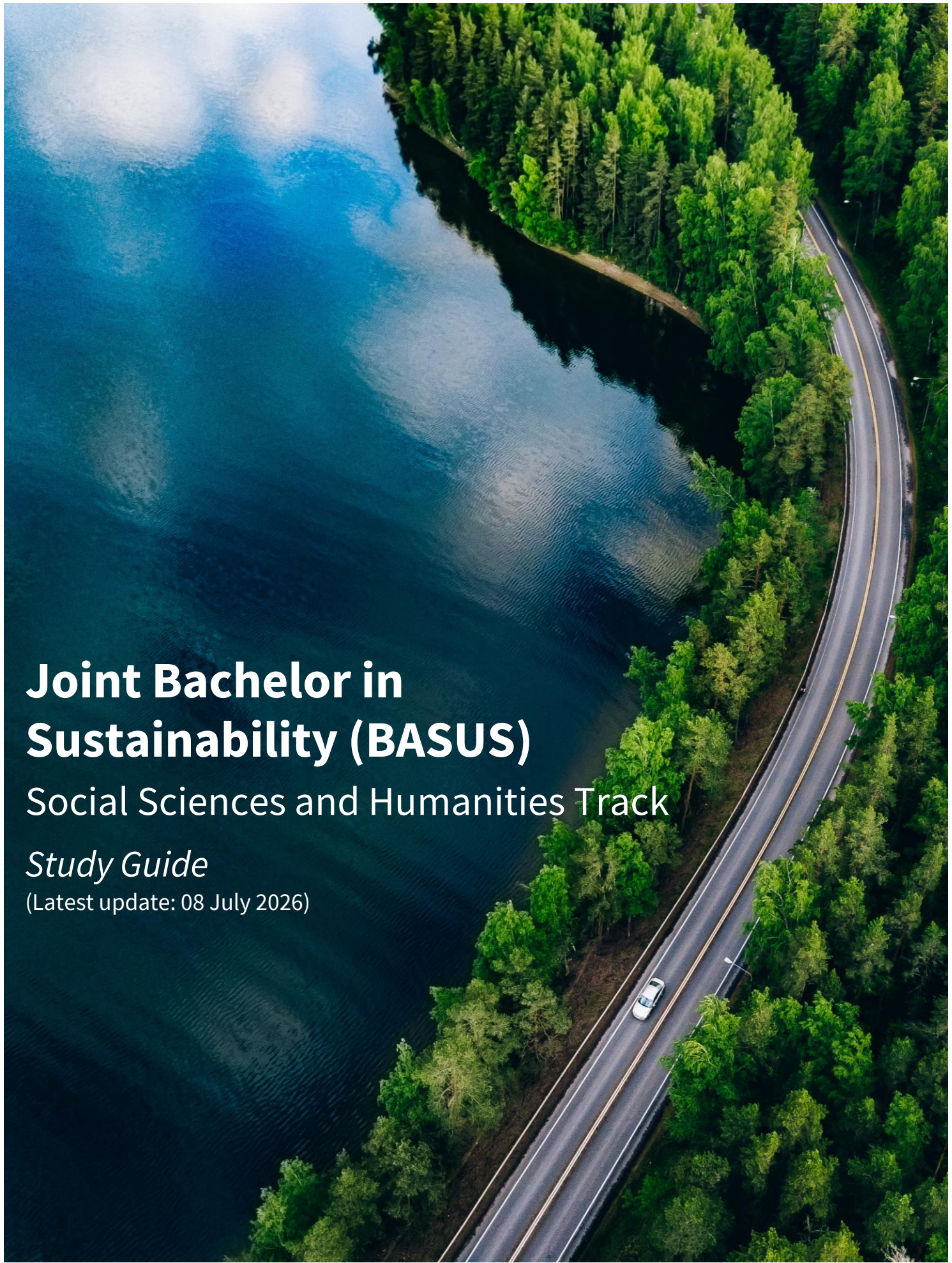


The background of the cover is an aerial photograph showing a deep blue lake on the left, a dense green forest on the right, and a winding asphalt road with a white car driving along the edge of the forest. The water reflects the sky and the surrounding greenery.

# **Joint Bachelor in Sustainability (BASUS)**

## Social Sciences and Humanities Track

*Study Guide*

(Latest update: 08 July 2026)



## Welcome!

Dear BASUS students,

Welcome to the Social Sciences and Humanities track at the University of Zürich. We're thrilled to have you on board!

This study guide will help you navigate your academic journey at UZH. Inside, you'll find everything you need to know about the track: how it's structured, what to watch out for, and how to successfully complete your studies. Think of it as your academic compass, helping you chart your course and offering support whenever questions come up.

In addition to academic details, we've included other resources such as the UZH survival guide that provide practical advice for settling into Zürich and exploring the services our university offers. From setting-up your IT infrastructure, to discovering

places to study and joining student organizations, this guide is packed with essentials to help you feel at home - and most of all, to inspire you about the possibilities of an enriching student experience.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us – we are happy to support you on your journey.

My best wishes for an inspiring and enriching study time in Zurich!



Basil Bornemann  
Program Coordinator BASUS Social Sciences and Humanities track



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# 1 Your BASUS Journey at the University of Zurich

## 1.1 Aim and Scope of the UZH “Social Sciences and Humanities” Track

Having completed your first year at Jagiellonian University in Kraków, you now enter the specialization phase of your studies at the University of Zurich. The Social Sciences and Humanities track approaches sustainability as a fundamentally human challenge: it asks what a sustainable society would look like, why sustainability is so difficult to achieve, and how meaningful change can come about. Across the track, you will engage with questions such as: What does sustainability mean in different social and cultural contexts? Why do some societies move toward sustainability more successfully than others? What roles do institutions, ideas, and interests play in enabling – or blocking – sustainable change? And which strategies can different actors use to advance sustainability transformations? Working from the perspectives of the social sciences and the humanities, you will learn to examine these questions critically, to weigh competing interpretations, and to analyze complex problems from multiple, sometimes conflicting, points of view. The aim is not to find a single formula for sustainability, but to understand the conceptual depth and acquire the methodological skills to understand sustainability problems and contribute thoughtfully to addressing them.

