

# Bachelor of Arts in Architecture – Studying from a different perspective

**Bern University of Applied Sciences**  
Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering



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## Who we are

The bachelor's degree course in Architecture is part of the Department of Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering at Bern University of Applied Sciences, where a comprehensive training in architecture is provided. It also includes continuing education courses. The course is among the most substantial offered by a Swiss University of Applied Sciences (UAS), but the institution is nonetheless user-friendly. The teaching locations are concentrated, making not only for stimulating studies, but also for intensive contact and exchanges between students and teaching staff. From the third semester onwards, students can choose to specialise in design, management or technology, playing to and developing their individual abilities and aptitudes. Students who prefer to cover every aspect of the course are free to do so, concentrating on breadth, not depth, of knowledge. In addition, we lay great emphasis on international exchange programmes. By offering some modules jointly with the bachelor's degree courses in Civil Engineering and Wood Engineering we promote the interdisciplinary aspects of the course of studies. Following the bachelor's degree, which qualifies graduates to work in the planning, construction and real estate industries, we also offer a master's degree in architecture. Together, the two degrees necessitate five years of study and lead to an internationally recognised qualification as architect as set out in the Unesco/UIA Charter for Architectural Education.●

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## The profile of the architect's profession

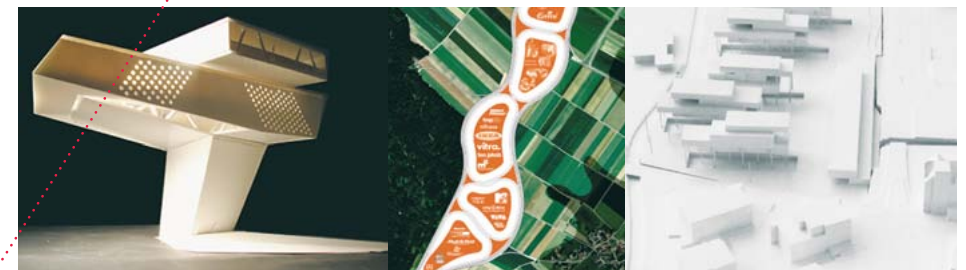
The architectural profession is changing. The future will be marked by comprehensive responsibilities on the one hand, and by growing professional specialisation on the other. Some architects focus exclusively on design issues such as space, form, colour or materials, whereas others concentrate on carrying out the technical aspects of construction jobs. They translate spatial concepts into reality and seek ways to put spatial concepts and concepts for utilisation into practice functionally, sustainably and in an aesthetically pleasing way. Others, in turn, concentrate on the processes required to plan and build structures, especially with an eye to their future uses. Their key competencies lie in the area of planning, managing and organisation.

The bachelor's degree at our institution has two aims. On the one hand, it prepares students for the master's degree course that will provide them with an internationally recognised qualification as architects. On the other hand, it allows them to go directly into professional life, working in the planning, construction or real estate sectors. Architects work in a wide variety of organisations, such as architecture firms, real estate companies, construction companies, public authorities, banks, etc. These employers' requirements vary greatly. What they all have in common, however, is that they involve a basic understanding of structures and the processes with which these are built and used.

Our graduates are in a position to contribute qualified work as part of planning teams, for companies in the sector or for a public authority. During the later semesters of the bachelor's degree course, students will be able to choose their own specialisations and develop the abilities that best meet their professional desires and personal inclinations. We offer a choice of modules in specialised fields: Design and Modelling, Management, Real Estate and Technology and Construction.

Regardless of which aspects of the profession a student chooses to focus on, two things remain essential. The first is a process of problem solving that leads from a comprehensive analysis to a synthesis via a creative search for possible solutions. The second is a thorough examination of the economic, social and cultural environment.

The bachelor's degree course in architecture at Bern University of Applied Sciences is aligned with the requirements of professional practice, with teaching oriented towards recognised scientific insights and methods.●



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## Bachelor of Arts in Architecture

Whether you have studied in Italy, Germany or Switzerland, your bachelor's degree is comparable throughout Europe. This is due in particular to the ECTS scheme and the module structure. The bachelor's degree is the first academic level to provide a professional qualification; it takes six semesters of study.

