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Version: 06.07.2023  
For further information: Admissions Office

*[This English translation is for information purposes only. The German version is the legally binding version.]*

## DIRECTIVE

### Admission to Master's degree programmes

*The ETH Executive Board,*

At the request of the Rector and pursuant to Art. 32 of the ETH Zurich Admissions Ordinance of 30 November 2010<sup>1</sup>,

*decrees the following:*

#### Overview

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<sup>1</sup> SR 414.131.52

## **Part 1: General regulations**

### **Art. 1 Subject**

This directive determines:

- a. the policies and framework according to which the ETH departments define the specific prerequisites for admission to their Master's degree programmes;
- b. the particular stipulations for admission with additional requirements and for performance assessments in the context of additional requirements;
- c. the administrative admissions procedure.

### **Art. 2 Programme regulations**

The prerequisites for admission are set out in the Appendix to the Programme Regulations of the corresponding Master's degree programme. They require the approval of the Rector.

## **Part 2: Specific prerequisites for admission**

### **Art. 3 Academic prerequisites**

<sup>1</sup> Every department defines a discipline requirements profile for each of the Master's degree programmes for which it is responsible. This profile comprises those knowledge and skills that allow for admission.

<sup>2</sup> The discipline requirements profile orients itself according to the content, scope, quality and level of mastery of the corresponding ETH Zurich Bachelor's degree programme (equivalency principle).

<sup>3</sup> The discipline requirements profile is structured as follows:

- a. Fundamental knowledge and skills essential for completion of the Master's degree programme: typically a basis in mathematics and the natural or engineering sciences.
- b. Subject-specific knowledge and skills: core elements of the selected discipline.

### **Art. 4 Language prerequisites**

<sup>1</sup> The languages of instruction at the Master's degree level are English, German, or a combination of English and German.

<sup>2</sup> Candidates must possess the language skills necessary for the chosen Master's degree programme, and supply the corresponding proof. The required language level is measured according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

(EFR)<sup>2</sup> scale. Every year the ETH Zurich publishes a list of the language certificates accepted. In detail:

- a. A level of at least C1 in the language of instruction indicated is required.
- b. Holders of a Bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences who apply for admission to a Master's degree programme must, according to the pertaining additional requirements, also supply proof of sufficient knowledge of German (also level C1), if they have not already done so in the context of Subpara. a.

<sup>3</sup> The required language certificates must be submitted by the application deadline.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup> No language certificate is required from candidates:

- a. who hold a Swiss Matura (applies to both English and German); or
- b. who hold a Bachelor's degree from ETH Zurich (applies to both English and German) or from EPF Lausanne (applies to English only); or
- c.<sup>4</sup> *rescinded*
- d.<sup>5</sup> who have completed a degree programme of at least three years of full-time studies at Bachelor level in the languages required for the Master programme; or
- e.<sup>6</sup> *rescinded*
- f.<sup>7</sup> who hold a German-language secondary school leaving certificate (applies to German only) from a country with German as an official (regional) language.

## **Art. 5** Performance prerequisites

<sup>1</sup> Departments may require a minimum level of academic performance in the preceding degree programme for admission to:

- a. specialised Master's degree programmes;
- b. consecutive Master's degree programmes, if the candidate has a background in a different discipline.

<sup>2</sup> These requirements apply equally to all candidates, including those holding a degree from ETH Zurich.

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<sup>2</sup> The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages ([www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy](http://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy)).

<sup>3</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 06.05.2019. It applies to candidates who submit an application for admission to a Master's degree programme from 1 November 2019 onwards.

<sup>4</sup> Rescinded pursuant to the resolution of 06.07.2023.

<sup>5</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 06.07.2023. It applies to candidates who submit an application for admission to a Master's degree programme from 1 November 2023 onwards. For further information see <https://ethz.ch/en/studies/master.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Rescinded pursuant to the resolution of 02.10.2012.

<sup>7</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 06.07.2023, in effect since 01.08.2023.

