Module Title	**Master's Thesis**
Module Code	MCLmath
Degree Programme	Master of Science in Life Sciences (MSLS)
ECTS Credits	30 ECTS
Workload	900 working hours
Module Coordinator	Stefanie Graf: **Address:** Länggasse 85, CH-3052 Zollikofen **Phone:** +41 31 910 29 58 **Email:** stefanie.graf@bfh.ch
Lecturers	• Principal advisor (BFH academic staff): advises on planning, data collection, analysis, and writing of the thesis. • Optional: Co-advisor (BFH academic staff from a different discipline or thematic field, or an external partner). • External expert (expert from the private or public sector or from another university or research institute; defined by the principal advisor and approved by the Head of Teaching): skim-reads thesis, participates in the oral examination. Head of Teaching: Prof. Dr. Roland Stähli MSLS Student Administration: studadmin.msc.hafl@bfh.ch
Entry Requirements	Before starting their Master's Thesis, students need to: • present their topic in the Master's Thesis Colloquium; • submit the Master's Thesis Project Definition. This document must be signed by the principal advisor and approved by the head of the respective specialisation.
Learning Outcomes and Competencies	After completing the module, students will be able to: • design and conduct an independent research project; • develop precise, theoretically grounded research questions and, where appropriate, formulate testable hypotheses aligned with the study's conceptual framework and methodological approach; • systematically identify, select and critically evaluate academic literature, assessing its relevance, methodological rigor and contribution to the field, to construct a robust theoretical foundation for their research; • employ specialised literature and domain-specific expert knowledge to support and substantiate their research; • apply correct academic referencing practices to ensure transparent, consistent and ethically sound use of sources; • select, justify and apply suitable methodological approaches to collect and analyse data; • interpret research findings and draw evidence-based conclusions that contribute to academic or professional practice; • communicate complex ideas clearly and professionally, both in written academic form and oral presentations; • concisely synthesise research findings, design clear and informative data visualisations, and translate complex scientific content into accessible language for a high-quality poster;

	• adhere to ethical research principles, including data protection, responsible data management and academic integrity; • apply project management strategies to plan, structure and complete a Master's Thesis within a defined timeframe; • reflect on their own research processes and identify limitations, challenges and areas for future development.
Module Content	The workflow is structured as follows: 1. Module Enrolment in IS-Academia: Students allocate a certain number of ECTS credits for the thesis to each semester of their studies, in multiples of five ECTS. 2. Choice of topic: Students choose from a list of open Master's Thesis topics or may propose their own topic. 3. Master's Thesis Colloquium: Presentation and discussion of the research proposal during a colloquium at the beginning of each semester. 4. Master's Thesis Project Definition: Finalisation of the Master's Thesis Project Definition form, in consultation with the principal advisor, and submission within a maximum of two months after the colloquium. 5. Realisation of the Master's Thesis according to the Project Definition and in consultation with the principal advisor. 6. Master's Thesis announcement form: Announcement of the slot in which the Master's Thesis will be submitted, at least 2.5 weeks before the date of submission. 7. Submission: Submission of the thesis, the raw data, the Master's Thesis abstract form, a poster in electronic format, and a bound copy of the thesis. Students may also submit their thesis in the form of a scientific publication. Additionally, students need to print the poster in A0 and bring it to the oral examination. 8. Oral examination: Oral examination of the thesis and its related field of knowledge by the principal advisor with the participation of an external expert.
Teaching and Learning Methods	Individual work on a challenging, comprehensive and practice-oriented topic, advised by the advisors. Students may also request methodological consulting (laboratory work, quantitative and qualitative statistical methods) in addition to regular supervision.
Assessment	The principal advisor is responsible for the evaluation of the thesis. The external expert only grades the oral examination and poster. • Assessment of Master's Thesis: Distinction between two types of work, using a separate assessment form for each (see the Campus App). 1. Type 1 – Desk-work focus: The thesis is largely based on secondary data and does not require any demanding coordinated activities. 2. Type 2 – Practical focus: The thesis has a strong practical orientation and includes coordinated activities with high demands on the student's independent working methods (laboratory, data collection, field work, or similar). • Assessment focus of the oral examination: 1. Ability to synthesise information.

	2. Clear and technically sound oral communication. 3. Ability to comment on the thesis. 4. Ability to independently relate the thesis to other topics studied in the degree programme. 5. Ability to answer additional questions. Students who receive an insufficient grade of 3.5 are given the opportunity to carry out a subsequent improvement of written assignments defined by the principal advisor. The maximum grade that can then be obtained is 4. This still counts within the same attempt.
Repetition	If a thesis is graded between 1.0 and 3.5, it must be repeated to graduate. A thesis can only be repeated with a new topic, based on a new project definition. Students who repeat their thesis must be assigned a new principal advisor. The choice of the new topic and new principal advisor are discussed and agreed upon with the Head of Specialisation.
Attendance	NA
Format	Oriented autonomous work
Module Type	Compulsory
Venue	Free choice of place of work. Depending on the choice of topic, fieldwork in Switzerland or abroad may be conducted. On request, students can take leave to write their thesis. Detailed information about leave requirements can be found on the Campus App.
Literature	All regulatory and supporting documents are available on the Campus App.
Links to other modules	• AF-01: Applied Research in Natural and Social Sciences • AF-02: Knowledge Management and Sharing in Agriculture and Forestry • AF-21: Expansion of Personal Scientific Knowledge • AF-24: Advances in Agricultural and Forest Sciences • AF-25: Current Topics in Applied Agricultural and Forest Research • AF-57: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Current Topics in Mountain Areas • E1: Journal Club Environmental and Natural Resource Sciences • D1: Handling and Visualising Data • D2: Design and Analysis of Experiments • D3: Modelling and Exploration of Multivariate Data • D4: Data and Ethics • F6: Journal Club “Food and Nutrition Sciences”
Language	The Master’s Thesis is usually written in English. Any deviation from this requirement must be justified by the principal advisor in the PD and agreed by the Head of Teaching.
Comments	NA
Last Update	September 2026