

ETH zürich

life

ETH community magazine
December 2019

Envisioning the future
ETH in 2040



Main Building

Dome gets new function

ETH is continuing to grow, as is the number of partnerships it is involved in, and more event venues are required as a result. The dome of the Main Building is therefore going to be converted into a space for visits, selected events and meetings. Key advantages include its central location in the Main Building, its proximity to the Dozenten-foyer restaurant and its unique architectural design. In the future, the new reception hall will be used for events such as delegation receptions and academic celebrations.

www.ethz.ch/executive-board-reports-19-5 →



Photo: ETH Zurich

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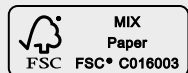
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Photo: Giulia Marthaler

Looking back at ETH Day

An eventful and important year

Numerous guests from the worlds of research, politics and industry – including Swiss Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin – came together on 16 November 2019 to celebrate the 164th anniversary of ETH Zurich. ETH Rector Sarah Springman looked back on an eventful year which saw much discussion of ETH's educational objectives. She highlighted the importance of preparing ETH graduates for their roles as experts and leaders of the future. This year, Evelyn Hu was awarded an honorary doctorate for her important work in semiconductor physics.

www.ethz.ch/eth-day →

ETH Link

Switching to electric buses

ETH Link runs between the Zentrum and Höggerberg campuses. In order to promote sustainable mobility, ETH is switching to electric buses, which are both quiet and emission-free. A charging station for the buses will be installed in front of the HIL building on the Höggerberg. If a bus is charged overnight, it will have enough battery capacity to keep running all day long. ETH Link is planned to switch to electric in late summer 2020.

www.ethz.ch/link-en →



Photo: ETH Zurich

Save the Date

Town hall meeting
at the turn of the year
4 February 2020
10-11 a.m.
Audi Max, Main Building

Cyber security

Opening of CYD Campus

On 7 November, Swiss Federal Councillor Viola Amherd opened the Cyber Defence Campus at ETH Zurich in the presence of ETH President Joël Mesot. The new campus will strengthen the partnership between ETH Zurich and the Swiss Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) in the field of cybersecurity. The CYD Campus, which also has a site at EPFL in Lausanne, will bring together experts from the DDPS, industry and the universities. The aim is to use early detection, new technologies and education to improve Switzerland's protection against cyber risks.

www.ethz.ch/cyber-defense-campus →



Photo: Alessandro Della Bella

New workshop platform

From an initial idea to a finished workpiece

Milling, lasering, printing – whatever the idea, the new workshop platform provides advice for ETH members or spin-offs and will place workshop orders directly with internal specialists or external suppliers. It also supports the various stakeholders by serving as a central contact point for matters relating to digitalisation, procurement and knowledge transfer.

www.werkstattplattform.ethz.ch/en →

Air travel project

“Stay grounded, keep connected”

International networking is crucial for researchers and students, but travel accounts for over half of all of ETH Zurich's greenhouse gas emissions, and around 93 percent of these stem from business flights. An ETH-wide forum will be held on 20 January in the Main Building as part of the “Stay grounded, keep connected” air travel project. The aim of the project is to reduce the amount of CO₂ emissions caused by ETH members' air travel.

ETH air travel project forum:

20 January 2020 from 4.30 to 6.30 p.m.

(Most of the workshops and presentations will be in German.)

www.ethz.ch/air-travel →

Key figure

320

That's the number of children who took the opportunity to find out about the different professions available at ETH on National Future Day. As part of the day's activities, they had the chance to develop video games, perform exciting experiments, investigate the differences between humans and animals, and build their own machines to measure air quality. The popularity of Future Day at ETH is growing year by year. All of the programmes were booked up in no time.

www.ethz.ch/zukunftstag-en →



Photo: Heidi Hostettler

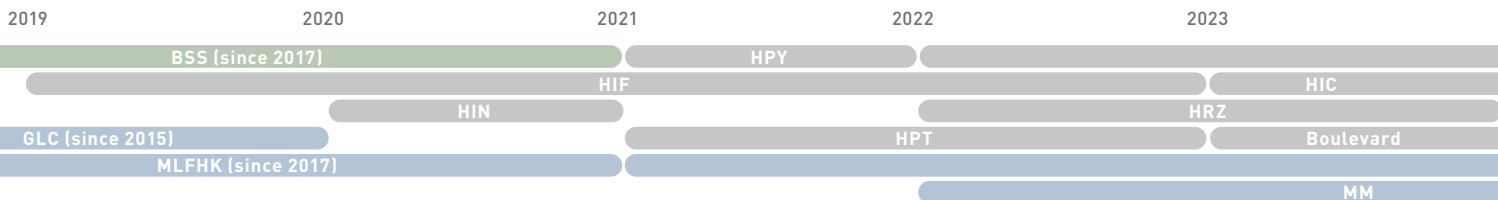
Welcome to the future

The Campus Höggerberg 2040 project lays out a vision for the ETH campus of the future. At the same time, however, space is becoming increasingly scarce for ETH. Why is that? And how can we overcome this challenge in order to create inspiring workplaces?



