester	CW 32	5 th semester
7 th semester (Autumn semester)	5 th semester	CW 2	6 th semester
8 th semester (Spring semester)	6 th semester	CW 32	7 th semester

Recommended semester for outgoing semester:

- Full-time: 3rd and 4th semester
- Part-time: 4th to 6th semester

Master students

Study abroad	Start planning and collect information	Apply online	Prepare your stay
3 rd semester (Autumn semester)	1 st semester	CW 2	2 nd semester
4 th semester (Spring semester)	2 nd semester	CW 32	3 rd semester

Important: Please keep in mind that semester dates from partner universities can differ from the dates of BFH and therefore not every partner university is suitable for both spring and autumn semesters. Information about the semester dates are available in the “List of Partner Universities” on Moodle.

Destination

The BFH Business School has numerous partner universities all over the world. Places at the partner institutions are limited. The “List of Partner Universities” can be found on Moodle.

Duration

Every student has the opportunity of studying either one or two semesters abroad (except Master students).

However, please note that if you are also planning to do a Double Degree, at least 50% of all modules in your study programme have to be completed at BFH. In that case, only one exchange semester would be possible.

8 Exchange Programmes

The different conditions which apply are listed in the overview below.

	Exchange students		Freemover students	
	Swiss European Mobility Programme SEMP	Bilateral Agreement	BFH agreement, but place for preferred university could not be allocated to student.	Non-contracted university
Countries	EU/EFTA countries	Non EU/EFTA countries	Upon students' choice	Upon students' choice
Universities	List of partner universities on Moodle.	List of partner universities on Moodle.	List of partner universities on Moodle.	Upon students' choice; depends if the host university accepts them as a Freemover and whether the BFH Business School accepts the modules students want to get credits transferred for. Note: Some of the universities have a high level of requirements and / or charge high tuition fees.
Transfer of credits	Partner universities offer modules within the business area. Transfer of credits, if the required modules are on offer, can be guaranteed.	Partner universities offer modules within the business area. Transfer of credits, if the required modules are on offer, can be guaranteed.	Partner universities offer modules within the business area. Transfer of credits, if the required modules are on offer, can be guaranteed.	Credits can be transferred if university is accepted and content of modules are approved by the BFH. Students must get approval of BFH Business School before applying at the host university.
Nomination / Application	Nomination by BFH Business School.	Nomination by BFH Business School.	Students apply directly at host university. Acceptance depends on the host university.	Students apply directly at host university. Acceptance depends on the host university.

	Exchange students		Freemover students	
	Swiss European Mobility Programme SEMP	Bilateral Agreement	BFH agreement, but place for preferred university could not be allocated to student.	Non-contracted university
Tuition fee	Students pay the regular tuition fee of the BFH.	Students pay the regular tuition fee of the BFH.	Students pay the tuition fee of the host university. Additionally, students can request a leave of absence for the respective semester at BFH and will be obliged to pay a fee of CHF 100 instead of the full study fee at BFH.	Students pay the tuition fee of the host university. Additionally, students can request a leave of absence for the respective semester at BFH and will be obliged to pay a fee of CHF 100 instead of the full study fee at BFH.
Grants / Scholarship	Application for grants from the Swiss European Mobility Programme SEMP can be handed in for an exchange in EU/ EFTA countries. Grants are limited to two semesters.	No scholarship paid by BFH.	No scholarship paid by BFH.	No scholarship paid by BFH.
General tasks	The same tasks apply for all outgoing students, (e.g. counselling interview, online application etc.)	The same tasks apply for all outgoing students, (e.g. counselling interview, online application etc.)	The same tasks apply for all outgoing students, (e.g. counselling interview, online application etc.)	The same tasks apply for all outgoing students, (e.g. counselling interview, online application etc.)

Students can either study as

- Exchange students (SEMP or bilateral agreements) or as
- Freemover students (contracted universities or non-contracted universities)

The Process

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Admission Requirements

- Counselling appointment with the Outgoing Mobility Coordinator
- Recommended: Completion of the foundation level
- Necessary language skills as required by the host university
- Bachelor students may not have more than 12 open ECTS in the foundation level after the respective disclosure of grades.



