



## The Curricular System at the University of Basel, Switzerland

Dear Readers,

Having recently taken an academic position at the University of Basel (UniBas hereafter), Switzerland, I would like to introduce you my current affiliation in terms of its curricular system. Higher education in Switzerland is a very well-established institution with a total of three major type of universities available in their system: (1) universities (as traditional academic institutions), (2) universities of applied sciences, and (3) universities of teacher education. The university of Basel is one of the lead universities in Switzerland holding the 4th rank among the Swiss system, 33rd in Europe, and 94th around the world according to Times Higher Education report in 2019. The university's devotion to excellence in teaching, research, collaboration, and contribution to science and society has been responsible for its eminent success. Its curricular system also has its play in this renowned attainment, as well.



Following the Bologna Process, a bachelor degree, or the First Cycle, student at UniBas has to successfully complete 180 European Credit Transfer Points (ECTS). If they are interested in pursuing a Master's degree, or the Second Cycle, students need to fulfil the requirements of a 90 to 180 ECTS depending on their study programs. The Third Cycle, as you might anticipate, is doctoral education and the required credits vary depending on the Ph.D. program. The numbers do not tell much about educational quality, as one needs to acknowledge the curriculum and the content.



What makes the Swiss system special is that BA education requires the completion of two major fields of study. To exemplify, one cannot study only Biology, but s/he has to have a second major, for which there is almost no discipline-based restrictions (except for the school of Medicine). To further illustrate, a philology student often pairs his/her

studies with another language or Humanities program. However, it is still possible and in current practice that they can enroll to programs from two different disciplines, such as Languages and Law or Natural Sciences. The idea behind this availability is to help students equip themselves with preliminary tools in interested areas, but then select an area to specialize on through further degree studies. Allocating time and space for interdisciplinary studies and helping young minds broaden their horizons with regard to the current age of technology, UniBas provides an independent and mind-opening atmosphere to young adults.

Each department at UniBas has a degree study plan available for students determined a priori. A typical fulltime student is required to finish the BA program within six academic semesters, but part-time study is also available. Programs might have their own cognate-based curricular divisions called modules. At the department of English Language and Literature (Philology), a BA student has to take classes from both strands of English



Linguistics and Literature. Terminology for classes within the curriculum is also different, as classes are staged from Proseminars (introductory core courses) to Seminars and Lectures (advanced topics). Most classes are on a pass/fail grading system. Yet, it is compulsory for all students to hand in theoretical (for core classes) and empirical research papers (for advanced classes). It is of great value to guide students to conduct empirical research as part of BA education considering the indispensable impact of having hands-on experience in a field. Applying theory into practice and



fostering empirical research are strengths of the curricular system at UniBas. If all these requirements are successfully completed, students take the four hour-length BA exam at the end of the sixth semester, which leads the way to graduation.

In a nutshell, students have a nice balanced selection of classes in each of their cognates designed to cater for their academic needs. More importantly, they have the freedom to study two majors from totally different disciplines if they wish. Yet, what makes it a top-quality institution is that the curricular system is designed for graded development from core to advanced studies and from theory to practice in all fields.



Sincerely,

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