The future home of D-BSSE in Basel: an airy new building full of natural light.

Image: Nickl & Partner Architekten



Construction timeline

Plans as of 2019

Basel location

Höggerberg campus

Zentrum campus

Text Florian Meyer

If you've visited an ETH Zurich campus recently, you've surely noticed the amount of construction work going on. On the Höggerberg campus, ETH is renovating the HIF building, which opened in 1976 and houses the Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering (D-BAUG). The building is also being expanded to include additional laboratory facilities and a multi-purpose hall, all of which can be adapted flexibly to accommodate new research

topics and technologies. The new laboratory facilities will bring together all nine environmental engineering professorships in the same space for the first time. New meeting areas will also be created in order to encourage academic discussion and the exchange of ideas.

Promoting collaboration is also one of the key principles of the new GLC teaching and research building, which is currently under construction on the Zurich Zentrum campus and will be used for work in the fields of health sciences and medical technology (D-HEST, D-ITET). The building includes laboratories for both new and existing professorships as well as research infrastructures which will enable collaboration with the University of Zurich and the hospitals. It will also provide new seminar rooms and workspaces for students. Interdisciplinary exchange is

championed on the Schällemätteli Life Sciences Campus in Basel as well, where ETH is building the BSS laboratory and research building for systems biology and synthetic biology (D-BSSE). The aim is to create a bright, pleasant space that people enjoy spending time in – in line with the new ETH real estate strategy focusing on the creation of inspiring environments.

In total, the three construction projects will provide 35,250 square metres of additional space for teaching, research and knowledge transfer. That's the size of nearly 138 tennis courts! It's a significant amount of space – but it's still just a drop in the ocean.

Growth constrained by structural limitations

ETH Vice President Ulrich Weidmann highlighted the issue recently, explaining that

available space is going to be in increasingly short supply in the near future: “We will have to get used to the fact that academic growth will be determined by the accommodation options available,” said Weidmann, whose domain in the Executive Board includes real estate-related matters. “In the next ten years, the construction rate, building refurbishments and leasing options will all play a part in determining which appointments we can make and when.”

ETH Zurich has approximately 490,000 square metres of usable space at its disposal in around 200 buildings – 8 times the area of the Louvre in Paris. But space is highly sought after. In the city of Zurich, for example, the available building area is growing scarce while the residential population continues to increase. ETH’s

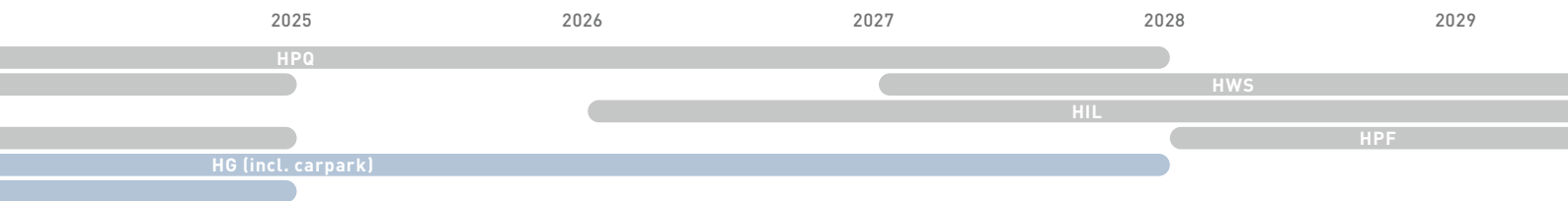
space reserves are slowly running out too, particularly on the Zentrum campus: “There is hardly any free space left for new buildings on the campus and, once the new GLC building is finished, we will have to focus on refurbishing existing buildings,” says Daniel Bucheli, Director of Real Estate Management at ETH.