**ECTS.** The European Credit Transfer System allows for an international comparison of academic qualifications. The course comprises 180 credits; a credit is earned with 30 hours of study.

**Modules.** The bachelor's degree course in architecture is modular, allowing its qualifications and diplomas to be compared. We distinguish between required modules and elective modules, which are interdisciplinary.

**Length of course.** The length of the course can be adapted to meet your own needs. After six semesters, you can gain a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture – the first degree to qualify you for professional life. The advantage of a bachelor's degree is the compact and short nature of the course, enabling you to start your career without delay. Those who wish to can move on to the master's degree course without a break.

**Mentoring.** We won't leave you to your own devices. Every student is assigned a mentor, who will act as your contact person and will also assist you as you start your career.

**Joint Master of Architecture HES-SO/BFH.** The Bachelor of Arts degree equips students with fundamental, though specific, skills; the Master of Arts degree provides a broader understanding of architecture. The Joint Master of Architecture course is offered jointly by the Ecole d'ingénieurs et d'architectes de Genève (EIA-GE, Geneva School of Engineering), the Hochschule für Technik und Architektur Freiburg (EIA-FR, College of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg) and the Department of Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering at Bern University of Applied Sciences in Burgdorf.

**Voluntary internship year.** This year as an intern not only leads to a better qualification, it also serves to prepare students specifically for their careers. This additional year of practical study earns students 30 ECTS points, so that they graduate with 210 ECTS points. ●

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## Course organisation

All students, whether full-time or part-time, attend the first two semesters together: these form the basis of the course. During the autumn semester, the five modules covered are architectural theory, the fundamentals of architecture, design, management and technology. In the spring semester, the entire class attends the same project module, with uniform teaching of methods, to make it easier for the students to work together later on.

**Developing and focusing on specialisations, or broad architectural general knowledge.** From their third semester, students can choose between the following specialisations: technology, management or design. They may choose to focus on certain areas as well as attending the required courses. During the project weeks in the spring semester, students thus come face to face very swiftly both with their own specialisation and with the others.

Should a student prefer a broadly based education, without a specific specialisation, he or she may attend modules covering all the specialised areas.

The bachelor's degree thus offers students a wide range of ways in which to develop. Whether a specialisation or a broadly based course is best for you depends on your individual aptitudes and abilities and your choice of future career path. A broad approach would be advantageous for someone planning to follow a bachelor's degree with a master's. On the other hand, specialising in a specific area would be an advantage for anyone planning to start his or her career directly after gaining a bachelor's degree.

**Full-time or part-time studies.** A full-time course takes at least six semesters, while part-time studies can be completed in eight to 12 semesters. This allows students to study for a bachelor's degree without having to give up their professional careers.

A semester lasts 16 weeks. The theoretical blocks are taught in the autumn semesters. They provide the fundamentals for the project studios in the spring semesters. Students may also visit a project studio in India during the practically oriented spring semester. The programme is rounded off by summer schools offering intensive three-week courses both at home and abroad.

The UAS supports students wishing to spend a semester studying abroad and has a large network of partner schools. ●



## Specialising in design

The specialised course in design offers students ideal conditions for developing their personal design abilities. The students' methodology develops out of artistic and conceptual perspectives, with the focus on the organisation of spatial form processes. This applies both to urban systems and to buildings and objects. Effecting this in technical and constructive terms is seen as an integral part of the process and derives from this development.

Students also learn the fundamental theoretical rudiments of the architecture and urban planning of the past few decades. Furthermore, a basic knowledge of the theory of art and of historic preservation is considered essential. Alongside design skills, students are taught to know and use analogue and digital design tools, resources and methods.

**Goals.** Studying design in depth allows students to carry out the most varied design and conceptualisation tasks professionally. Design work takes place at the nexus of conceptual aesthetic awareness, theoretical knowledge and the professional application of all the available design resources. These three points also form the focus of the course with an additional, fourth, point: training in communication. Students are taught to interpret and evaluate their own designs and those of others. They will also have a grasp of the concepts from other, adjacent, fields, such as business, politics, law, management, sociology, psychology and art.

