



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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Bern University of Applied Sciences Annual Report 2021: Shaping change together

Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) turned its focus to new areas of research and teaching in 2021. The institution is doing its part to address societal challenges, offering programmes and projects in such fields as sustainability. What's more, BFH is a popular choice – enrolment increased by 4 percent.

President Sebastian Wörwag reflects on a successful and challenging year at the university: 'The year 2021 will be remembered as one that brought much change. COVID-19 has taught us to leave familiar paths behind, but even beyond pandemic crisis management, we've learned the importance of rethinking old habits,' says Sebastian Wörwag. For that very reason, BFH made a commitment in 2021 to do even more to respond to today's pressing issues. The CircuBAT project, for instance, aims to close the loop between production, use and recycling of lithium-ion batteries and improve EV life cycle assessments. 'We want to develop solutions to ensure a sustainable future, whether that means optimising energy storage or improving the circular economy,' Wörwag explains.

Creating knowledge for a sustainable world

Last year, BFH continued to promote its focus on sustainability, with particular emphasis on the topic of circular economy. The university launched its new interdisciplinary master's degree programme 'Circular Innovation and Sustainability'. As future agents of change, graduates will power the transformations needed for a more sustainable society. In collaboration with the KOF Swiss Economic Institute, BFH researchers conducted the first representative study of the implementation of circular economies at the company level, titled 'Status report on the Swiss circular economy'. The study found that the possibilities of the circular economy are not yet being fully exploited in Switzerland. Companies stand to gain tremendous competitive advantages by implementing circular measures. Learn more about the study and other university highlights in BFH's digital Annual Report.

Commitment to digitalisation

BFH has also achieved pleasing milestones in the area of digitalisation: it has developed its own Open Science strategy. Thanks to Open Science, scientific research is becoming more accessible, transparent and secure. In the area of teaching, the canton of Bern worked with five universities – including BFH – to found the BeLEARN competence centre. Researchers, start-ups and education stakeholders are working under one roof to promote digital transformation in education.

Strengthening society

Demographic change and our current health care system pose major challenges for Swiss society. BFH is therefore committed to finding long-term solutions to current issues relating to health, ageing and inclusion. In the newly updated Institute on Ageing, experts from a wide range of disciplines will work even more intensively to tap into the potential of an ageing society.

Significant rise in student numbers and positive financial return



In September, around 2,500 new students began their studies at BFH, with total enrolment climbing 4 percent to 7,780. The figures show how important science-based and hands-on education is in these uncertain times. BFH's financial outcome is also gratifying. The 2021 annual financial statement shows a revenue surplus of CHF 6.3 million, with an operating result of CHF 4.7 million. Revenue rose by CHF 14.2 million from the previous year to CHF 316.5 million. Third-party funding provided welcome income, boosting research funding by CHF 2 million to CHF 41.9 million. Funding for continuing education increased by CHF 2.3 million to CHF 22.3 million. Despite the pandemic, research and education revenues reached an all-time high. For further facts and figures relating to students, staff and finances, see our digital Annual Report.

Looking to the future

BFH turns 25 years 'young' this year. It will continue to pool its knowledge and expertise to make the world a better place, one where sustainability takes precedence, digital literacy and responsibility become standard and society grows more health-conscious and caring of all ages. Furthermore, BFH is committed to further developing Bern's identity as a university location.

bfh.ch/annualreport2021

Contact

Corina Lardelli, Press Office BFH, T +41 (0)31 848 33 42, mediendienst@bfh.ch