The lack of space is down to the fact that the number of ETH members has increased significantly in the last ten years and ETH’s construction rate has not been able to keep up with this growth. This trend is expected to continue in the years to come. Growth is not something that ETH Zurich is specifically aiming to achieve. Rather, it is a natural consequence of the university’s success. ETH’s primary objective is – and always has been – to lead the field when it comes to world-class

teaching and research. This requires effective student–staff ratios and additional professorships for new fields of research, and all of this needs to be accommodated in suitable spaces.

Increased density rather than reinvention

The Hönggerberg campus is central to ETH’s plans to develop its spaces and real estate: while development options are limited on the Zentrum campus due to the historical structures of the district and city, ETH still has land available for new buildings on the Hönggerberg. Between now and 2040, the university wants to increase the total volume of its buildings by 50 percent. Before ETH can implement these construction projects, the Zurich Municipal Council will have to approve



A view of the new Polyterrasse and the prominent café area below.

Major construction projects over the next 15 years (some already in progress) Plans as of 2019

ETH has big plans for the Hönggerberg: in addition to a new computing centre (HRZ) next to the heating plant, there will be several new buildings on campus providing space for teaching, research and offices.

■ New construction
■ Renovation



2030 2031 2032 2033 2034

HWS
HIL
HPF

HWN
HPT

special new building regulations. There is currently a limit to how much ETH is allowed to build – and the next new-build project, the HPQ physics building, will more or less take it up to the limit.

The vision for the Hönggerberg is to make it an attractive campus with the feel of a city district, combining the teaching and research buildings with public spaces, gardens and a busy boulevard featuring cafés and shops. Four new buildings along the boulevard (Wolfgang-Pauli-Strasse) will create space for a new park and the expansion of the Flora Ruchat-Roncati garden. In the future, the campus will be a place where students and researchers from different disciplines come together to exchange ideas, as well as a place for socialising and leisure activities, where guests and local residents are welcomed. The

university aims to create a high-quality urban area through these measures.

Department and Executive Board member to move to Hönggerberg

ETH is focusing its development in Zurich on the two main sites: the Zentrum campus and the Hönggerberg campus. At other sites, the university is forming thematic clusters in order to improve collaboration and the joint use of technology platforms and infrastructures – in Basel (systems biology) and Lugano (supercomputing), for example. Furthermore, ETH is planning to gradually stop using small, uneconomical properties, as well as former living spaces that are currently used as offices.

In the medium term, the development of the Hönggerberg will create space for another department on this campus: “Which department is going to move

will be discussed in great detail – and some substantial new buildings will be required,” explains Weidmann. There is also talk of a member of the Executive Board moving to the Hönggerberg in future. Weidmann himself and his Executive Board domain are moving to the newly leased Octavo building in Oerlikon at the end of 2020: “Teaching, research and knowledge transfer should be prioritised when it comes to using the limited space on the Zentrum campus.”

As the construction of new buildings is not currently able to keep up with demand, the university is having to lease a number of large buildings until around the end of the next decade – with the aim of gradually phasing these out again once it has built enough of its own buildings. “Unfortunately at the moment we cannot fulfil everyone’s demands and we are not

able to offer all users their first choice of location,” says Bucheli. The Department of Computer Science (D-INFK), for example – which is growing significantly in size – will soon be allocated premises in Oerlikon as there are no suitable spaces available to rent on the Zentrum campus in the short term.

New space concepts for work at ETH

Refurbishment work makes space even more scarce, and there are a number of buildings that will need refurbishing over the next few years. These include the HIL building on the Hönggerberg campus – which houses the Department of Architecture (D-ARCH) and the Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering (D-BAUG) – and the Main Building (HG) on the Zentrum campus as well as the

Polyterrasse building where the sports facilities and the canteen are located.

According to Bucheli, refurbishing an old building provides an opportunity to change the way it is used. For example, the district heating plant, a protected monument on the Zentrum campus, is being turned into a new Student Project House, which is set to open in June 2020 and will provide a space for students to implement their own ideas. Furthermore, the GLC will house three flexible lecture halls which can be divided into five seminar rooms and used both for group/project work and for online examinations. “Our vision of providing an exceptional working infrastructure applies to all ETH members,” says Bucheli.