1. Information

Students have to collect as much information as possible about their preferred destinations.

2. Counselling Interview

Every student must apply for the mandatory counselling interview with the Outgoing Mobility Coordinator. It is expected that students know the process of studying abroad and that each student has consulted the list of partner universities.

3. Selection of Five Destinations

Decide on up to 5 preferred exchange universities in order of priority.

4. Online Application (MoveOn)

Every student must submit the online application on MoveOn within the deadline and has to indicate up to 5 universities in order of priority. The link for MoveOn is indicated on Moodle (ESOS-GINF).

Mandatory documents:

- 1 A4 page motivation letter in English (except students applying for a German or French speaking programme):
 - Students have to briefly explain their general motivation for doing an exchange semester
 - Applicants have to refer to their preferred universities and explain why they have decided on them

Deadline for Online Application

For Autumn Semester: CW 2

For Spring Semester: CW 32



5. Allocation and Nomination

After submitting the online application on MoveOn, the Outgoing Mobility Coordinator will allocate the applicants to the available study places. Should there be more applicants than places available, the following selection criteria will guide our decision making:

- Academic performance
- Evidence of motivation to study abroad (preparation for counselling interview etc.)

Students have to confirm the place, before they will be nominated at the partner university.

6. Moodle

After the allocation, students will have to register on the Moodle page of the respective semester, where all relevant information regarding the semester abroad will be available.

7. Application at Partner University

Based on the nomination, students will be contacted directly by the host university and receive information about the further procedure (application, housing, course registration etc.).

8. Application for Transfer of ECTS Credits (Learning Agreement)

Furthermore, each applicant is required to submit the “Application for Transfer of ECTS Credits”, where students have to list the modules from the host university which they would like to have accredited at the BFH.

12 9. Study Abroad

During the exchange semester, students will act as an ambassador of the BFH. Students' support in promoting the BFH is much appreciated. Recognition of hours to the Certificate of Engagement is possible. More information can be found on Moodle.

10. Transfer of ECTS Credits

After the termination of the exchange semester, students will have to hand in their Transcript of Records (ToR) from abroad to the Outgoing Mobility Coordinator. It will then be compared with the "Agreement for Transfer of ECTS Credits". The credits achieved abroad and stipulated in the Learning Agreement will be acknowledged and stated in the BFH ToR.

11. Feedback & Study Abroad Fair

Students have to fill out a survey about their studies abroad. Additionally, some students will be invited to the Study Abroad Fair of the next semester, in order to share experiences with interested future outgoing students.



Information & Support

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Information Material

There is a lot of information material available, take a look at:

Moodle

Students will find all the important information and documents about their semester abroad on our Moodle page:

<https://moodle.bfh.ch/course/view.php?id=13242>

Websites

The websites of our partner universities contain detailed information such as module offers, location of the university, etc. Students will find direct links to the websites of all our partner universities on Moodle.

First-hand Experiences

The Student Services highly recommend reading the experience cards from former outgoing exchange students. The documents and links are available on Moodle. Another possibility is to get in touch with current or former outgoing as well as incoming students directly; their contact details are available on Moodle.

Study Abroad Fair

The Student Services organise the Study Abroad Fair once every semester. The fair offers students the opportunity to ask questions and to get in contact with former outgoing students as well as current incoming students. Since organising a semester abroad takes some time, we recommend students to attend the fair at the beginning of their study programme in order to have enough time for research. Please consult Moodle for further information about the date and time of the event.

14 Support From the Outgoing Mobility Coordinator

The Outgoing Mobility Coordinator supports outgoing students in the following areas:

- Informing students about options to study abroad
- Providing information and procedures in terms of planning a semester abroad
- Nominating applicants to our partner institutions
- Counselling students in academic issues such as module selection, repetition of modules etc.
- Supporting outgoing students during their planning time and during their time abroad with special issues



Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ

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How can I contact former outgoing students?

