

The compact and clear UAS profile.

Our conception of a “UAS” as an independent university of applied sciences.

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About FH SCHWEIZ

FH SCHWEIZ is the only national umbrella association for graduates of all disciplines stemming from the universities of applied sciences (UAS). There are 36 regional and 4 national organisations affiliated with FH SCHWEIZ. Currently, the umbrella association has over 48,000 members. FH SCHWEIZ promotes a strong dual education system, amongst other things.



Christian Wasserfallen
President FH SCHWEIZ
and National Council

In 2008, FH SWITZERLAND devised the “UAS profile”. Specifically, it provides guidance for the economic and political worlds and society in general, and explains the skills and outstanding characteristics that distinguish graduates of universities of applied sciences. Under the leadership of FH SWITZERLAND, 13 features were set out at that time to guarantee a high level of employability as well as the excellent reputation of UAS degree holders. Over the ten years since then, the university world has become more sophisticated. In its broad lines, the UAS profile still applies. But some of the characteristics expected have been achieved or else are still in the making. For this reason the list of objectives and features expected has been revised. The result is a nine-point catalogue.

Introduction

In Switzerland, universities of applied sciences (UAS) are equivalent to but different from other types of higher-education institutions. UAS prepare undergraduates for their future career through practice-oriented programmes as well as through application-oriented research and development (R&D). UAS degree programmes aim at a high level of employability and qualify graduates for professional work with bachelor’s degrees and industry-oriented and specialist master’s degrees. UAS teaching is based on the principle “Gained in practice, for use in practice”.

Our concept

UAS lecturers

UAS teaching staff are a major success factor in the UAS profile. Lecturers have to currently put the latest savoir faire into practice at their workplace and bring this experience to the classroom. Part-time positions are to be encouraged at lecturers’ workplaces and the economy/society/cultural worlds canvassed to encourage recruitment of lecturers for UAS bodies. Consequently they work in, or have at one stage, worked in the relevant industries. They are also fully aware of the independent UAS profile within the Swiss educational landscape. Study curricula at UAS are designed to fit skills and application objectives using the appropriate scientific methodology. UAS are well prepared to take on new digital teaching techniques using the most modern technology.

Application-oriented research and development

Courses in UAS must comply with UAS R&D guidelines. R&D is particularly close to practice in the employment world and is financed both by third-party and internal funding. In R&D, UAS strive to achieve the same conditions as in universities and at ETH Zurich. Third-party R&D funding, e.g. through Innosuisse should be directed more to the special areas and needs of UAS.

Employability

The high employability of men and women who graduate from UAS is one of the most telling arguments in favour of UAS degree programmes. Direct hiring into an industry without a long induction phase is both in the interest of graduates and of employers themselves. This obviates the need for long periods of on-the-job training after graduation. Maintaining high employability after completing UAS degree programmes requires structured exchanges between UAS and economic, societal and cultural players. The constant contacts maintained at the highest levels between UAS degree holders and senior UAS staff ensure further development of the UAS profile both internally and externally. This is exactly why economic, societal and cultural players are involved as much as possible in decisions taken on UAS development.



Brigitte Häberli-Koller
Councilor, President advisory
board FH SCHWEIZ

Why do we set out a UAS profile? Quite simply, because: universities of applied sciences (UAS) in their current form are still relatively new. The UAS is one of three types of higher-education institutions, in addition to universities and educational colleges. The world of continuing education is undergoing change and has become more complex over the last few years, something which is tied up with changes in the job market and advances in technology. We politicians have to handle a variety of issues on a daily basis. It is precisely in complex problem areas that we need help and guidance. The UAS profile, by clearly and concisely setting out the essential information, highlights the position of universities of applied sciences and their graduates in the educational landscape. Thus, it serves as an ideal and valuable communication tool.

In addition, we promote a clear understanding of the UAS “brand” amongst all involved (students, lecturers and management).

Admission

The profile of UAS degree holders is significantly influenced by the practical experience they gained prior to their studies. Students may have come from technical colleges. Secondary-school graduates are also increasingly finding their way to UAS. These students have to undergo a year of specific on-the-job training before graduating. The job training opportunities for secondary-school graduates needs to be improved. The easy access to training programmes is a great strength and must be safeguarded.

Continuing education

Current developments and trends in the job market should be adopted and the appropriate skills included in UAS degree programmes. Uncontrolled growth, particularly in the names given to degree programmes, should be prevented. Quality assurance in continuing education at university level must be ensured by institutional accreditation or in other ways, such as via ratings. There must be a possibility to provide credits for previous practical and educational experience.

Higher education levels in the Bologna process

There are three university levels in the Bologna system (Bachelor, Master and PhD). The PhD level should be offered to UAS degree holders in Switzerland. This can be done through cooperation or, in the medium term, through independent offers. The goal must be to promote young talent at UAS. The independent UAS profile based on science, practice and R&D should form the basis of all three levels.

Cooperation and mobility

UAS cooperate with other universities domestically and abroad despite their own competitive positioning. In this way, they promote the excellence of their own institution and guarantee both a wide-ranging curriculum as well as the quality assurance features of the UAS umbrella brand expected by economy, society and culture. Furthermore, the mobility and exchange of students and lecturers domestically and abroad should be promoted.

Identity and participation

The UAS profile strengthens identity and must be used for the further development of UAS. Accordingly, the UAS profile should be strongly represented by appropriate personalities at important committees and bodies in the fields of higher education policy and innovation. These people with a UAS background should take an active part in issues and on committees.

Designation

A UAS should be clearly recognisable as such. The official English name for international acceptance is “University of Applied Sciences”.

The compact and clear UAS profile.



“An autonomous profile is a must for UAS, just as individuality rounds out a personality.”

Brigitte Breisacher
CEO Alpnach Norm-Schränkelemente AG



“UAS also represents an opportunity to network and exchange ideas in a constructive atmosphere.”

Remo Tettamanti
CEO Cantina Sociale Mendrisio



“The sound education at UAS and the university’s excellent contacts opened several doors for me.”

Vera Kaelin
PhD student, graduate research assistant, University of Illinois at Chicago



“Employability thanks to practical relevance — with an UAS background. This is often an advantage when filling key positions.”

Markus Theiler
CEO Jörg Lienert AG



“A UAS degree holder has academic tools at their disposal that can develop the skills acquired over many years of professional experience.”

Raoul Leuba
Trading Director Nucor Trading SA



“UAS degree holders are also very successful when it comes to starting salaries and low unemployment numbers.”

Georges Ulrich
Director FSO

What is the UAS profile?

The UAS profile describes the unique profile of graduates from universities of applied sciences.

What features make up the UAS profile?

Graduates from universities of applied sciences have high employability. This is based on their skills and work experience.

Which skills are we talking about?

The UAS profile picks up on skills that UAS degree holders have developed before and during their studies. Skills consist of knowledge, competences and abilities. The UAS profile distinguishes technical, methodical, self and social competences.

What is understood by workplace experience?

Workplace experience combines professional, work and business practical experience. It results from the experience gained in the job market before and during studies (apprenticeships, internships and employment).

What are the goals of the UAS profile?

The UAS profile provides orientation for business, society and politicians. In addition, the UAS profile is understood as a possible basis for discussion on

continuing education issues. It also shows what is specifically meant by the employability of graduates from universities of applied sciences.

Does the UAS profile apply to all UAS degree holders?

The close practical relevance of UAS education is present in all fields of study, not only in the classical fields such as technology, economics and architecture.

Further information and contact

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