## 1.2 Structure of the Track

You complete the track over three semesters in Zurich (Semesters 3 to 5), followed by a final semester (Semester 6) in which you write your Bachelor’s thesis and may, if you wish, spend time at another partner university (see Section 5, “Going Abroad”). The curriculum combines compulsory track modules with a broad area that you shape yourself:

- **Compulsory track modules** form the academic backbone of the track and comprise four areas: Disciplinary Core, Disciplinary Extensions, Thematic Foci, and Integration (described in Section 1.3). The modules in the Disciplinary Core and Integration areas are compulsory, meaning that you must study all listed modules; the Disciplinary Extensions and Thematic Foci areas comprise compulsory elective modules, which means that you have to study a certain selection of the listed modules.
- **Electives, languages, practical and transversal skills** give you the freedom to broaden your knowledge, learn a language, and build practical competencies, so that you can shape your own academic and professional profile within or beyond the track (described in Section 1.4). In these areas, you can freely choose among eligible modules offered at UZH or at other BASUS partner universities. Please note that for most modules, specific participation requirements apply – make sure you check them well in advance and reach out to the module coordinator to clarify conditions of participation. At UZH, we provide a list of pre-selected courses for which no specific requirements apply.

You conclude your studies with the Bachelor’s thesis (described in Section 1.5). The diagram below gives an overview of how these elements fit together; the sections that follow describe each of them.

|                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                   |                                               |                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Semester 1-2</b><br>BASUS Introduction<br>@University Krakow                                               | <b>BASUS Common Core</b> (20 ECTS)<br>Introduction to sustainability dilemmas<br>Introduction to environmental factors<br>Introduction to economic development<br>Introduction to social issues | <b>BASUS Track Introductions</b> (24 ECTS)<br>Chemistry & physics<br>Environmental & life sciences<br>Economy & geography<br>Economics, management & engineering<br>Law & politics<br>Social sciences & humanities | <b>Transversals &amp; Practicals</b><br>(26 ECTS) | <b>Electives &amp; Languages</b><br>(40 ECTS) |                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Semester 3-5</b><br>Specialization Track<br><i>Social Sciences and Humanities</i><br>@University of Zurich | <b>Integration</b><br>(12 ECTS)<br>Sustainability Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (I-III)                                                                                            | <b>Disciplinary Core</b> (12 ECTS)<br>Sustainability ethics<br>Sociology of sustainability<br>Anthropology of sustainability<br>Sustainable finance                                                                |                                                   |                                               | <b>Disciplinary Extension</b> (12 ECTS)<br>Political science<br>Legal perspectives<br>Geography<br>Religious studies<br>Philosophy |
|                                                                                                               | <b>Thematic Foci</b> (24 ECTS)<br>Justice, Responsibility & Rights      Cultures, Spaces & Transformations      Structures, Actors & Strategies      Governance, Politics & Policy              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                   |                                               |                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Semester 6</b><br>Optional Mobility<br>@Partner University                                                 | <b>Bachelor Thesis</b> (10 ECTS)                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                   |                                               |                                                                                                                                    |

### 1.3 Compulsory Track Modules

The specialization track includes several compulsory as well as compulsory elective modules, which complement and build on each other:

- **Disciplinary Core (12 ECTS)** introduces central social-science and humanities approaches to sustainability: ethics, anthropology, sociology, and finance.
- **Disciplinary Extensions (12 ECTS)** broaden this foundation with courses from complementary fields such as law, geography, history, and philosophy.
- **Four Thematic Foci (24 ECTS)** let you deepen your theoretical and empirical knowledge in the areas that interest you most: Justice, Responsibility & Rights; Cultures, Spaces & Transformations; Structures, Actors & Strategies; and Governance, Politics & Policy
- **Integration courses (12 ECTS)** tie these strands together, equipping you with the inter- and transdisciplinary methods needed to conduct your own research on real-world sustainability challenges, alongside the other students in your cohort.

The tables below provide a tentative overview of the courses offered per area and module.

| <b>Integration (12 ECTS)</b> |                                                                                                     |                 |             |  |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|--|
| <b>Course Number</b>         | <b>Title</b>                                                                                        | <b>Semester</b> | <b>ECTS</b> |  |
| 01SM82LB001                  | Sustainability Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities<br>- Approaches and Methods           | HS              | 3           |  |
| tbd                          | Sustainability Research in Social Sciences and Humanities<br>- Applications and Explorations        | FS              | 3           |  |
| tbd                          | Sustainable Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities<br>- Current Topics and Research Designs | HS              | 3           |  |

| <b>Disciplinary Core (12 ECTS)</b> |                                                         |                 |             |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>Course Number</b>               | <b>Title</b>                                            | <b>Semester</b> | <b>ECTS</b> |
| 01SM80LB002                        | Introduction to Sustainability Ethics                   | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                | Anthropological Perspectives on Sustainable Development | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                | Introduction to Sustainable Finance                     | FS              | 3           |
| tbd                                | Sociology of Sustainability                             | FS              | 3           |

| <b>Disciplinary Extension (12 ECTS. choose 4 courses)</b> |                                                  |                 |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>Course Number</b>                                      | <b>Title</b>                                     | <b>Semester</b> | <b>ECTS</b> |
| tbd                                                       | European Integration                             | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                                       | Introduction to Development Policy and Economics | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                                       | Law and Sustainability                           | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                                       | Philosophy of Sustainability                     | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                                       | Political Ecology                                | HS              | 6           |
| tbd                                                       | Political Theory of the Anthropocene             | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                                       | Water and Humans                                 | HS              | 3           |

The table below shows examples of courses offered for each of the four thematic foci.

| <b>Thematic Foci (24 ECTS to be freely chosen from the different foci)</b> |                                                                                                              |                 |             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b><i>Justice, Responsibility and Rights</i></b>                           |                                                                                                              |                 |             |
| <b>Course Number</b>                                                       | <b>Title</b>                                                                                                 | <b>Semester</b> | <b>ECTS</b> |
| tbd                                                                        | Justice and Sustainability                                                                                   | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                                                        | Legal aspects of Environmental Governance and Justice                                                        | HS              | 2           |
| tbd                                                                        | Political Ecology                                                                                            | HS              | 6           |
| <b><i>Cultures, Spaces &amp; Transformations</i></b>                       |                                                                                                              |                 |             |
| tbd                                                                        | Advanced Spatial Analysis                                                                                    | HS              | 5           |
| tbd                                                                        | Anthropological Perspectives on Islam and Sustainability:<br>From Islamic Finance to Muslim Environmentalism | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                                                        | Eco-Cosmologies                                                                                              | HS              | 3           |
| <b><i>Social Structures, Actors &amp; Strategies</i></b>                   |                                                                                                              |                 |             |
| tbd                                                                        | Markets and Norms                                                                                            | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                                                        | Markets, Power and Morality                                                                                  | HS              | 6           |
| tbd                                                                        | Political Economy of Sustainable Energy Transitions                                                          | HS              | 2           |
| <b><i>Governance, Policies &amp; Politics</i></b>                          |                                                                                                              |                 |             |
| tbd                                                                        | The Environment in Global Sustainability Governance                                                          | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                                                        | The Politics of Inequality                                                                                   | HS              | 3           |
| tbd                                                                        | Political Economy of Sustainable Energy Transitions                                                          | HS              | 2           |

Detailed information for each course is given in the UZH online course catalog: <https://studentervices.uzh.ch/uzh/anonym/vvz/index.html>

#### 1.4 Elective Modules

Two overarching components run throughout all six semesters, meaning that some of the ECTS were already earned during semesters 1 and 2 at JU Kraków.