You can find their contact details on Moodle. Get in touch with current or former outgoing students, it offers you a very good way of getting firsthand information.

How much does an exchange semester cost?

All outgoing exchange students have to pay their regular tuition fee at the BFH (except freemover students). Additional costs during a semester abroad depend mainly on the destination.

Keep in mind the following when calculating costs:

- Books / photocopies
- Travel / transportation
- Housing / accommodation
- Living: food, leisure, travel...
- Visa (if required)
- Insurance
- Health checkup (if required)
- Tuition fee (especially freemover)

Check the cost of living of the respective country e.g.

www.expatistan.com.

How can I apply for grants?

If you are studying at a partner university in a EU/EFTA country which is a member of the Swiss European Mobility Programme (SEMP), you are eligible for a grant. The grants are limited to two semesters.

The grant application and organisation is done by the Global Engagement Office (GEO) at Falkenplatz and you will receive further information on what documents have to be submitted in a separate email. This will be around December for the spring semester and around July for the autumn semester.

Alternatively, you may apply for government scholarships.

However, these grants are not coordinated by the BFH.

More information is available at

<https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/service/scholarships-for-study-abroad/government-scholarships/scholarship-offers>.

16 How many credits can or must I achieve abroad?

You must enrol for modules at the host university equivalent to at least 21 BFH ECTS credits.

Can I get ECTS credits transferred for language courses?

Studying abroad offers a great opportunity to learn the language of your chosen country. Most of the universities offer language courses. In some cases, credits achieved from language courses can be transferred; however, this needs to be approved in the "Application for Transfer of ECTS credits" and depends on (amongst other things) language, level, number of ECTS credits.

What are my options if the host university requires proof of language proficiency, but I do not have a certificate?

The Student Services can organise an English placement test or issue confirmation letters based on the language of your study program or language courses taken at the BFH.

I would like to take a language course prior to my stay abroad. Is there any financial support?

The interdisciplinary "BFH diagonal" programme offers a range of language courses free of charge. For inquiries regarding other language courses, please get in touch with the Student Services.

I have to repeat modules from a previous semester, how do I apply?

You are responsible for the enrolment of the repeat examination, please inform yourself at the Student Services about the different possibilities.

How can I inspect my exams when I am studying abroad?

Please contact the Student Services, they will provide you with the information.

How will my credits achieved abroad be indicated in the BFH Transcript of Records?

The transcript of the BFH will not report the single modules from your semester abroad, but the whole amount of credits achieved and accepted according to the Learning Agreement. The name of the partner university where the exchange semester took place will be

mentioned in the BFH transcript. For later use, you will have two transcripts – the one from BFH and the other from your host university. Please note that your grades from your semester abroad will therefore not count into the average of the results achieved at the BFH.

What do I do if I fail an exam at the university abroad?

Failing an exam at the university abroad can happen, and it is up to you to check the options available to you for re-examination. It might be a possibility to repeat the failed exam at the BFH if both universities agree. Additionally, a failed exam will have an effect on your Application for Transfer of ECTS, therefore please contact the Outgoing Mobility Coordinator immediately.

What does the BFH expect from me in terms of representing the BFH abroad?

During your semester abroad you will act as an ambassador for the BFH and you will represent not only our university but also our country. You can help raise awareness about the BFH at our partner university and we expect you to be talking about our country and the opportunities to study with us! When you return from your semester abroad, you can support the Student Services in promoting an exchange semester to your fellow students, eg. at the Study Abroad Fair. Take the chance to apply for the Certificate of Engagement.



Your Exchange – Step by Step

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Before



During



Attend the Welcome Week, meet fellow students and get all information for your stay



Act as a BFH ambassador and promote BFH abroad



Send us a picture of Bernie Bear abroad



Enjoy your adventure abroad

End of stay



Upload your Experience Card on Moodle



Send us your Transcript of Records



Fill out our Feedback Survey to help us improve future exchange semesters



Share your experiences and keep those special memories forever

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