



Bern University
of Applied Sciences



Bachelor in Social Work Study Guide

Disclaimer

This brochure is intended for informational purposes only and is subject to change without notice. In case of discrepancies the legal and regulatory provisions are applicable.

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Welcome to the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Social Work at BFH

- 2 The Bachelor's degree programme in Social Work at Bern University of Applied Sciences has many special features. I'd like to introduce you to some of them:

Strengthening personality – a Development Centre to launch your studies

Social workers are confronted with people in difficult life situations. Because the social worker's own personality plays a key role in such encounters, we attach special importance to the development of personal and social skills. The Development Centre that you attend in the first week of your studies marks the start to developing these skills within the degree programme.

Multifaceted degree programme – Social work and related disciplines in one curriculum

Theory and methods of social work as well as practical training are the central elements of the curriculum of the bachelor's degree programme. In addition, related disciplines such as law, psychology, sociology and economics are embedded in the programme.

Professional qualification for all fields of social work

Upon completion of your bachelor's degree in social work, you have a recognised professional qualification with good prospects in the employment market. The degree programme at BFH enables you to practice your profession in all fields of social work - social work, sociocultural animation and social pedagogy.

Tailored teaching and learning methods

The variety of skills you will learn requires various learning and teaching settings: Lectures and seminars alternate with workshops, supervision and coaching, classroom study with self-study, and modules at the university with modules that take place in social work fields. At this point I'd like to emphasise:

Guided and individual self-study

In each module, teachers will provide knowledge of the subject at hand. But you will also acquire content and skills by studying on your own, through self-study. Within self-study we make the distinction between guided and individual self-study. During guided self-study, teachers support you by assigning tasks that help you work your way through the content. Individual self-study, on the other hand, you design yourself. Both types are core components of how you learn. That is why it is important that you plan sufficient time for self-study from the very start.

Digital teaching and learning

We use information and communication technology and digital media as a didactically proven extension to traditional learning and teaching methods. Our aim here is to offer you the best possible environment for skill acquisition. In the Virtual Reality Lab for example, you can practice your communication and counselling skills.

Inquiry-based Learning

In some modules you will investigate content in an exploratory manner. This means you acquire the learning content by developing and pursuing your own questions, which you then try to answer as the module progresses. Inquiry-based learning leads to deeper knowledge acquisition and promotes your ability to adapt to new knowledge and to work your own way through questions and problems.

I am delighted that you have decided to join this exciting degree programme in Social Work at Bern University of Applied Sciences, and I extend to you a heartfelt welcome to our department.



Prof. Petra Benz Bartoletta
Chair of the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Social Work



Direct link to videos related to the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Social Work at BFH

Social work:

A multifaceted profession

4 What is social work?

People can get into problems, regardless of age, gender or origin, which they cannot manage without professional help. Social work professionals advise and provide preventative support in crisis situations or for longer term problems. Working in public and private organisations, they offer or give access to various forms of aid.

Social work deals with individual and societal problems, such as poverty, forced migration, addiction, crime and conflicts. It explains how social problems and circumstances manifest themselves at the personal level, within society, and how they can be overcome. Interventions by social workers aim to promote social integration and participation, as well as foster autonomy and personal responsibility. Social work uses various concepts and methods, such as counselling, networking and public relations.

Social work has many facets:

- As a discipline, it involves scientific research of its effects and the justification of its actions.
- As a profession, it encompasses the fields of social services, social pedagogy and sociocultural animation. It is a comparatively new profession. The types and fields of work, the external conditions and its institutions are all subject to rapid change. The areas within which social work operates have increased vastly in recent years and this development seems set to continue.

Tasks and fields of work

Working directly with clients is an important task of social workers. Together with the person who is seeking help they analyse the situation, formulate goals, assist with the helping process, all done by mobilising the necessary professional knowledge. Social workers also act in teams, by developing objectives and managing and attending support processes. Beyond this, there is project work and networking in the local community, in neighbourhoods and in social planning, as well as management tasks such as financial planning, human resources management and education. And last but not least, social workers are involved in public relations and are socio-politically active.

Social workers are not just employed in public social services. There is a whole host of positions open to them. These include positions in child and adult protection, in youth work, in institutions for people requiring special support, in various counselling services, in drug prevention and substance abuse treatment, in women's refuges, in community centres, courts, church institutions, clinics, penal institutions and employment programmes. There are also openings in (university) education, research and politics.