- **Electives (35 ECTS):** Free choice of disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses to sharpen and broaden your academic profile within or beyond the specialization track. A curated selection of these recommended courses is directly linked in the UZH Course Catalog. However, you are also free to choose other relevant courses beyond this list.
- **Languages (5 ECTS):** You must complete at least 5 ECTS credits in a second language. The UZH Language Center – as well as some other departments, such as the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – offers beginner courses in Portuguese, French, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Korean, Russian, Chinese and more.
- **Transversals & Practicals (40 ECTS):** Develop other academic and professional competences, such as programming (e.g., Python Bootcamp 3ECTS), Business Development (Entrepreneurship Basics 3ECTS), academic writing (Academic English 3ECTS) or Marketing Basics (Marketing Strategy 3ECTS).

Additionally, you can integrate online courses offered by Una Europa partner universities. The University of Helsinki, for example, offers a wide variety of online courses.

#### 1.5 Bachelor's Thesis

Your studies culminate in the Bachelor's thesis (10 ECTS), a compulsory module in which you carry out an independent piece of academic research on a sustainability topic of your own choice. Together with your supervisor, you define the research focus and develop the work over the course of the module. The thesis is an individual piece of work; co-authorship is not permitted.

The thesis comprises approximately 24 to 30 pages (about 72,000 to 90,000 characters including spaces). It shall be written in with the approval of the Study Commission, another language is also possible. Your thesis must be supervised by a teacher of the study program who holds at least a doctoral degree.

The supervisor assesses and grades the thesis in the form of a written report. If the thesis is rejected as insufficient, it may be revised and resubmitted once. If it is rejected a second time, you may write one further thesis on a new topic. As the thesis is written at UZH, you register for it and for your degree at the Faculty of Theology and the Study of Religion, in accordance with the applicable Program Regulations.



## 2 Planning Your Study Progress

### 2.1 Academic Year and Examination Dates

The dates listed below are standard faculty timeframes and are subject to change. You are responsible for verifying the specific exam dates, times, and locations independently.

| Fall Semester 2026                |                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Semester                          | 1 August 2026 to 31 January 2027                                                                                                                  |
| Lecture Period                    | 14 September 2026 (Week 38) to 19 December 2026 (Week 51)                                                                                         |
| Exam Weeks                        | TRF: Calendar Week 2 (2027) but                                                                                                                   |
|                                   | RWF: Weeks 1 - 5                                                                                                                                  |
|                                   | PHF: Week 51                                                                                                                                      |
|                                   | WWF: Weeks 1 & 2                                                                                                                                  |
|                                   | MNF: Weeks 51 - 5                                                                                                                                 |
| Deadlines for Course Registration | <a href="https://www.students.uzh.ch/en/studyadmin/booking/fristen_hs.html">https://www.students.uzh.ch/en/studyadmin/booking/fristen_hs.html</a> |

| Spring Semester 2027              |                                                    |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Semester                          | 1 February 2027 to 31 July 2027                    |
| Lecture Period                    | 22 February 2027 (Week 8) to 4 June 2027 (Week 22) |
| Exam Weeks                        | TRF: Week 24                                       |
|                                   | RWF: Weeks 24-28                                   |
|                                   | PHF: Week 22                                       |
|                                   | WWF: Weeks 23 & 24                                 |
|                                   | MNF: Weeks 35 – 37                                 |
| Deadlines for Course Registration | tba                                                |

Abbreviations:

- **TRF:** Faculty of Theology
- **RWF:** Faculty of Law
- **WWF:** Faculty of Economics
- **PHF:** Faculty of Philosophy
- **MNF:** Faculty of Science

Keep in mind that while many modules use traditional end-of-semester exam sessions during the weeks listed above, some courses rely on semester-long assessments. The module coordinators will provide information on the exact dates, and the current exam schedule will also be published on the website. For oral exams, the module coordinators are responsible for setting the dates. Students are generally informed by the respective instructors. If not, you can reach out to them during or after class or via email.

## 2.2 Module and Exam Booking

By booking a module through the UZH Student Portal, you are automatically registered for the associated performance assessment. Please familiarize yourself with the specific procedures and requirements well in advance.

## 2.3 Types of Assessment

Performance assessments include, but are not limited to:

- **Classic Examinations:** Oral, written, or practical exams
- **Continuous Coursework:** Written papers and presentations
- **Practical & Coursework Elements:** Documented practical work and documented active participation in courses
- **Special Formats:** Assessment performance within e-learning courses, proof of academic achievements completed through independent study, and documented tutoring activities.

## 2.4 Grading, Repetition and Workload

The assessment of a semester performance can be evaluated either with grades or with pass/fail. Grades are assigned on a scale from 1 to 6 in quarter-grade increments (0.25), where 4.0 is the minimum passing grade:

| Grade    | Verbalization             | Status |
|----------|---------------------------|--------|
| 6        | Excellent                 | Pass   |
| 5.5      | Very Good                 | Pass   |
| 5        | Good                      | Pass   |
| 4.5      | Satisfactory              | Pass   |
| 4        | Sufficient                | Pass   |
| 1 – 3.75 | Very Poor to Insufficient | Fail   |

ECTS credits are only awarded if the performance is assessed as satisfactory or better (grade 4 or above). The credit system used is based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). One credit corresponds to 30 hours of total work. A failed performance assessment may be repeated twice.

If you fail or do not complete a module, you may repeat it. Depending on the module, you either repeat the whole module, which requires rebooking, or only the assessment; the course catalog specifies which applies, and there is no right to an immediate repeat. A compulsory module may be repeated up to twice. If you do not pass it within these attempts, it counts as a definitive failure. A definitely failed compulsory module leads to a formal dismissal from the study program and to a block on that program and on similar UZH programs that include the same module as compulsory, meaning you can no longer continue in those programs.

## 2.5 Study Duration

The standard period of study designated to complete your track and your Bachelor's thesis is 6 semesters (3 years). However, if you are unable to complete your degree within these 6 semesters, you can extend your studies. If you exceed the standard duration, you must submit an official request for an extension of two additional semesters via UZH Student Portal. This application must be submitted within 30 days of receiving your academic record at the end of your 6th semester. Please note that you must provide valid, significant reasons clearly outlining the circumstances that prevented you from graduating within the designated three years.