**Career prospects.** Graduates who have specialised in design can look forward to working predominantly in the following professional areas:

- Qualified work in teams with a focus on organising form processes.
- Design work in architecture and engineering firms (designing plans for new buildings, renovations and conversions, drawing up plans for structures, designing temporary structures, devising with urban planning concepts).
- Acting in advisory capacities for design jobs, providing support in problem solving in the areas of urban development and construction concepts.
- Communicating planning schemes. ●



## Specialising in management

Development schemes can only be brought to a successful conclusion if everyone involved (owners, authorities, planners, specialists, users, etc.) is included in a carefully planned and administered process. These days, such processes are becoming increasingly complex, as the demands of users and the public grow, while materials, planning and construction technology become more diverse and demanding. The key challenge is not only to optimise the short construction period, but also to ensure the creation of premium and lasting real estate products.

Organising and leading planning and construction processes has become a discipline in its own right in the construction and real estate business. It requires fundamental knowledge of architecture and building techniques on the one hand, and specialised knowledge of economic relationships in the real estate area on the other, as well as the ability to create networks of people from differing professional disciplines. The skills needed to do all this are taught in the specialised management course.

Students focusing on management add to their knowledge of architectural fundamentals by learning more about methodological and social skills in particular. We use practical training and knowledge transfer to help students acquire and practice the methods and theoretical fundamentals of finances, systems theory, task analysis, process planning, process management, business management and teamwork. Particular emphasis is laid on the use of forward-looking methods and techniques in architectural design.

The skills you learn will prepare you to manage challenging projects with, for example, large architectural practices, general contractors, real estate companies or the finance industry or public authorities. ●

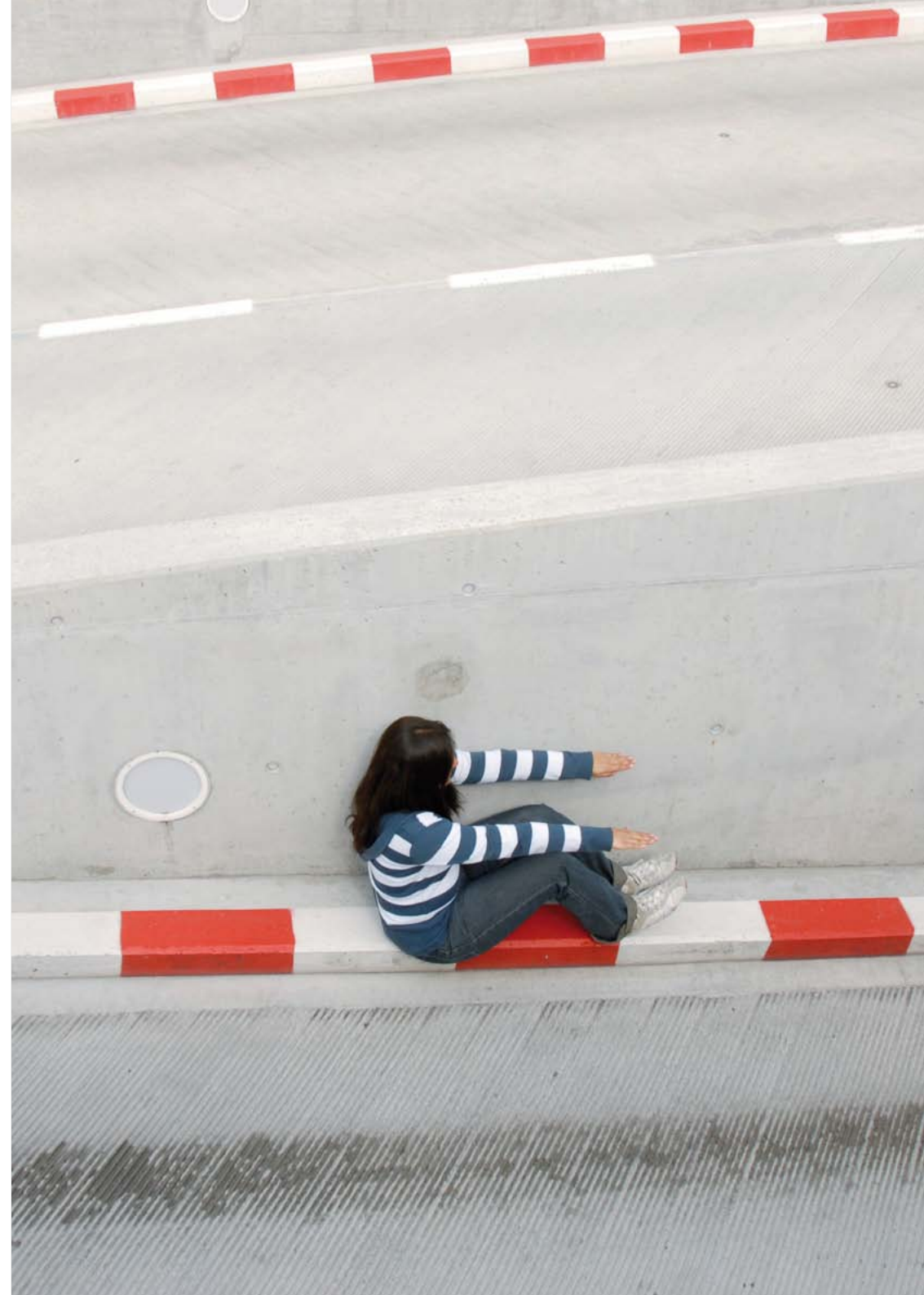
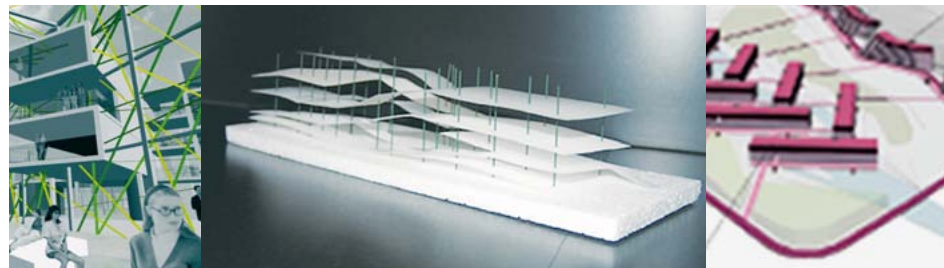
## Specialising in technology