Open room structures, known as multi-space concepts, are becoming increasingly popular: these office space concepts

allow each group to arrange the space in the way that best suits their working methods: meeting rooms of different sizes, presentation rooms, shared spaces, telephone rooms or quiet workspaces. Workspace concepts like these offer more flexibility and efficiency than a series of individual offices, or open-plan spaces where noise and lack of privacy can be an issue. “Multispace is a flexible workspace model that is well suited to the working methods in a university and allows solutions to be implemented more quickly. We will start by testing these concepts within our own Executive Board domain in the Octavo building from the end of 2020 onwards,” says Weidmann. ■

www.ethz.ch/constructionprojects →

2036

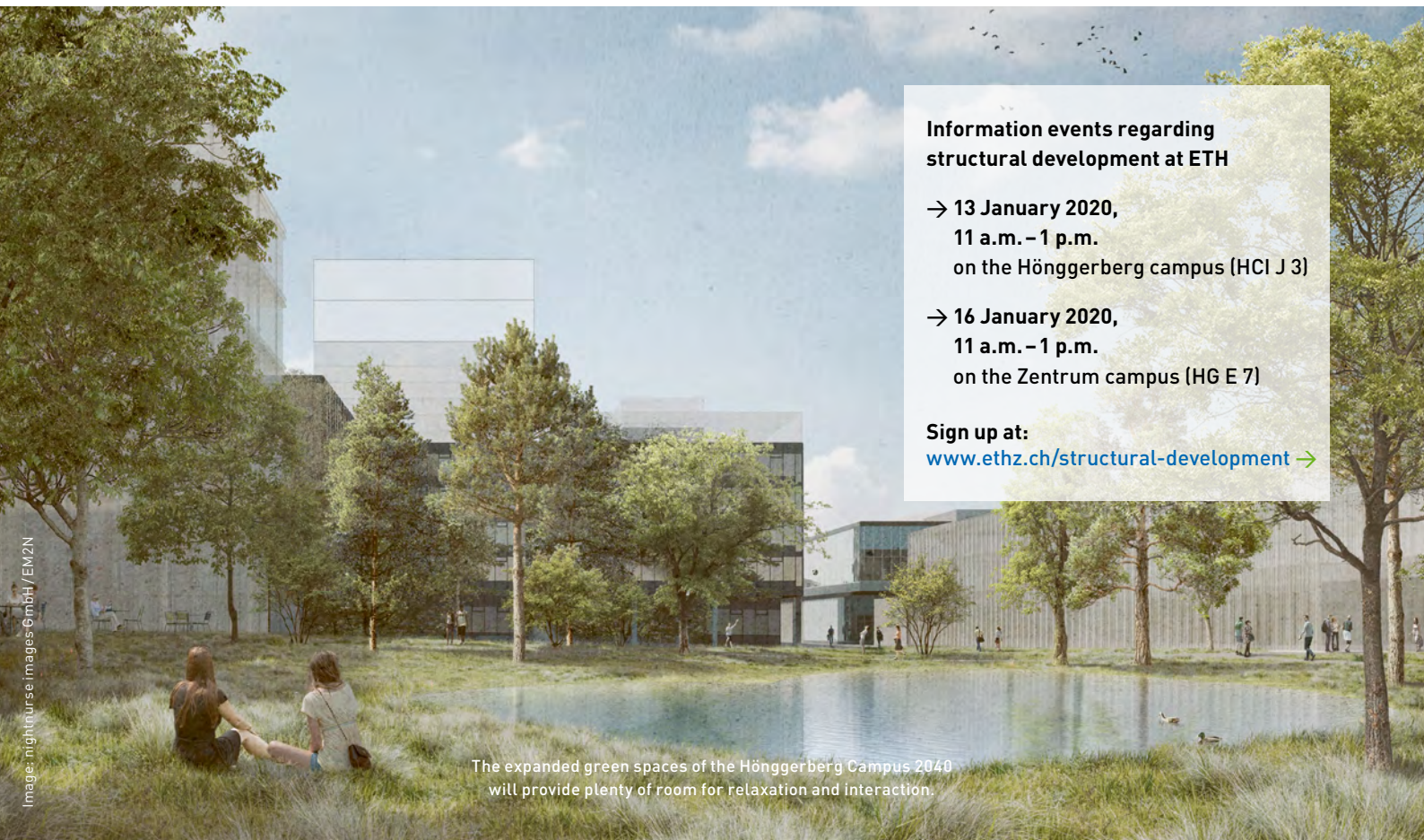
2037

2038

2039

2040

HIH



Information events regarding structural development at ETH

- 13 January 2020, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. on the Hönggerberg campus (HCI J 3)
- 16 January 2020, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. on the Zentrum campus (HG E 7)

Sign up at: www.ethz.ch/structural-development →

The expanded green spaces of the Hönggerberg Campus 2040 will provide plenty of room for relaxation and interaction.