## 2.6 Bachelor's Degree

BASUS is a joint-degree program. Your Bachelor's degree is therefore awarded jointly by all six Degree Awarding Parties – the universities of Helsinki, Jagiellonian (Kraków), KU Leuven, Complutense Madrid, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and Zurich – once you have earned the required 180 ECTS credits, of which at least 90 must be completed at the University of Zurich. You register for your degree at the Faculty of Theology and the Study of Religion by submitting your degree application to the Vice Dean of Studies, who verifies that you have fully met all graduation requirements. You can file this application at the earliest for the semester in which you complete your final remaining requirements.

Your final degree will be evaluated with a weighted overall grade. In this calculation, your graded modules are weighted according to their ECTS credits. Please note that any surplus modules you take will not count toward your Bachelor's degree. However, they will still be listed in your Academic Record as non-credited achievements. As this is a joint degree, your final diploma documents – the joint diploma and the joint diploma supplement – are issued on behalf of all six Degree Awarding Parties, with Jagiellonian University in Kraków, as the coordinating university, responsible for issuing them or arranging their issuance. The diploma carries the logos of the partner universities and is signed by their legal representatives or delegates. The official conferral of your academic degree takes place when you receive your signed diploma.

On the joint diploma, the degree is designated “Joint Degree Bachelor in Sustainability”, which at the University of Zurich corresponds to the “Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability”.

## 3 Going Abroad

### 3.1 Exchange Opportunities within the BASUS Partner Network

In the sixth semester, when writing the Bachelor's thesis, you may also study at another Una Europa University. Those planning to write their thesis during this mobility semester must arrange suitable supervision well in advance and check the opportunities and requirements of the host university. For advice in planning, contact Study Program Coordination for organizational questions, get in touch with the specialized offices at the respective universities.

### 3.2 Application Steps, GSE Office, and Critical Deadlines

An international exchange requires meticulous administrative preparation. The entire process is supervised in tandem with the Global Student Experience (GSE) office at UZH.

- **Eligibility:** To participate in a mobility semester, you must have completed your assessment year (first two semesters) and meet the general credit/grade requirements set by the faculty.
- **Timeline & Deadlines:** Preparation begins up to a year in advance. The main application deadline for exchange placements in the following academic year (Autumn or Spring semester) is typically January 15th. A secondary deadline for remaining spots in the Spring semester usually falls on August 15th.
- **Credit Recognition:** Before leaving, you must complete a Learning Agreement with Basil Bornemann to guarantee that the ECTS credits earned abroad will count toward your BASUS degree.

For comprehensive step-by-step application guides, partner university databases, and drop-in consultation hours, visit the official website: [int.uzh.ch](https://int.uzh.ch)

### 3.3 Scholarships, SEMP Funding, and Travel Grants

Multiple funding tracks are available to support BASUS students during their time abroad:

- **SEMP Funding (Swiss European Mobility Program):** The Swiss counterpart to Erasmus+. If your exchange is approved within Europe, you are automatically eligible for a monthly stipend of 440 CHF.
- **Una Europa Travel Grants:** Specialized travel allowances or short-term mobility grants occasionally funded by the alliance for specific workshops or collaborative thesis research.
- **Hardship & Accessibility Grants:** Additional financial aid is available through the GSE office for students with disabilities, chronic illnesses, or proven financial hardships to ensure an equitable exchange experience.



## 4 Your First Steps before arriving in Zurich

### 4.1 Essential Contacts

Study Program Coordination    Reach out for overall program advice.

Office Address (for all coordinators):  
Room KAA-H-01, Kantonsschulstrasse 1, 8001 Zürich

**PD Dr. Basil Bornemann (Track Coordinator)**

Phone: +41 44 634 58 74 | E-Mail: [basil.bornemann@uzh.ch](mailto:basil.bornemann@uzh.ch)

**Apitta Tharcisius (Administrative Support)**

E-Mail: [apitta.tharcisiusmariaselvam@uzh.ch](mailto:apitta.tharcisiusmariaselvam@uzh.ch)

**Prof. Dr. David Atwood (Academic Supervisor)**

Phone: +41 44 634 47 30 | E-Mail: [david.atwood@uzh.ch](mailto:david.atwood@uzh.ch)

For more details visit the official UZH BASUS website: [trf.uzh.ch/en/BASUS](http://trf.uzh.ch/en/BASUS)

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Global Student Experience    Contact this office for international student administrative matters.  
Room KOL-E-17, Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zürich  
E-Mail: [incoming@int.uzh.ch](mailto:incoming@int.uzh.ch) | Website: [int.uzh.ch](http://int.uzh.ch)

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Office of Student Affairs    Contact for all matters related to admission, issuing the UZH Card, leave of absence and withdrawal from the university.  
Student Services, Rämistrasse 71, CH-8006 Zürich  
E-Mail: use contact form [students.uzh.ch/en/studyadmin/administration/email](http://students.uzh.ch/en/studyadmin/administration/email)

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Student Advisory Services    They support matriculated students who have general (not subject or faculty-related) questions about studying at UZH. They offer consultation and coaching.  
Visit their website for more information: [studienberatung.uzh.ch](http://studienberatung.uzh.ch)

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### 4.2 Visa Requirements

EU/EFTA Citizens    You do not require a visa to enter Switzerland. A valid passport or national identity card (ID) is sufficient.

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|                      |                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Non-EU/EFTA Citizens | You must obtain a national "D" visa before traveling. Apply at your local Swiss embassy or consulate general at least three months prior to entry. |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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|                                                                            |                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Citizens of Australia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the UK | You do not require an entry visa. However, you must apply for an official document assuring a residence before your arrival. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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For detailed information, please refer to the information on the website:  
[uzh.ch/studies/application/entry](https://uzh.ch/studies/application/entry)

### 4.3 Residence Registration

International students who will reside in Switzerland for more than three months must obtain a residence permit. In the Canton of Zurich, they must normally register in person with the residents' registration office of their municipality within 14 days of arrival or moving into their accommodation. In the City of Zurich, this office is called the *Personenmeldeamt*; elsewhere it is often called the *Einwohnerkontrolle*. The current fees are approximately CHF 40 for municipal registration, plus CHF 70 for the residence-permit card for EU/EFTA nationals or CHF 142 for non-EU/EFTA nationals. Required documents generally include a valid passport or identity card (EU/EFTA students), confirmation of enrolment, and a rental or subletting agreement. Depending on nationality and student status, a visa or an assurance of a residence permit (including proof of sufficient financial means) may also be required.