The specialised course in technology centres on architectural design with the emphasis on construction. Are you equally interested in technical construction questions and design issues? If so, then focusing on technology and construction is the right direction for you to take. The structure and construction of buildings, load-bearing systems and materiality should all express the architectural and spatial concept; conversely, spatial forms and the world of images should be portrayed and defined in the structural formulation of a building. The focal points in the technology specialisation are construction, materials and technology. We pay particular attention to construction typologies and methods, to the technology of building and other materials, to production, fabrication and the transportation and assembly of building components and building systems.

**Goals.** Our aim is to teach students to employ various methodological instruments, tools and media in developing projects and to nurture a conscious approach towards questions of materials and energy resources, and their use and maintenance in terms of sustainability. Students will understand planning, project development and the construction phase as an interdisciplinary process.

### Career prospects

- Working in planning and development offices in all areas of architecture
- Organising the strategic planning phase, preliminary and project development, building plan submission, detailed design, implementation and construction supervision
- Urban development (defining the decision-making criteria for design plans, housing developments and neighbourhood development)
- Renovation, modernisation, conversion and transformation work
- Consultancy services on construction and technological questions, processing issues, leading projects in the real estate and management sector with regard to planning and execution
- Working in research and development for industrial construction companies
- ICT support for planning and architecture firms.



