
HKB

Hochschule der Künste Bern
Bern University of the Arts

EN

Master Design

Entrepreneurship & Research



Berner Fachhochschule
Bern University of Applied Sciences

Professional design practice has undergone a major change. Since its means of production, its basic knowledge and its methods have become accessible to a larger public, the economic value of services in traditional design disciplines has been decreasing. At the same time, design is considered today as essential for developing innovative solutions for socially relevant problems.

That is why the Master of Arts in Design of the Bern University of the Arts teaches design as an interdisciplinary creative activity in which our students design content, not just form, and for other people, not for themselves or a client. We support them in grasping the complexity of socially relevant problems, in interpreting these, and in finding answers by bringing together knowledge from diverse fields.

Having set out with these objectives in 2015, the HKB/MA DESIGN is considered today as one of the most innovative design programmes in the German-speaking countries. We are proud to shape the discourse on “Design Entrepreneurship” and “Design Research” by educating designers and researchers who successfully develop new work areas in accordance with their creative capabilities and visions.

HKB/MA DESIGN: Entrepreneurship & Research with Social Impact

The HKB/MA DESIGN offers you an individual course for design and design-research projects with a high degree of social relevance in the fields of Entrepreneurship and Research, as a full-time student (over 3 semesters) or as a part-time student (over 5 semesters).

What is the HKB/MA DESIGN all about?

The HKB/MA DESIGN is focused on developing your project from the first idea until it is ready for implementation. It offers you small classes for individual support, and provides you sufficient time to identify a socially relevant design problem or research question, to analyse the problem or state of research, to create innovative solutions or new knowledge, and finally to formulate a business concept or research plan.

You apply with an idea for a product, a service or a research project, or choose an idea from the advertised project proposals. The programme advises you in finding appropriate supervisors, and in designing your curriculum according to the specific needs of your project.

What does the HKB/MA DESIGN mean by “Design with a social impact”?

The HKB/MA DESIGN puts the social relevance of design and research at the heart of things. The programme thematises the complex networks of relationships between human beings and objects and between people and the environment.

You thereby learn and apply creative and scientific theories, methods and tools that will enable you to develop innovative solutions to socially relevant problems and to increase the “social impact” of your project. These include, for example, planning, carrying out interviews, participatory observation, workshops, cultural probes, on-site inspections and “empathy tools”.



Top: Course "Design Entrepreneurship" by Thierry Blancpain (Co-Founder, Grilli Type Foundry) and Florian Jakober (Co-Founder, Afrika).
Below: At the annual Design Research Methods Festival, invited experts introduce you to current theories and methods.







Top: Course "Design Research" by Dr Arne Scheuermann (Professor of Design Theory).

Below: On a field trip in a foreign city, you will visit diverse hotspots such as the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Faculty of Design.

What is the result of my studies and what can I do after graduating from HKB/MA DESIGN?

On the “Entrepreneurship” track you will conclude your studies with a business concept for a design-based product or service that you can make the basis of a subsequent career. With your final project you can found your own company and apply for design grants or start-up support, in particular for DEAL, the Berner Designinitiative programme for excellent entrepreneurial design projects.

On the “Research” track you will conclude your studies with a research plan for a design research project that you will carry out in your subsequent career. With your final project you will apply for research support or for admission to a doctoral programme, in particular at the Graduate School of the Arts of the University of Bern and the HKB (via the specialised Master in Research on the Arts of the University of Bern).

The skills and competencies gained during your studies will increase your chances of achieving an attractive career as an independent designer, entrepreneur, or design researcher.

Could you suggest examples of typical projects?

As every project develops from an individual idea and vision, there is no typical case. But the following two projects can serve to showcase the potential of the programme:

Dolografie

Based on her bachelor thesis, Sabine Affolter developed a business and marketing concept for this visual communication tool for pain therapy during her studies in Design Entrepreneurship.

Today, Dolografie is used by a growing number of therapists. It was awarded the European Design Award 2017, the Swiss Design Award 2013/14 and the Bernese Design Foundation 2014/15 marketing award. In addition, the project was supported by our partners Creative Hub.

Learning from Niggli

Nina Paim developed this research project investigating the publishing strategies of the Swiss publishing house Verlag Arthur Niggli during her studies in Design Research.

To continue her research and publish the results, she received the Werkbeitrag of Canton St. Gallen. A multilingual publication is planned for publication by Triest Verlag in 2019.

Information and Contact

Start

annually in September

Application deadline

in mid-March

Duration

three semesters full-time or
five semesters part-time

Tuition fee

750 CHF per semester (excl. application, registration and additional fees)

Prerequisites

Fluent German or English (written and spoken), and a basic knowledge of the other language; Bachelor or Diploma from a university of arts/of applied sciences in a design, business or other research discipline; professional, teaching or research experience (at least an internship)

Application

including CV, letter of motivation, portfolio and aptitude interview

Contact

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Organisation

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Permanent lecturers

Prof. Minou Afzali
Thierry Blancpain
Florian Jakober
Dan Nessler
Ulrike Felsing
Prof. Robert Lzicar
Prof. Dr Arne Scheuermann

Previous guest lecturers

Andrea Augsten
Lucas Conte
Dominic Fiechter
Michael Flückiger
Angela Haas
Meike Hardt
Dr Tanja Herdt
Beatrice Kaufmann
Theresia Leuenberger
Ignazio Morello
Matthias Rohrbach
Hugo Ryser
Annina Schneller
Daniel Schoeneck
Christoph Stähli Weisbrod
Matthias Vatter

HKB and inclusive culture

HKB offers special programmes enabling individuals who have disabilities to study without barriers. People with physical or mental impairments or a chronic condition can study at HKB provided they meet the usual admission criteria.

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