Please consult this website for more information:  
[internationals.uzh.ch/visa/registration](https://internationals.uzh.ch/visa/registration)

### 4.4 Mandatory Health Insurance

Health insurance is legally compulsory for everyone residing in Switzerland for longer than three months. Your basic policy must cover illness, accidents, and maternity.

**Important Rule on Employment:** The moment you take up any employment in Switzerland, you automatically become subject to the Swiss insurance mandate. Any existing exemptions (including the EHIC) will instantly become invalid, and you must purchase a Swiss health insurance plan.

Upon registering at your local residents' registration office, you will receive an official letter tracking your insurance status. You have three months from your arrival date to declare your coverage via one of two paths:

- **Option A: Apply for an Exemption.** Choose this option if you are from an EU/EFTA country or the UK with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). You can request an official exemption from the Swiss health insurance, provided you do not work in Switzerland. You are entitled to receive medical treatment in Switzerland upon presentation of the EHIC.
- **Option B: Purchase a Swiss Plan.** Choose this option if you are from a non-EU country or an EU country, but you plan to work in Zurich. If you have private insurance from your home country, you may apply for an exemption. However, the exemption is rejected in almost all cases. It is recommended to buy a Swiss Plan.

You can choose any private Swiss health insurance provider. For affordable student rates, look into specialized international student packages (usually 40 to 100 CHF/month). Find a list of insurance packages here to choose one that most suits your needs: [ethz.ch/en/studies/international/after-arrival/health-insurance/nicht-eu](https://ethz.ch/en/studies/international/after-arrival/health-insurance/nicht-eu).

These private student plans are not automatically recognized. Once you apply for an exemption from the Swiss compulsory insurance mandate, the Zurich Social Insurance Office (SVA) will review your specific policy individually to ensure it meets Swiss legal coverage standards.

For both options, you must submit your application and insurance documents online to the Zurich Social Insurance Office (SVA) via this link: [eadminportal.ch/svazh/ekvg](https://eadminportal.ch/svazh/ekvg)

Find here a guide which explains how to fill in the SVA form: [int.uzh.ch/Instructions/Exemption](https://int.uzh.ch/Instructions/Exemption)

Note: It can take well over 3 months to receive the outcome of your exemption request. Consult the external page website of SVA for an update on the current waiting time (website in German only): [svazurich.ch/ueber-uns/sva-zuerich/kontakt/kontaktformulare/kvg-befreiung\\_kontakt/formular](https://svazurich.ch/ueber-uns/sva-zuerich/kontakt/kontaktformulare/kvg-befreiung_kontakt/formular)

And check your email spam folder regularly!

Please consult this website for more information: <https://int.uzh.ch/en/in/organization/arrival>

#### **4.5 Accommodation in Zurich**

The housing market in Zurich is tight, and finding a place that meets your needs might take some time, thus it is best to begin the search for a suited apartment as early as possible.

For comprehensive guides, verified listings, and student housing portals, please consult the official university resources directly:

- Accommodation for International Students  
[internationals.uzh.ch/en/living-in-zurich/accommodations](https://internationals.uzh.ch/en/living-in-zurich/accommodations)
- Housing Office of UZH/ETH and Affordable Housing  
[students.uzh.ch/en/studentlife/living/accomodation](https://students.uzh.ch/en/studentlife/living/accomodation)

## 5 Financing Your Studies

### 5.1 Monthly Living Costs

Living and studying in Zurich comes with a reputation for being expensive, and managing your finances effectively requires careful planning from day one. The following matrix provides a realistic overview of the average monthly living costs you should anticipate as an international student at UZH (tuition fees are not considered):

|                                                | Amount in CHF          | Comments                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Travel within City of Zurich                   | 49 or 77               | ZVV annual subscription 49 CHF for <25 years, 77CHF for >25 years                                                             |
| Health Insurance                               | 0 or 40-100            | EU/EFTA students can be exempted; starting from 40 CHF for non-EU/EFTA                                                        |
| Social Insurance (AHV)                         | 0 to 45                | Until 25 years, after depends on wealth & income; 0 CHF if you are an international student without permanent residency in CH |
| Food (eating out at mensas and eating at home) | 400 to 500             |                                                                                                                               |
| Housing (rent, heating, electricity)           | 600 to 900             |                                                                                                                               |
| Personal (leisure, clothing etc.)              | 250                    |                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Total amount</b>                            | <b>ca. 1300 – 1900</b> |                                                                                                                               |

Total expenses depend greatly on the amount of rent paid and lifestyle choices (e.g. leisure expenses). Here is an overview of prices in Zurich in general: <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Zurich>

### 5.2 Student Employment & Part-Time Jobs

Balancing your studies with a part-time job is a common way to help finance your life in Zurich. However, working regulations and restrictions strictly depend on your nationality:

- **EU/EFTA Citizens:** You are permitted to start working from your very first day of residency. You are allowed to work a maximum of 15 hours per week during the semester, and up to 100% (full-time) during official semester breaks. There is no additional work permit required for these student hours,

as you fall under the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons. However, you are legally required to notify your employment to the competent authorities. In the Canton of Zürich, this is the Migration Office. You can submit this notification directly via their online contact form here: [zh.ch/de/migration-integration/kontaktformularmigrationsamt](https://zh.ch/de/migration-integration/kontaktformularmigrationsamt)

If you wish to work more than 15 hours per week during the semester, you must submit your employment contract and confirmation of matriculation to the Migration Office. They will review whether your residence status can remain under "education" or must be changed to "employment". Note that you do not need a work permit for a mandatory student internship.

- **Non-EU/EFTA Citizens:** You may only start working six months after the beginning of your studies and you will need a permit to work in Switzerland. Once this waiting period is over, you are subject to the same limits: a maximum of 15 hours per week during the semester and up to 100% during semester breaks. In both cases, your employer will have to apply for a work permit at the cantonal office for economy and labor (AWA). Your future employer will need a letter confirming that your employment will not interfere with your studies. Please contact the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Theology and the Study of Religion (TRF) to request this letter. Find more information regarding work permit regulations and mandatory notification procedures here: [studyinswitzerland.plus](https://studyinswitzerland.plus)

What you can expect to earn:

- **University Roles (e.g., Student Assistant):** The average gross hourly salary range is 28 - 30 CHF.
- **Other Sectors (e.g., Gastronomy, Retail):** Hourly wages can be lower, often ranging from 20 -25 CHF.

Working the maximum permitted 15 hours per week during the semester at an hourly wage of 30 CHF equates to approximately a net monthly salary of 1,600 CHF.