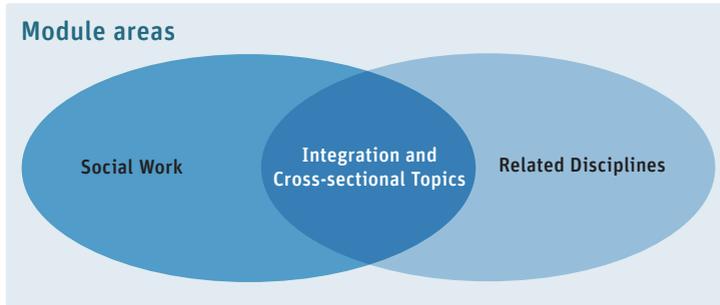
Requirements

Social work requires a strong personality with above average personal and social skills and a reflected professional motivation. Men and women are suitable,

- who like to have contact with people and show interest in their difficulties and developmental capabilities,
- who are interested in circumstances and the origins of social problems of individuals, families, groups and communities,
- who want to search for solutions together with their clients and reveal new prospects for them by providing and conveying resources for them,
- who are prepared to work within an institutional framework and perform administrative tasks carefully and reliably,
- who are interested in further developing their personal and social skills. Personal interaction with people in very different life circumstances holds great potential for this.

Curriculum Bachelor in Social Work

- 6 The curriculum of the bachelor's degree programme is made up of three module areas.



Social Work

The modules in this area provide the students with the theoretical contents of social work. An additional focus is on social work methods, which enables students to learn the craft of social work from the ground up.

Practical Training

Practice modules

The social work module area also includes the practical training. The two practice modules last between 5 and 12 months, depending on the level of employment, and are completed in a social services organisation recognised by the department. Qualified professionals in the organisation supervise the students on site.

Concomitantly, the students receive support from the university. The goal of this cooperation between professionals, university teachers or assistants and students is the development and consolidation of the students' professional skills and of their professional identity.

The different forms of the practice module

- Practice module in a social services organisation
- Practice module within an existing position for students who are already active in the social work profession
- Practice semester abroad, often in cooperation with domestic universities

Modules accompanying the practice module

To support and link theory and practice, the students complete the following modules in addition to the practice modules (PM):

- Theory-Practice Workshop (PM I)
- Case Workshop (PM II)
- Project Workshop (PM I/II)
- Training Supervision (PM I and II)

Related Disciplines

Social work professionals work with representatives of other disciplines in their everyday work. The knowledge of these disciplines and their scientific backgrounds promotes inter-professional cooperation and thus the cause of social work. Therefore, the related disciplines of sociology, law, psychology, philosophy and ethics, economics and administrative science as well as educational sciences are taught in separate modules in the bachelor's degree programme for social work at BFH.

Integration and Cross-sectional Topics

The modules in this area address social problems and issues such as poverty or addiction and other themes such as institutional youth care, social welfare or child and adult protection. These are addressed from the social work theory and methods perspective, as well as from the viewpoints of the related disciplines. This enables the integration of the knowledge and skills acquired in the modules of the Social Work area and of the Related Disciplines area.

8 Module Areas, Module Groups, Modules

Within the module areas the modules are divided into groups. Within some of the module groups (in light blue) the modules can be freely selected: To a large extent students can follow their own interests and create an individual profile. Only the essential fundamentals (in dark blue) are compulsory. Students can also generally determine the sequence of the modules.

We reserve the right to make changes to individual modules.

Title and Recognition

Students who successfully complete the bachelor's degree programme are entitled to use the title "Bachelor of Science BFH (BSc BFH) in Social Work". Our bachelor's degree is recognised within Switzerland and internationally recognised as a university degree. It qualifies the bearer to work in all fields of social work: social services, social pedagogy and sociocultural animation.

Teaching Staff

You will find the list of our teaching staff with their professional backgrounds and publications on our website.
sozialarbeit.bfh.ch/bachelor → Contact

Module areas, Module groups, modules

Module area Social Work	Module area Integration and Cross-sectional Topics	Module area Related Disciplines
<p>Practical training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Practice module 1 20 ECTS – Practice module 2 24 ECTS <p>Accompanying modules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Theory-practice workshop – Case study workshop – Project workshop – E-module: Theory-practice workshop/Case study workshop – Training supervision <p>total 7 ECTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interaction and communication I – Interaction and communication II – Social work: historical and theoretical introduction <p>4 ECTS each</p> <p>Personal and social skills I–III</p> <p>2 ECTS each</p> <p>Social work methods Selection includes*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Counselling approaches in social work – Case management – Conflict management – Socio-spatial methods in social work <p>total 12 ECTS</p> <p>Social work theories Selection includes*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Theories of action compared – Applied difference theories – Critical social work <p>total 12 ECTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Educational sciences – Economics and administrative science – Philosophy and ethics – Psychology – Law – Sociology <p>4 ECTS each</p> <p>Specialisations in Related Disciplines Selection includes*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Educational sciences – Philosophy <p>total 8 ECTS</p>
51 ECTS	36 ECTS	32 ECTS
total 161 ECTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Seminar paper I & II 2 ECTS each – Bachelor thesis (introduction & colloquium included) 15 ECTS 		
total 180 ECTS		

■ Compulsory modules ■ Compulsory elective modules

* The selection may vary, depending on programme needs and enrollments.