**Art. 6<sup>8</sup>** Further admissions prerequisite for candidates from non-EU/EFTA countries

The departments may also require candidates from non-EU/EFTA countries to submit the results of a GRE<sup>9</sup> examination. These results constitute a further criterion for determining suitability for the desired degree programme.

**Art. 7** Further prerequisites for admission to specialised Master's degree programmes

<sup>1</sup> For admission to specialised Master's degree programmes, departments may impose stipulations in addition to performance prerequisites, for example (in Master's programmes with a tutor system) a tutor's agreement to supervise the respective student.

<sup>2</sup> These requirements apply equally to all candidates, including those holding a degree from ETH Zurich.

### **Part 3: Particular stipulations for candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from certain universities**

**Art. 8** Swiss universities

<sup>1</sup> Candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a Swiss university (not including ETH Zurich and EPF Lausanne) are admitted to consecutive Master's degree programmes in the corresponding discipline without subject-specific conditions. Admission may, however, be subject to additional requirements. The following conditions apply:

- a. Guaranteed admission (freedom of movement) within the respective discipline only applies if a candidate completed a mono-subject study programme or at least a major study programme in the corresponding field of study.
- b. Admission remains subject to proof of sufficient knowledge of the languages of instruction (see Art. 4).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The standard for determining a corresponding discipline is the 'List of disciplines at universities' (Liste der Studienrichtungen der universitären Hochschulen) adopted by the Chamber of Universities on 25.10.2019<sup>11</sup>.

**Art. 9** EPF Lausanne (EPFL)

Candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from EPFL are admitted to the consecutive Master's degree programme in the corresponding discipline at ETH Zurich. Admission remains subject to proof of sufficient knowledge of the languages of instruction (see Art. 4).

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<sup>8</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 15.10.2018. It enters into effect on 15.10.2018.

<sup>9</sup> GRE = Graduate Record Examination.

<sup>10</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 11.10.2016. It enters into effect on 01.11.2016.

<sup>11</sup> See [www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch)

## **Art. 10** Partner universities

Departments may identify which Bachelor's degrees from other universities guarantee admission to a Master's degree programme, with or without additional requirements. Admission remains subject to proof of sufficient knowledge of the languages of instruction (see Art. 4).

## **Part 4: Particular stipulations for candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences**

### **Art. 11** Universities of applied sciences

<sup>1</sup> For the admission of candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a Swiss university of applied sciences (UAS)<sup>12</sup>, the relevant provisions of the Ordinance of the University Council on the Coordination of Teaching at Swiss Universities (Verordnung des Hochschulrates über die Koordination der Lehre an den Schweizer Hochschulen)<sup>13</sup> and the Concordance List (Konkordanzliste)<sup>14</sup> of the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities apply. The Concordance List comprises the transfers on which the universities concerned have agreed and for which admission with additional requirements is possible. The following are reserved:

- a. the stipulations on the required overall grade set out in Para. 3; and
- b. proof of sufficient knowledge of the language(s) of instruction according to Art. 4.

<sup>2</sup> UAS graduates whose degree programme is not found on the Concordance List have no guarantee of admission. They may be admitted, however, if the additional requirements necessary to satisfy academic prerequisites lie within the framework set out in Art. 14, and if the performance prerequisites given in Para. 3 and the language prerequisites given in Art. 4 are satisfied.

<sup>2bis</sup> Para. 2 sentence 2 also applies to UAS graduates holding a Bachelor's degree from a signatory state of the Lisbon Convention.

<sup>3</sup> Admission to a Master's degree programme for UAS graduates holding a Bachelor's degree from Switzerland or a Bachelor's degree from a signatory state of the Lisbon Convention is only possible if the overall grade in the Bachelor's degree programme is at least a 5.0 or analogous to the grade 5.0 (Swiss grading system using grades 1 to 6: 6 is the best, 4 a sufficient, and 1 the lowest grade). The details for determining the overall grade are set out in the appendix.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *rescinded*

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<sup>12</sup> A diploma from a Swiss university of applied sciences (former FH Diplom) is regarded as equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in the same discipline from a Swiss university of applied sciences.

<sup>13</sup> SR 414.205.1

<sup>14</sup> See [www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch)

<sup>15</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 06.07.2023, in effect since 01.08.2023.