Find more information regarding working regulations on these websites:

[int.uzh.ch/en/in/organization/living](https://int.uzh.ch/en/in/organization/living)  
[careerservices.uzh.ch/en/ratgeber/Working-in-Switzerland](https://careerservices.uzh.ch/en/ratgeber/Working-in-Switzerland)

Consult this website to find links to job offering websites:

[students.uzh.ch/en/studentlife/living/vacancies](https://students.uzh.ch/en/studentlife/living/vacancies)

### 5.3 Scholarships & Loans

Depending on your own financial situation and that of your parents, you may be eligible for a scholarship or loan. The main funding route is the UZH scholarship, administered by the Student Financial Aid Office. International Bachelor students can apply once they have earned 55 ECTS – that is, after a successful first year.

The UZH scholarship draws on several funding sources pooled and distributed by the Student Financial Aid Office, so students file a single application rather than approaching individual funds. Support is subsidiary: it supplements your family's contribution and other sources rather than covering full living costs, and students in Switzerland solely to study are generally expected to seek funding in their home country as well.

Please note that the amount of money from scholarships reduces if students earn more than CHF 6,000 per year. As it involves significant paperwork, you should apply as early as possible.



- Detailed information and support are provided here through the Student Financial Aid Office [studienfinanzierung.uzh.ch](https://studienfinanzierung.uzh.ch)

Beyond the UZH scholarship, a few genuinely separate options are worth exploring:

- **Private Foundations:** from 1000 CHF upwards. You can get an overview of potential Foundations tailored to your personal situation for a one-time fee of 78 CHF from [stipendium.ch](https://stipendium.ch)
- **Educa Swiss:** A non-profit offering free financing coaching and low-interest education loans (on average around 1.5%, capped at 3.25%). It is open to students resident in Switzerland with a valid permit, so it becomes an option once you are here with your B permit, not before arrival. Learn more at <https://educaswiss.ch/>
- **Home-country and international scholarships:** Grants from your home country, the EU, or private bodies; often the most realistic source for international students, and worth researching before you arrive.

## 6 Setting Up Your Digital Life & Navigating UZH

### 6.1 Credentials and UZH Email Account

Your digital credentials are generated automatically once your university enrollment is finalized.

- **Account Access:** Your individual login data will be available for download within 72 hours of completing the enrollment process. You can find these details via a separate password letter located in the Application Portal on the website [studentservices.uzh.ch](https://studentservices.uzh.ch).
- **Two-Factor Authentication (2FA):** UZH enforces mandatory two-factor authentication across all central IT systems. You must configure your secondary authentication method during your initial login setup.
- **Official UZH Email Account:** Your student email address grants you free access to Microsoft 365 (Outlook). Ensure that you check this account regularly.

For step-by-step instructions consult this website:

[zi.uzh.ch/en/getting-started](https://zi.uzh.ch/en/getting-started)

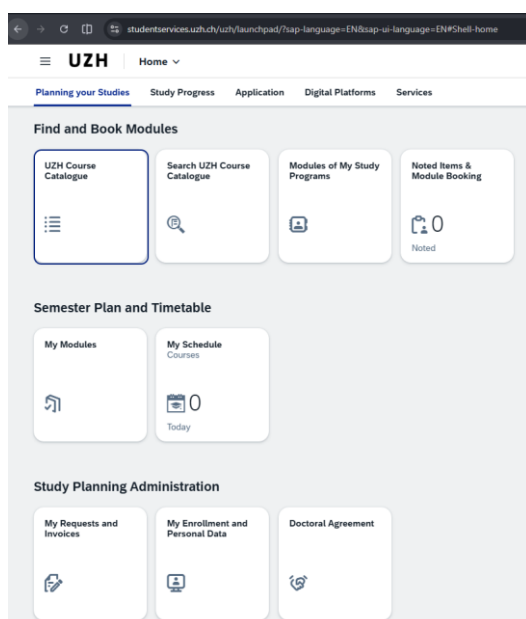
For step-by-step instructions on setting up your inbox on your laptop or phone consult this website:

[zi.uzh.ch/en/support](https://zi.uzh.ch/en/support)

### 6.2 Digital Platforms

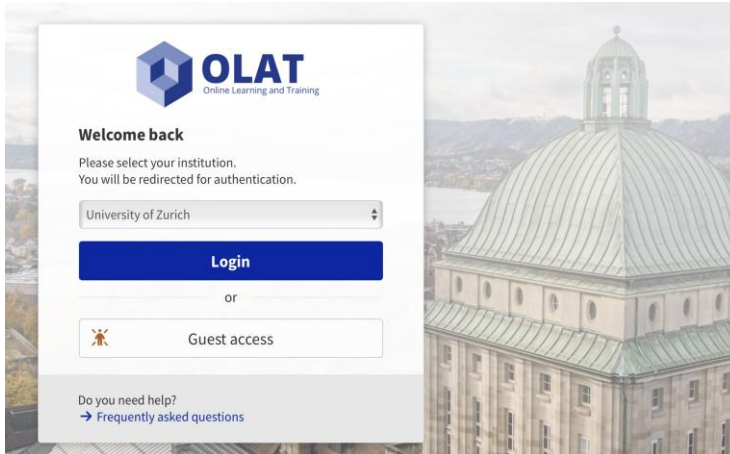
Your day-to-day academic workflow, timetable coordination, and course contents are managed across three primary web and a mobile application:

- **The UZH Student Portal**  
Your central administrative dashboard. Use this platform to access the module booking application, track your degree progress, download official enrollment certificates, and view your final exam results. Consult the UZH Student Portal here: <https://studentservices.uzh.ch/uzh/launchpad>.



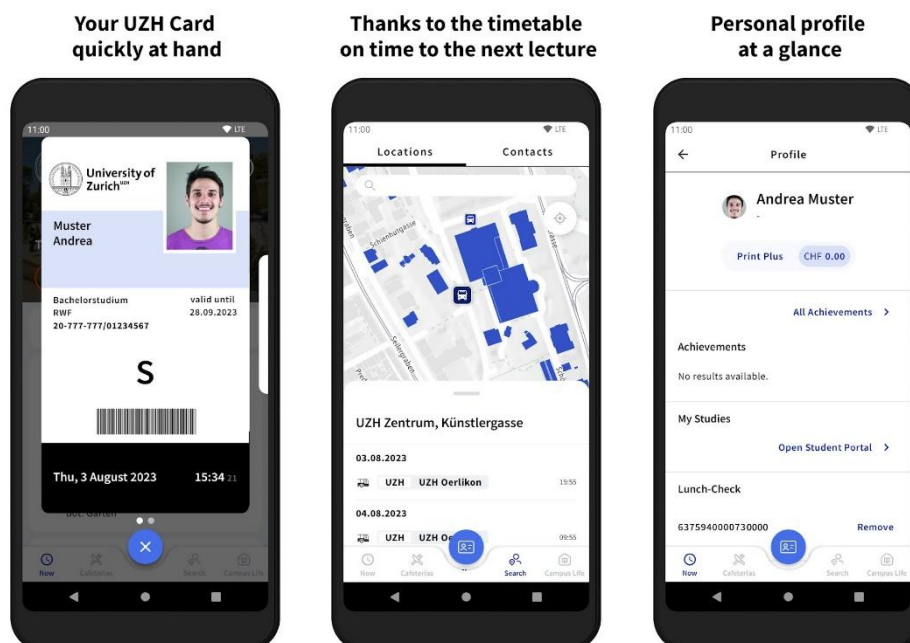
- **OLAT (Online Learning And Training)**