A woman with short, styled grey hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a dark navy blue pinstriped blazer over a vibrant red top, accessorized with a pearl necklace. Her hands are on her hips, and she stands in a modern interior with wood-paneled walls and a glass railing in the background.

“We can all help to bring about change”

ETH Zurich has been trying for years to increase the percentage of women in its ranks, not least among its students. So far, these efforts have not met with huge success. Why is that? And what is ETH doing to attract more female students? We asked Rector Sarah Springman.

Text Roland Baumann **Photos** Markus Bertschi

Professor Springman, this year women make up 34 percent of the university's new Bachelor students. That corresponds to an increase of around 3 percentage points over the last 10 years. Are you happy with these results?

There is still a lot more to be done – I wish we had as many young women as men wanting to study at ETH. We are missing out on too many talented female students. However I'm pleased to see that the trend is going in the right direction.

Why is it taking so long?

We are having to battle with stereotypes that are entrenched throughout our society. There are certain professions that are still regarded as typically female or male. We see that with our degree programmes too: in the Department of Health Sciences and Technology, for example, women make up nearly two thirds of the students. And there are more female students than male in the Departments of Environmental Systems Science and Biology.

Which areas have the lowest percentage of women?

The traditional engineering sciences: mechanical engineering, computer science and electrical engineering. Women are very much in the minority in these fields – and they make up just 12 to 20 percent of the students, depending on the degree programme. Although it is precisely these departments that are making the biggest efforts to attract future female students.

Tell us about these efforts...

The departments invite schoolgirls to ETH so that current female students and alumnae can show them what they can expect if they would come to study here and what varied and

exciting jobs they could expect to compete for with an engineering degree. Events such as the computer science days for girls, or joint events to promote female mechanical engineers and electrical engineers, are attended by dozens of interested young women. And we offer special STEM taster courses for girls on National Future Day too.

It seems that this isn't having the desired effect though, if you look at the figures...

Given that just over 40% of girls earn a science-based *Matura*, it's not that bad either, also considering that gender roles are a social phenomenon. We are making efforts to combat this problem as well. We make sure that future teachers – male and female – are aware of gender issues as part of our teacher training. And on International Women's Day this year, we posted a series of video profiles

of female professors at ETH on our social networks. These role models are very important. Furthermore, there is *Globi and the Crazy Machine*, a children's book set at ETH (part of the popular Swiss series of books featuring Globi, a cartoon parrot). When we were developing the story together with the publisher, we knew from the outset that we wanted the main character – a professor – to be female.

You are an engineer yourself. How did you end up in that field?

As a child, I always enjoyed building sandcastles and dams with my brothers. Then when I was 15, we went to Marconi Elliott Automation Systems on a school trip, and that was when I realised I wanted to be an engineer. It was while I was studying at Cambridge that I became really interested in soil mechanics – the interaction between buildings, structures and the soil.

“We are missing out on too many talented female students.”

Sarah Springman, Rector

When you joined ETH as a professor in 1997, around 7 percent of full professors were women. Today it is around 15 percent. You were the first woman to be appointed as a professor of civil engineering in Switzerland.

What was that like for you?

I received a very warm welcome both inside and outside the department. Two colleagues invited me to join their project groups, so I settled into the ETH culture very quickly. Actually, the main challenge for me was not being a woman, it was the language. My German was fairly limited back then.

As a professor, were you able to promote gender equality actively?

I was obviously able to have a direct influence on my group. I have hired 15 men and 7 women over the last 17 years and half of my postdocs were women. It goes without saying that they were all paid the same. I was also very keen to help members of my group balance work with their family responsibilities – we introduced the option of home working early on and we always took parents' commitments into account when arranging meetings.

And what are the figures like for female students in your department?

When I started, it was around 5 percent. As a professor, I got involved in every possible initiative aimed at encouraging girls to pursue engineering sciences. I have no idea how many sandcastles I've built with them over the years (laughs). In any case, I had a group of enthusiastic girls in my

lab every year – as did other colleagues. Today, the proportion of women in our department is around a third, which is roughly the same as the average across ETH.



“It’s important to me to champion high-performing women.”

Sarah Springman, Rector

You are now the Rector of the university. What kind of leverage do you have?

One of the most important contributions I can make is to bring a female perspective to the decision-making bodies at ETH. Women often have a different mentality to men. Sometimes they're not as good at negotiating, for example. This is particularly significant when it comes to appointing new professors. And it's important to me, as a general rule, to champion high-performing women wherever appropriate.