<sup>5</sup> Admission to a Master's degree programme for holders of a Bachelor's degree jointly offered by universities of different university types is only possible if the overall grade in the Bachelor's degree programme is at least a 5.0 (Swiss grading system). The overall grade is always calculated by ETH Zurich; the method employed is set out in the appendix.

<sup>5bis</sup> If less than 2/3 of the study achievements according to the standard study plan of an inter-university degree programme are completed at a recognised university, the degree is classified as a degree from a university of applied sciences.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *rescinded*<sup>17</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *rescinded*<sup>18</sup>

## **Part 5:**<sup>19</sup>

## **Part 6: Admission with additional requirements**

### **Art. 13** General regulations

<sup>1</sup> If the academic prerequisites have not been completely satisfied admission may proceed subject to the acquisition of missing knowledge and competences (additional requirements). Admission to the Master's degree programme is not possible if there are too many gaps in a candidate's academic background, particularly in the area of fundamental knowledge and competences (see Art. 14).

<sup>2</sup> Additional requirements are defined by subject matter, but are linked in content, responsibility and performance assessments to a course unit in the Course Catalogue.

<sup>3</sup> Course units specifically intended for students who require the respective subject matter in the context of additional requirements may be published in the Course Catalogue. These course units are labelled as such.

<sup>3bis</sup> The course units mentioned in Para. 3 include so-called 'virtual course units' and 'advanced courses'. These are subject to the following stipulations:

- a. A 'virtual course unit' is always attached to an existing course unit from a Bachelor's degree programme (regular course unit). Its content is provided in the form of literature or lecture notes, and students address it via self-study. The performance assessment takes one of the usual forms at the usual time (session examination, end-of-semester examination, semester performance). The modalities of the performance assessment may, however, differ from those of the regular course unit.

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<sup>16</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 06.07.2023. It enters into effect on 01.08.2023.

<sup>17</sup> Rescinded pursuant to the resolution of 06.07.2023.

<sup>18</sup> Rescinded pursuant to the resolution of 06.07.2023.

<sup>19</sup> Rescinded pursuant to the resolution of 26.03.2013. It applies to candidates who submit an application for admission to a Master's degree programme from 1 November 2023 onwards.

- b. An 'advanced course' is a course unit which is designed independently of existing course units of the Bachelor's degree programme. Its content is oriented towards the profile of requirements of the respective Master's degree programme and, especially in the context of interdisciplinary Master's programmes, serves to align the levels of knowledge of students with differing academic backgrounds. The usual course types (lecture, exercise, practicals, independent study etc.) and forms and times of performance assessment are available. All of the following stipulations also apply to advanced courses:
1. They may only be deployed in specialised Master's degree programmes as additional requirements.
  2. They must be listed in the appendix to the programme regulations.
  3. The department responsible for the Master's degree programme must offer the advanced course itself (no service lectures).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>4</sup> It is normally up to the candidate to master the subject matter either through self-study or by attending courses. However, the respective performance assessment is subject to the stipulations pertaining to the designated course unit, including any central elements.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Departments may refuse permission to enter the performance assessments of certain course units of the Master's degree programme to candidates who have not yet fulfilled their additional requirements.

<sup>6</sup> Credits earned within the framework of a student exchange programme do not count towards the fulfilment of additional requirements.

<sup>7</sup> Candidates admitted subject to the fulfilment of additional requirements may only undertake a student exchange when said additional requirements have been completely fulfilled.

#### **Art. 14**    Extent of additional requirements

<sup>1</sup> If the scope of additional requirements to be fulfilled, expressed in credits, exceeds an upper limit, admission will be refused. These upper limits are:

- a. for candidates holding a university Bachelor's degree:
  1. consecutive Master's degree programmes: 30 credits,
  2. specialised Master's degree programmes: the number of credits determined by the respective department, but at the most 30 credits,
  3. additionally: credits in the area of fundamental knowledge and competences (discipline requirements profile; vgl. Art. 3, Para. 3, Subpara. a): the number of credits determined by the respective department;
- b. for candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences: 60 credits.