The central learning platform used by most UZH lecturers to manage active courses. Use your standard UZH credentials to log in. Through this portal, you can bookmark your enrolled courses, access literature, and also submit essays or join conversations with other students on forums. Consult OLAT here: [lms.uzh.ch/dmz/](https://lms.uzh.ch/dmz/).



- **UZH Now App**

The official mobile application for daily campus life. This app provides access to your personalized student profile, your current daily timetable, a campus navigation map, informations about campus life and daily Mensa menus. Download it here: [app.uzh.ch/en](https://app.uzh.ch/en)



## 6.3 Wi-Fi, VPN, and IT Support Desk

To connect your devices securely on campus and access the university's digital library infrastructure from home, configure the following networking tools:

- **Campus Wi-Fi (eduroam):** The secure, campus-wide wireless network framework. To connect your laptop or mobile phone automatically at any UZH or ETH location, authenticate using your UZH email address and your dedicated identity profile.

- **VPN:** Essential for remote research. Many protected academic journals, library catalogs, and database search tools require an active UZH network connection. Download and run Ivanti Secure Access Client whenever working off-campus.

If you experience any technical problems, you can contact the Support ServiceDesk:

[sdesk.uzh.ch/tas/public/ssp/](https://sdesk.uzh.ch/tas/public/ssp/)

Please consult this website for more information:

[zi.uzh.ch/en/students](https://zi.uzh.ch/en/students)

#### 6.4 The UZH Card and Physical Campus Access

Once you receive your UZH student card, you must sign it and validate it at a validation station on campus. Students must re-validate their cards every semester so that they continue to receive the student benefits. For detailed information, including a map with all validation stations at UZH, see here:

<https://www.uzhcard.uzh.ch/en/validation.html>

You will need the card for:

- Student discounts outside inside and outside the university
- Identification at the University (e.g. at examinations, for libraries etc.)
- Print, copy and scan at UZH multifunction devices through: [zi.uzh.ch/en/students/workplace-collaboration/uzhprintplus/4students](https://zi.uzh.ch/en/students/workplace-collaboration/uzhprintplus/4students)
- Electronic access to buildings and facilities if the card is enabled for access.

Some functions of the UZH Card are also available electronically on the UZH now app (see above).

#### 6.5 Study Places and Libraries

The UZH buildings and the 30 university library sites offer a wide choice of spaces where you can study and work. When there are no lectures or classes taking place, you can also study and work in empty seminar rooms.

Please consult this website for more information about locations, opening hours and booking of study places: [students.uzh.ch/en/new/learning/studyspaces](https://students.uzh.ch/en/new/learning/studyspaces)

#### 6.6 Cafeterias and Mensas

UZH operates numerous cafeterias and *Mensas* (student canteens) across all campus locations, offering affordable meal options, snacks, and coffee. The official university app UZH Now displays all current UZH cafeteria menus and operating hours.

Because the UZH Zentrum campus and the ETH Zürich main campus are located directly adjacent to one another, you can eat at all ETH Mensas as well. Your UZH Card grants you the exact same student discount rates at all ETH dining facilities. Get the ETH Mensa App to consult all current ETH cafeteria menus and operating hours. Download it here: [ethz.ch/en/campus/getting-to-know/cafes-restaurants-shops/gastronomy](https://ethz.ch/en/campus/getting-to-know/cafes-restaurants-shops/gastronomy).

## 7 Your Student Life, Health & Well-being

### 7.1 Campus Life and Activities

University life extends far beyond lecture halls. UZH offers a vibrant ecosystem of cultural, athletic, and social activities designed to enrich your student experience:

- **ASVZ (Academic Sports Association Zurich):** Your student status grants you access to sports facilities, gyms, and hundreds of weekly classes across Zurich. Access your digital membership via the ASVZ app using your UZH credentials. Consult this website to learn more about ASVZ and to download the app: <https://www.asvz.ch/en/634-welcome-asvz>
- **Cultural and Social Events:** From campus cinemas and student-run bars to specialized workshops and sustainability weeks, there is always something happening. Keep an eye on the official campus bulletin boards and the UZH now app for weekly highlights.

### 7.2 Student Associations

Getting involved in student organizations is the fastest way to build a network, develop soft skills, and actively shape university policy:

- **VSUZH (Verband der Studierenden der Universität Zürich):** The official student association representing the entire student body at UZH. They advocate for student rights in university politics, offer legal counseling, and organize major student events. Find out more on their website: [vsuzh.ch](https://vsuzh.ch)
- **Student Associations (Fachvereine):** Every field of study has its own dedicated student committee (Fachverein). They organize targeted exam preparation sessions, maintain old exam archives, host social mixers, and represent your specific track's interests to the faculty. Find a list with all Student Associations here: [students.uzh.ch/en/studentlife/studentorgs/societies](https://students.uzh.ch/en/studentlife/studentorgs/societies)
- **Student Organizations:** UZH hosts a wide variety of broader student organizations. These include cultural groups, sustainability initiatives, student magazines, sports clubs, and international networks like the Erasmus Student Network (ESN). Find a list with all student organizations here: [students.uzh.ch/en/studentlife/studentorgs/organizations](https://students.uzh.ch/en/studentlife/studentorgs/organizations)

### 7.3 Student Support Services

Academic pressure, administrative hurdles, or personal challenges can occasionally feel overwhelming. UZH provides confidential, professional, and free support structures to assist you:

- **Psychological Counseling Services (PBS):** Jointly run by UZH and ETH, this service offers free, strictly confidential, and professional counseling sessions for students facing academic anxiety, burn-out, personal crises, or mental health struggles. Sessions are available in both German and English. Find out more about this service and book an appointment here: [pbs.uzh.ch](https://pbs.uzh.ch)
- **Disability Office / Special Accommodations:** If you have a physical disability, chronic illness, or a neurodivergent condition (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia), you can apply for "Nachteilsausgleich" (special

accommodations) to receive extended exam times or adaptive learning setups. Request counseling and accommodations: [disabilityoffice.uzh.ch](https://disabilityoffice.uzh.ch)

- **Student Advisory Services:** For questions regarding overall degree planning, shifting tracks, or the administrative handling of academic hardships, contact the central student advisory team. Consult their website: [studienberatung.uzh.ch](https://studienberatung.uzh.ch)

## 7.4 Mobility & Public Transport in Zurich

The public transport network in Switzerland is reliable, safe and efficient. It's no problem to get around without a car – in fact, about half of the population in the city of Zurich doesn't own a car. Not only Zurich, but the whole country is perfectly accessible by train, tram and bus.