Could you give us an example?

A few weeks ago, Professor Evelyn Hu was awarded an honorary doctorate on ETH Day, whereas 9 percent of the honorary doctors between 2008 and 2014 were women. I pointed this out to the departments, who put forward the annual nominations. There are many outstanding potential female recipients worldwide. And it made a real difference: over the last five years, the proportion of women has increased to 43 percent of the total. This example may not appear to be hugely significant

by itself, but what I'm trying to say is that if we are sufficiently aware of certain issues, we can all help to bring about change in our day-to-day lives. ■

www.ethz.ch/promoting-women →

Facts about salaries



There are many myths circulating around the subject of salaries. But what are the facts? *life* asked the HR department.

Text Rebecca Lehmann

How are new employees' salaries determined?

Three factors determine someone's starting salary: the job description, their experience and a cross-comparison with other internal functions. The job description defines a person's tasks, the associated competencies and responsibility and the required training/qualifications for the role. Based on this profile, the job is assigned to one of 15 function levels. The positioning within the salary band for the relevant level is then determined by the candidate's relevant experience. The relevant experience is based on a typical career path for a particular function level and the person's age, ensuring that the process for determining salaries is traceable and the same for everyone. There is very little leeway when it comes to assigning staff to a salary level or negotiating on starting salaries. Most academic staff such as doctoral candidate or professor are excluded from this system. Doctoral candidates are employed with a fixed-term contract and clearly defined salaries, and professors' employment contracts are regulated in the Professors' Ordinance.

How do the salary increments work?

Alongside the inflation compensation, which is set by the Swiss government and applied to all employees within the salary system – i.e. technical and administrative staff and academic staff with permanent contracts – additional individual salary management may be implemented. This is dependent on the experience and performance of the person in question. The salary may increase by a few percent with every additional year of experience up to a limit of 15 years of experience (calculated on the basis of age and function level, not when a person joined

ETH). Employees who remain in their role for longer than this will not receive any further experience-related increments. However, they can still move up within their salary band through good performance. This does not mean that every positive assessment during an employee appraisal will have an effect on salary: performance-related salary increases depend on the current position in the salary band. It is only possible to move to a different function level if the job profile changes significantly.

Who decides on salary increases?

Every year, the Swiss government determines what percentage of the total payroll is available for individual salary management. Last year, it was 1.2 percent. A calculation tool is available which takes into account relevant experience, the assessment in the appraisal interview and the position in the salary band and which suggests to managers the individuals who are eligible for a change in salary. The relevant managers then use these suggestions as a basis when deciding on changes to salaries.

How does ETH check that the principle of equal pay is upheld?

Every four years, the ETH Board appoints an external body to check whether the principle of "equal pay for equal work" is upheld. The 2016 evaluation showed that the pay discrepancy between men and women is around 0.5 percent. By way of comparison, according to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, the difference across the whole of Switzerland was between 8.4 and 12 percent in 2016. The next review is scheduled for the first half of 2020. In November 2019, the ETH President signed the charter for equal pay in the public sector, thus committing ETH Zurich to the promotion of equal pay between men and women. ■
www.ethz.ch/funktionsraster →
www.ethz.ch/salary-increments →

Practical tips for sustainable events

The events that we host are a reflection of the university, and they offer an opportunity to make sure we are doing things in the same way across the campus. A new online planning tool will help to ensure that our events are sustainable.

Text Michael Keller **Illustration** Philip Bürli

It is often the little details that make an occasion perfect – or inadvertently provoke discontent. Take ETH's Klimarunde climate event last October – the main programme was a resounding success, but for some attendees the refreshments at the drinks reception afterwards left a bitter taste in the mouth.

The food was certainly delicious, and the catering was impeccable. The problem was that, at this public event on the subject of climate change – which made explicit mention of the methane emissions from meat production – some of the canapés contained meat. One guest made a personal complaint to the Executive Board about the organisers' "lack of awareness".

Setting an example on our campus

Whether or not there was a lack of sensitivity here remains an open question, and it is worth pointing out that the organisers deliberately cut down the amount of meat in the menu provided by the caterer to 2 out of 13 dishes. What the anecdote shows clearly, however, is that the public are very aware of sustainability issues and that our university has to set an example that goes beyond academic expertise and reaches into other areas of life.

We take this responsibility seriously, as demonstrated by numerous measures aimed at upholding sustainable principles

not only in our research and teaching, but also in our operations and on campus. This also applies to the many events that take place here.