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<sup>20</sup> Added according to the resolution of 06.06.2017. It enters into effect on 15.06.2017.

<sup>21</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 26.03.2013. It enters into effect at the beginning of Autumn Semester 2013.

<sup>2</sup> The differing educational background of candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences is taken into account in that admission is always subject to additional requirements comprising 40 – 60 credits.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Para. 2 also applies to candidates holding a Master's degree from a university of applied sciences if the preceding Bachelor's degree was not acquired at a university.

#### **Art. 15** Academic record

Course units completed in the context of additional requirements are listed in the academic record on a separate page (details: title(s) of course unit(s), grade(s), number of credits). Both passed and failed courses are listed (and always the result of the latest attempt).

### **Part 7: Fulfilling additional requirements**

#### **Art. 16** Reference: ETH Zurich Ordinance on Performance Assessments

This paragraph contains additional stipulations to the ETH Zurich Ordinance on Performance Assessments<sup>23</sup>.

#### **Art. 17** Fulfilling additional requirements

<sup>1</sup> Additional requirements are regarded as fulfilled if the candidate passes the corresponding performance assessments by the set deadlines and according to all other stipulations of Art. 18 or 19.

<sup>2</sup> If a candidate fails said performance assessments or does not respect the respective deadlines the Master's degree programme in question will be regarded as failed and the candidate will be excluded from it.

<sup>3</sup> The deadlines according to Art. 18 or 19 may in principle not be extended. Exceptions are only granted on cogent grounds such as illness or accident. The Rector decides on exceptions.

#### **Art. 18** Rules for candidates holding a university Bachelor's degree

Candidates holding a university Bachelor's degree:

- a. A pass grade is necessary in each individual course unit designated as an additional requirement.

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<sup>22</sup> See also SR 414.205.1

<sup>23</sup> SR 414.135.1, RSETHZ 322.021

- b. The performance assessments pertaining to all course units attended in the context of additional requirements must be undertaken within two semesters of the start of the programme.
- c. Any repetition of failed performance assessments must take place within three semesters of the start of the programme.

**Art. 19** Rules for candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences

<sup>1</sup> Candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences:

- a.<sup>24</sup> Fulfilment of additional requirements may not, with the exception of the case given in (2) below, be made subject to pass grades in each required course unit. The following possibilities apply:
  - 1. Performance assessments may be combined in examination blocks if session examinations are involved, or
  - 2. Groups of course units may be established, where pass grades are required not in every course unit in each group but only in a certain number of course units.
- d. The performance assessments pertaining to all course units attended in the context of additional requirements must be undertaken within two semesters of the start of the programme.
- e. Performance assessments belonging to one examination block must always be undertaken during the same examination session.
- f. Repetition of failed performance assessments or examination blocks must be undertaken within four semesters of the start of the programme. If an examination block is repeated all of the performance assessments belonging to it must be repeated.
- g. If groups of course units (see a. 2) are indicated, any credits acquired through surplus subjects cannot be counted towards the Master's degree.

<sup>2</sup> Every course unit designated as an additional requirement to be passed individually during the ETH Bachelor's degree programme, and for which there is no possibility of compensation, must be passed individually. These course units include, in particular, written work (e.g. the Bachelor's thesis), seminars and practicals (e.g. laboratory practicals).<sup>25</sup>

**Art. 20<sup>26</sup>** Particular stipulations regarding deadlines

<sup>1</sup> The period of time allowed for completion of additional requirements as per Art. 18 and 19 begins on the date of entry to the Master's degree programme. It is not interrupted by withdrawal from ETH Zurich.

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<sup>24</sup> Detailed version of 24.08.2012.

<sup>25</sup> Detailed version of 24.08.2012.

<sup>26</sup> Added pursuant to the resolution of 26.03.2013. It enters into effect at the beginning of Autumn Semester 2013.

<sup>2</sup> If withdrawal from the Master's degree programme takes place by the end of the first semester at the latest and if all prerequisites for re-entry to the same degree programme have been satisfied, the following two stipulations apply:

- a. any re-entry to the same degree programme is subject to the normal deadlines for additional requirements;
- b. additional requirements already completed are recognised at re-entry as long as they are the same additional requirements as previously. Both passed and failed attempts are recognised.