Academic year and semester structure

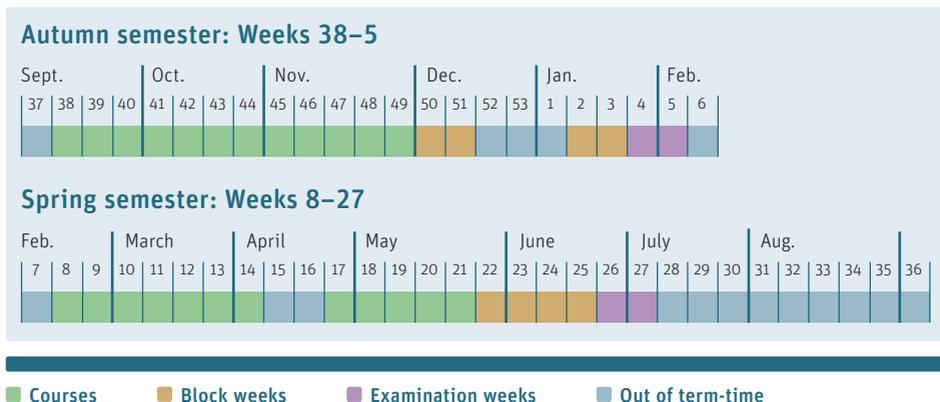
10 Start dates

There are two programme start dates: in the autumn (calendar week 37), and in the spring (calendar week 7).

Semester structure

The autumn and spring semesters are the same length (18 weeks each) and have the same structure:

After 12 weeks with weekly recurring modules, there are 4 so-called “block weeks”, in which individual modules are offered with a condensed timetable, and 2 examination weeks.



In weeks 37 and 7 respectively, orientation activities and the Development Centre take place for new students.

Out of term-time (including 6 weeks of holiday):
Calendar weeks 28–37; 52–1; 6+7; 15+16.

Study trips, Summer School, Winter School and International Week usually take place during out of term-time, particularly in calendar weeks 7, 28 and 37.

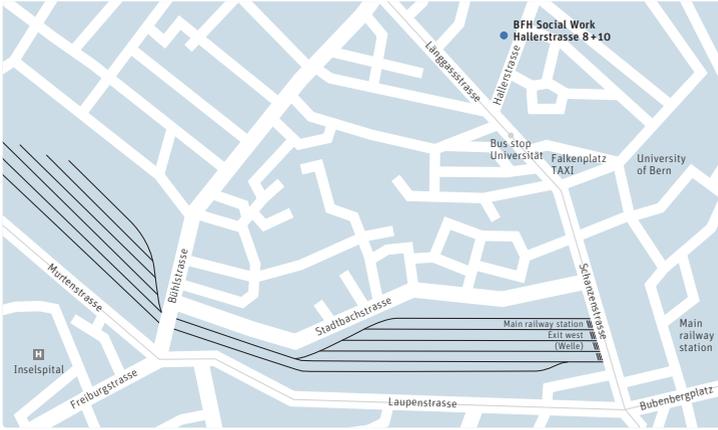


“In addition to the theoretical knowledge that is of such use to me, the degree programme changed me as a person. It gives me the tools to see situations from a different perspective. I learn how to critically challenge assumptions and I learn a great deal about myself.”

Khadija Ibrahim, Student

Location plan and Contact

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Hallerstrasse 10

- Administration office:
Telephone +41 31 848 36 10
- Head of Department:
Telephone +41 31 848 36 00

Hallerstrasse 8

- Library:
Telephone +41 31 848 36 36
- Lecture halls and classrooms

You can reach us from the central train station

With bus 12: Toward Länggasse, Stop: Universität

On foot: The most direct way does not lead through the underground train station hall, but via the exit “Schanzenbrücke / Länggasse”: Leave your arrival platform on the west side via the “Welle von Bern” service bridge, and go uphill on the Schanzenstrasse. After about 300 m, you will reach Falkenplatz, and shortly after that Hallerstrasse branches off to the right.

Please use public transport.
There are no long-stay parking spaces near us.

Bern University of Applied Sciences

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soziale-arbeit.bfh.ch/bachelor

Degree programmes

- Bachelor and Master in Social Work

Continuing education

- Master, Diploma and Certificate of Advanced Studies
- Courses
- In-house training

Services

- Evaluation and assessment
- Development and consultancies
- Tuition and training

Applied research and development

- Social intervention
- Social organisation
- Social security