## Module Plan Bachelor of Arts in Architecture: 180 credits

Credits	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>Semester 1</b>	<b>Joint modules</b>																													
	Architectural theory/Basics of design (6)					Fundamentals/General knowledge (6)					Design/Modelling (6)					Process design/Real estate/Organisation (6)					Technology/Construction/Structural concepts/Cladding/Energy concepts (6)									
<b>Semester 2</b>	<b>Project class/Spring semester</b>																								<b>Summer school</b>					
	Project class: Design (12)												Project class: Design (12)												Summer school project class: Design (6)			Optional subject		
	<b>Voluntary internship year</b>																													
	Voluntary internship year (1 <sup>st</sup> opportunity) (30)																													
<b>Semester 3</b>	<b>Joint modules</b>												<b>Specialisation modules (special elective modules)</b>																	
	Architectural theory/Basics of design (6)					Fundamentals/General knowledge (6)					Design (6) Planning/construction processes I (6) Materials technology (6)					Presentation (6) Project development I (6) Load-bearing structures (6)					Production (6) Business management I (6) Energy (6)									
<b>Semester 4</b>	<b>Project class/Spring semester</b>																								<b>Summer school</b>					
	Project class: Design (12)												Project class: Design (12)												Summer school project class: Design (6)			Optional subject		
	<b>Voluntary internship year</b>																													
	Voluntary internship year (2nd opportunity) (30)																													
<b>Semester 5</b>	<b>Joint modules</b>												<b>Specialisation modules (special elective modules)</b>																	
	Architectural theory/Basics of design (6)					Fundamentals/General knowledge (6)					Fabrication (6) Planning/construction processes II (6) Building cladding (6)					Dynamics (6) Project development II (6) Transformation (6)					Sequences (6) Business management II (6) Technical equipment (6)									
<b>Semester 6</b>	<b>Project class/Spring semester</b>												<b>Bachelor's degree thesis</b>																	
	Project class: Design (12)												Thesis preparation (6)						Thesis (12)											

## Course beginning

Calendar week 38

## Course duration

Full-time: at least six semesters

Part-time: a maximum of 12 semesters

## Fees

CHF 600.– per semester

CHF 100.– registration fee

CHF 80.– examination fee per semester

CHF 90.– Charge for materials per semester

## Admission requirements

- Completed vocational training in the construction industry, with Swiss national higher certificate of vocational education
- Higher school certificate from a higher school, or vocational training completed outside the construction industry, with higher certificate of vocational education and practical internship  
Bern UAS offers students with a higher school certificate the chance to enter its Passerelle programme, which prepares them for technically oriented UAS studies. Additional information can be obtained from the course administration or from [www.passerelle.bfh.ch](http://www.passerelle.bfh.ch)
- Training at a technical college
- The course administration will decide on the admission of applicants with equivalent training, either in Switzerland or abroad, after a personal interview

## Advice and information events

Several information events are organised every year at which our courses are presented. We can answer individual questions and give advice on the personal requirements for our courses in a face-to-face meeting. Both these meetings and the information events are free of charge and do not commit you in any way. You will find the dates of future information events and a contact form for arranging a meeting under [www.ahb.bfh.ch](http://www.ahb.bfh.ch).

## Head of course

Friedrich Häubi, Professor of Architecture/Construction Process Management

E-Mail [friedrich.haeubi@bfh.ch](mailto:friedrich.haeubi@bfh.ch)

### Bern University of Applied Sciences

Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering

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### Courses at the Bern University of Applied Sciences Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering

Bachelor

- of Arts in Architecture
- of Science in Civil Engineering
- of Science in Wood Engineering

Master

- of Arts in Architecture (collaboration with the Fachhochschule Westschweiz HES-SO)
- of Engineering in Wood Technology (collaboration with University of Rosenheim D)
- of Science in Engineering (collaboration with Swiss University of Applied Sciences)

Master of Advanced Studies

- MAS Preservation and Conversion
- MAS Timber Construction
- MAS Sustainable Construction

Certificates of Advanced Studies (CAS)

### Courses at the Higher Technical Schools HF Wood Biel

Advanced technical courses

- Technical specialist Diploma HF in Timber Construction
- Technical specialist Diploma HF in Woodworking Industry
- Technical specialist Diploma HF in Lumber Industry
- Postgraduate HF in Management Studies

Professional and advanced technical certificate courses

- Timber Construction Supervisor
- Timber Construction Senior Supervisor (Site supervisor with Swiss specialist certificate)
- Swiss Master's certificate in Timber Construction
- Wood specialist with Swiss specialist certificate

### Research and Development Services

- Practice-oriented Research and Development in all divisions
- Contract services
- Accredited testing: All our laboratories are certificated to ISO/IEC 17025 standard and have SAS (Schweizerische Akkreditierungsstelle) accreditation. The tests are recognised internationally.
- Knowledge and Technology Transfer (WTT – KTT)

Our university employs a certified quality management system that follows European Foundation for Quality Management Systems (EFQM) guidelines.

**ACQUIN** Accreditation, Certification  
and Quality Assurance Institute

[www.ahb.bfh.ch](http://www.ahb.bfh.ch)