Anyone looking to organise a local workshop, an international conference or a major public event at ETH Zurich can now make use of an online tool to help with their planning and decision-making. The overarching aim of the tool is to make sure our events are sustainable.

Drawing on previous experience

The content of the web-based tool derives from the existing guidelines "Nachhaltige Veranstaltungen" (Sustainable Events) and "Nachhaltiges Catering" (Sustainable Catering), which the Safety, Security, Health and Environment (SSHE) administrative department developed some time ago together with the Sustainability team from the University of Zurich.

"The guidelines provide a good overview, but not enough people know about them," says Gina Mörgeli from the SSHE department, who developed the online tool in conjunction with Anahita Zelger from the Services department. Together, they revised and expanded the original content and turned it into a user-friendly web application, which Mörgeli hopes will make the information more accessible.

Helping with decisions

The tool takes the form of an interactive mindmap with several levels. The first screen shows 14 planning areas where

sustainability criteria need to be taken into account, from transport, guest accommodation and event locations to catering, decorations and giveaways. When the user selects an area, they are taken through a number of further levels corresponding to relevant subtopics.

In the transport category, for example, users are asked whether a conference could also take place virtually. If not, perhaps the amount of travel involved could be reduced by using live streams. If participants must attend the event in person, they are encouraged to travel by train rather than plane. The final level of the tool offers practical suggestions and tips as well as helpful links such as the videoconferencing service from IT Services or a search function for sustainable accommodation.

Focus on campus catering

Alongside transport and accommodation, event catering has a major impact on the environment. In the interests of sustainability, food and drink should be vegetarian, seasonal and regional wherever possible and should be sourced from fair, eco-friendly production. The tool can provide background information on this subject and suggest possible options. Mörgeli recommends speaking directly to catering firms about their efforts to promote sustainability.

Mörgeli worked with ETH Sustainability to define the criteria in the field of catering. The staff unit for sustainability

has been working with the caterers for some time to make food services on campus more environmentally friendly. Since 2018, these efforts have been encapsulated in the Climate Programme for ETH catering (see box). They are currently working on developing a comprehensive set of criteria for healthy, eco-friendly, socially responsible catering. This also includes the matter of packaging: plans are in place to introduce reusable containers from reCIRCLE on campus in the 2020 Spring Semester. "The measures implemented by the caterers will also reduce the footprint of the events," says Mörgeli happily.

The Events section will use the new online tool in its Event Academy training programme in order to raise awareness among ETH members, and both the University of Zurich and Zurich's tourism board are interested in using it too. Mörgeli sees the mindmap as a living tool that will keep developing and evolving: "We would love to get feedback from event organisers and users." ■

www.ethz.ch/environmental-protection →

Promising results so far for caterers

As part of the Climate Programme for ETH catering, the SV Group and Compass Group are committed to reducing their CO₂ emissions by 10 percent in 3 years. To this end, they are expanding their vegetarian options, avoiding food waste and goods carried by air, and focusing on seasonal and regional products. At the halfway stage, the caterers are well on the way to reaching their target. If they are going to achieve the required reduction in emissions by January 2021, however, they will need the support of their users. The menu choices of ETH members heavily influence the products that the caterers offer.

www.ethz.ch/food →



Katharina Poiger Ruloff
Secretary General

“Talent alone is not enough”

Text Karin Köchle **Photo** Florian Bachmann

“My favourite thing about working here is that you are constantly coming into contact with interesting, engaged people at every level,” says Katharina Poiger. The stimulating atmosphere in her working environment is one of the main reasons why Poiger, who is now 53, has been working at ETH for nearly 25 years. Three years ago, she was appointed Secretary General, becoming the first woman to take on the role.

Poiger was born in Vienna and moved to Switzerland when she was four years old. Sport played a major role in her life from an early stage – she developed a passion for synchronised swimming and competed in events for eight years, even becoming part of the Swiss junior national team. She wasn’t just a successful competitor – she started judging synchronised swimming competitions at the age of 17 and later became an A judge for the international swimming association Fina.

At ETH, Poiger took on her first role – assistant to the then President – while she was still completing her studies in political science. Since then, she has worked in a number of different staff units but her roles have always focused on forming a link to the ETH Board and to the world of politics. Today, Poiger’s tasks include coordinating the operations of the Executive Board and all of the parliamentary questions that concern ETH. She likes the fact that her role involves frequently changing perspective and dealing with all kinds of different expectations: “I want to work together with everyone involved to find a good solution for ETH and its members.”