To navigate the network efficiently, keep the following rules and tools in mind:

- **Essential Apps:** Download the SBB App for national train travel, here: [sbb.ch/en/travel-information/apps/sbb-mobile](https://sbb.ch/en/travel-information/apps/sbb-mobile), the ZVV App for local Zurich trams and buses, here: [zvv.ch/en/service/apps/zvv-app](https://zvv.ch/en/service/apps/zvv-app) and the SwitzerlandMobility App, the ultimate map tool for official cycling tracks and route planning, here: [schweizmobil.ch/en/switzerlandmobility-app](https://schweizmobil.ch/en/switzerlandmobility-app).
- **Buying Tickets:** You must purchase your ticket before boarding your train, tram, or bus. Tickets can be bought via the mobile apps or at the touchscreen vending machines located at almost every stop.
- **No Onboard Sales & Fines:** Tickets cannot be purchased onboard. Traveling without a valid ticket results in high immediate fines.
- **Cycling in the City:** Cycling is a highly popular, budget-friendly alternative. You can easily rent bikes and e-bikes across the city using bike-sharing networks like PubliBike. If you bring or buy your own bicycle, ensure it is equipped with functioning lights for night riding, as the police heavily fine unlit cyclists.

Please consult this website for more information on the public transport:

[internationals.uzh.ch/en/living-in-zurich/transport](https://internationals.uzh.ch/en/living-in-zurich/transport)

For local cycling guidelines in Zürich, please consult the official website (German only):

[stadt-zuerich.ch/de/mobilitaet/velo](https://stadt-zuerich.ch/de/mobilitaet/velo)



## 8 Your Educational & Career Opportunities after BASUS

### 8.1 Master's Degree Programs

The multidisciplinary foundation of the BASUS curriculum prepares you for a wide range of specialized graduate studies across Switzerland. To help you navigate your options, a comprehensive [Master's Programs Overview Matrix \(Excel Sheet\)](#) has been compiled, mapping out suitable Master's tracks at Swiss higher education institutions (Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences).

To make an informed decision, ensure you review the following key indicators for each program listed in the spreadsheet:

- **Admission Requirements:** Many Master's programs require specific foundational. Look out for potential admission gaps early on. The broad area of Electives in BASUS offers you numerous opportunities to take courses that will prepare you for a subsequent master's program.
- **Language of Instruction:** While some programs are bilingual (German/English), the majority of environmental and sustainability Master's programs in Switzerland are taught entirely in English.
- **Structure:** Standard Master's programs comprise either 90 ECTS (1.5 years) or 120 ECTS (2 years).

### 8.2 Academic Tracks

If you're interested in research after completing a master's degree program, you can pursue a career within academia and higher education:

- **Doctoral Studies (PhD):** Conduct doctoral research at a research institute for example on environmental governance, climate justice or sustainability transformation.
- **Research and Project Management:** Use your training to support academic roles, manage research projects and coordinate social-ecological field studies in academia.

### 8.3 Career in the Private Sector

Corporate sustainability has shifted from a compliance requirement to a core business strategy. The private sector seeks professionals who understand ecological boundaries and data-driven sustainability metrics:

- **Sustainability Consulting & ESG:** Advising corporate clients on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting, life-cycle assessments (LCA), and supply chain decarbonization strategies.
- **Environmental Impact & Risk Management:** Roles within engineering firms, environmental consultancies, or insurance companies, focusing on environmental impact assessments (EIA) and climate risk modelling.
- **Corporate Sustainability Offices:** In-house positions within major corporations tasked with implementing zero-waste circular economies, carbon offsets, and corporate environmental strategies.

#### 8.4 Career in the Public Sector

If your goal is to influence systemic change, policy frame working, or public awareness, public administration and non-profit organizations offer direct pathways to societal impact:

- **Public Administration:** Roles within environmental protection agencies, urban planning departments, and regional offices for waste, water, and energy management.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** Project management, scientific advising, or policy advocacy positions within national and international environmental NGOs (such as WWF, Pro Natura, Greenpeace, or regional foundations like Durabilitas).
- **International Organizations:** Opportunities within multilateral environmental frameworks, trans-boundary climate networks, and international sustainability development task forces.

## 9 Study Regulations

Below you can find a table with the official study regulations that apply to your program. Please note that for legal reasons all official documents can be provided in German only. If you need clarification on specific legal terms or clauses, please contact your program coordinator, Basil Bornemann, for assistance.

| Official Name                                                                                                                                                            | Description                                                                                                                                               | Link                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rahmenverordnung über den Joint Degree Bachelorstudiengang in Sustainability an der TRF der UZH und den beteiligten Partneruniversitäten der Hochschulallianz Una Europa | General framework and legal regulations specifically for the Joint Degree Bachelor's program in Sustainability at TRF and Una Europa partner universities | <a href="#">Legal Framework on the Joint Degree Bachelor's Program in Sustainability</a>                                    |
| Anhang zur Studienordnung zum Joint Degree Bachelorstudiengang in Sustainability an der TRF der UZH                                                                      | Specific program requirements, course structures, and detailed study guidelines for the Social Sciences and Humanities Track                              | <a href="#">Appendix to the Program Regulations for the Joint Degree Bachelor's Program in Sustainability at TRF of UZH</a> |
| Rahmenverordnung über die Bachelor- und Masterstudiengänge an der TRF der UZH                                                                                            | Faculty-wide framework regulating all Bachelor's and Master's programs at the TRF                                                                         | <a href="#">Legal Framework on the BA and MA Degree Programs at TRF of UZH</a>                                              |
| Studienordnung für das Bachelor- und Masterstudium an der TRF der UZH                                                                                                    | General study regulations and academic procedures for all students at TRF                                                                                 | <a href="#">Program regulations for BA and MA Degree Studies at TRF of UZH</a>                                              |

Abbreviations:

- **TRF:** Faculty of Theology
- **UZH:** University of Zurich

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