



Bern University of Applied Sciences
Communications
Falkenplatz 24
3012 Bern, Switzerland
T +41 (0)31 848 33 00
mediendienst@bfh.ch
www.bfh.ch

PRESS RELEASE

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Sustainability offensive at BFH

Bern University of Applied Sciences publishes first Sustainability Report

How sustainable is Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH in its core areas – teaching, research and operations? The first Sustainability Report shows that the university is heading in the right direction, a fact underlined by the success of the new ‘Circular Innovation and Sustainability’ master’s degree programme, the only one of its kind in Switzerland. Over 60 applications have already been submitted, exceeding all expectations.

By rolling out Sustainable Development as a strategic area, BFH is looking to play a significant role in helping to transform our society and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Manuel Fischer (Institute for Sustainable Business, Business School), who is leading the strategic area alongside Christelle Ganne-Chédeville (School of Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering), emphasises, ‘The Sustainability Report outlines the status quo and identifies where the potential for the future lies. It is key to ensuring that BFH is in a position to champion sustainable development efficiently and consistently across all of its areas of activity and to serve as a role model.’

Teaching: equipping students with a sustainability skillset

Sustainability is central to our teaching programme at BFH: various degree programmes now have an explicit sustainability focus or offer sustainability-oriented specialisations. Over 130 ‘BFH diagonal’ modules offer students additional opportunities to attend lectures outside their own degree programme, expanding their interdisciplinary expertise. The coming autumn semester will also see the launch of our first interdepartmental master’s degree programme ‘Circular Innovation and Sustainability’. It combines business skills with a technical and ecological understanding of circular production cycles and outlines sustainable ways of dealing with natural resources. The degree programme is proving popular – over 60 candidates have already applied.

Research for sustainable development

In research too, BFH is breaking new ground in terms of sustainability. 2020 saw the launch of 10 interdepartmental research projects, including the Urban Future Lab and the MemoryBox project, which focus on social innovation. BFH is also currently establishing three research fields where projects are to be interdisciplinary: Food Systems, Sustainable Development of the Built Environment and Circular Economy.

Operations: acting as a sustainability role model

Alongside activities in research and teaching, BFH is also focusing on ensuring sustainability in its own operations. We began by drawing up an initial balance sheet of BFH’s energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. In 2021 BFH consumed around 110 TJ of energy and emitted the equivalent of around 4,450 tonnes of CO₂. While these figures provide a general indication of the status quo, they should be treated with some reservation as the data situation is not yet final. Since 2020, BFH has been setting new standards with its mobility concept: 18 measures highlight ways in which BFH can minimise its use of resources and reduce harmful emissions.



In 2021 more vegetarian than meat-based meals were offered for the first time at the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences. This concept met with such positive feedback that it is now being rolled out to other departments.

Contact:

Manuel Fischer
Head of Specialist Service for Sustainable Development
T +41 (0)31 848 44 02
manuel.fischer@bfh.ch

Links:

[BFH Sustainability Report](#)
[Sustainability at BFH](#)
[Urban Future Lab project](#)
[MemoryBox project](#)
[BFH diagonal](#)
[Master's degree in Circular Innovation and Sustainability](#)
[Mobility concept](#)