What is the secret to her success? She always focuses on the matter at hand and takes an objective, fact-based approach. Her sporting career helped her to be organised and focused: “In sport, you quickly realise that talent alone is not enough – you also have to work hard. That applies in the world of work as well!” ■



Lorenz Ursprung
Zurich Academic Sports Association



Illustration: Kornel Stadler

A decade of refurbishment ahead for the ASVZ

More and more people in Switzerland are exercising, and they're doing it more and more often. We have noticed this trend too: in 2018, the students, employees and alumni of Zurich's universities notched up nearly 1.7 million visits to the ASVZ – setting a record in the 80-year history of university sport in Zurich.

All of the evidence suggests that this trend is set to continue. When it comes to the most popular activities, around half of the visits are from individual gym users, while the group fitness and yoga classes are also proving very popular. We are of course delighted to hear this, but it does mean that overcrowding is becoming a problem in the gym spaces and changing rooms. The infrastructure of the ASVZ Sport Centers are reaching their limits. And the problem is complicated further by the fact that a number of facilities need to be refurbished at more or less the same time. The universities are aware that the facilities need improving: the Polyterrasse is being fully renovated and will have much more space for sports activities when it reopens. The new UZH Forum will also house a large sports facility. And the Zurich University of Applied Sciences is going to give the ASVZ more space for sports in the medium term as well.

For now though, the ASVZ has a decade of refurbishment ahead. The Fluntern Sport Center will be closed until the end of 2020 while it undergoes extensive conversion and refurbishment work, and the facility in Irchel is also going to be renovated in a few years. The greatest challenge for us, however, is the renovation

of the Polyterrasse – the home of our most popular Sport Center – which is set to commence in 2022. Together with ETH and UZH, we are working hard to provide temporary solutions and alternatives. Unfortunately though, it is inevitable that the four-year construction project is going to cause a significant amount of disruption, and we will have to cut down on the services we offer as we simply won't have enough space. Once all the refurbishments and new buildings are complete, however, we will be able to provide unrivalled sports services and facilities once again.

That's the long-term view, but there are exciting things coming up in the immediate future too: from 26 to 31 December, we will be offering all kinds of fun activities at the Irchel Sport Center as part of our Christmas special. The Höggerberg and Irchel Sport Centers will also be open to individual gym users during this period. And from the start of January, we'll be kicking off our winter sports programme in earnest – snow permitting, of course. ■

Lorenz Ursprung

About the author

Lorenz Ursprung is the director of the Zurich Academic Sports Association (ASVZ).
www.asvz.ch →

Why I became VSETH president

Freshers come into contact with the Association of Students at ETH Zurich (VSETH) on their very first day. But they're so overwhelmed by the avalanche of information, they don't realise what the logo on their new gym bags actually stands for.

It was the same for me at first. I ticked the box saying I wanted to join VSETH on my first day because my supervisor told me it was a good idea. As time went on, I attended events like the freshers' party (Erstsemestrigenfest) and the weekly PapperlaPub and made use of the music rooms, and that was how I ended up getting more involved. I only realised that there was a proper union behind all of this when I became a member of the PapperlaPub commission board in my third semester.

I quickly found out more about the broad remit of the association and became more familiar with its internal structures. I liked what I saw, and I ended up becoming first vice president of the commission, then president and then a member of the VSETH board.

Student engagement has become an essential and enriching part of my life. I enjoy balancing out my day-to-day academic work by supporting other students who are also looking for some diversion from the challenges of their studies. As the new VSETH president, I am therefore delighted to represent

a community of people who, despite their diversity, are all pursuing the same goal: making life at university as supportive and enjoyable as possible.



Thierry Hörmann, D-INFK student and president of VSETH

www.vseth.ch →



A gift for a good cause

The Executive Board held its traditional Christmas reception on 17 December to thank all of the ETH staff for their hard work. This year, in order to promote sustainability, staff members were given a borosilicate glass FILL ME bottle designed exclusively for ETH. Not only are the bottles extremely heat-resistant and hygienic, they are also fully recyclable. Furthermore, 1 franc for every bottle goes to the DRINK & DONATE charity, which provides access to clean water for people in developing countries.

Anyone who didn't have the chance to redeem their gift voucher at the drinks reception can do so at the ETH Store until 7 February.

We wish everyone a happy festive season and a good start to the new year!

(Photo: ETH Zurich)

www.ethz.ch/christmas-reception →