## **Part 8: Admissions procedure**

### **Art. 21** General regulations

<sup>1</sup> The ETH Academic Services determine the admissions procedures.

<sup>2</sup> Regulations specific to degree programmes are determined by agreement between the ETH Academic Services and the responsible department / degree programme.

<sup>3</sup> The appendix to the respective Master's degree Programme Regulations stipulates:

- a. those persons who may enrol directly in a consecutive Master's degree programme without registration or application procedures (impossible in the context of specialised Master's degree programmes);
- b. those persons who must apply to the ETH Academic Services for admission to a Master's degree programme;
- c. further degree-programme-specific rules which must be anchored in the respective Programme Regulations concerning admissions procedures.

### **Art. 22** Direct admission to and enrolment in a consecutive Master's degree programme

<sup>1</sup> Bachelor's degree students who are already matriculated at ETH Zurich and who are admitted to a consecutive Master's degree programme without registration or application procedures should enrol in the Master's degree programme directly via 'myStudies'.

<sup>2</sup> The appendix to the Programme Regulations of the respective Master's degree programme sets out the conditions according to which students may enter the Master's degree programme before the Bachelor's degree is issued.

<sup>3</sup> Admission is provisional until the Bachelor's degree is issued. It will be revoked if the Bachelor's degree is not or cannot be issued.

### **Art. 23** Application

<sup>1</sup> All candidates not entitled to enrol directly in the desired Master's degree programme via 'myStudies' must submit an online application for admission to the respective programme.

<sup>2</sup> The requirements for application, in particular the documents to be submitted and the application dates and deadlines, are published on the website of the ETH Zurich Admissions Office.

<sup>3</sup> Only one application per Master's degree programme may be submitted for entry in a particular semester.

<sup>4</sup> Application is possible even if the required Bachelor's degree has not yet been issued.

<sup>5</sup> In agreement with the departments the ETH Academic Services stipulate:

- a. which admissions documents must be submitted by all candidates;
- b. which admissions documents are specific to the degree programme.

#### **Art. 24** Assessment of applications, admissions committee and admissions decision

<sup>1</sup> The ETH Academic Services formally assess all applications and registrations.

<sup>2</sup> Each department or degree programme appoints an admissions committee which comprises at least three persons, at least one of whom is an appointed professor.

<sup>3</sup> The admissions committee assesses how far candidates' backgrounds correspond to the respective discipline requirements profile. It sets any additional requirements and formulates the requests for admission/rejection to be submitted to the Rector via the Director of Studies.

<sup>4</sup> The Rector makes the final decision regarding admission without additional requirements, admission with additional requirements, or rejection.

#### **Art. 25** Communication of the admissions decision

<sup>1</sup> Candidates are informed in writing of the admissions decision. The written document also contains information pertaining to any additional requirements (see Art. 13).

<sup>2</sup> The respective department is responsible for answering candidates' questions regarding the academic evaluation of the application. The department appoints a person or office for this purpose and informs the ETH Academic Services accordingly in advance.

<sup>3</sup> At the request of the candidate the ETH Academic Services will issue the admissions decision in the form of an appealable decree. The ETH Academic Services base the decision on the respective department's academic evaluation (see Art. 24, Para. 3).

<sup>4</sup> *rescinded*<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Rescinded pursuant to the resolution of 06.07.2023.

**Art. 26** Entering the Master's degree programme

<sup>1</sup> To students from an ETH Bachelor's degree programme who have been granted admission, the following applies:

- a. Said students can enrol in the Master's degree programme once they have acquired that number of credits which would qualify them to enrol in the Master's degree programme consecutive to their original subject (cf. Art. 22, Para. 2).
- b. The normal ETH enrolment dates and deadlines apply.
- c. Admission is provisional until the Bachelor's degree is issued. Admission will be revoked if the Bachelor's degree is not or cannot be issued.

<sup>2</sup> All other candidates who have been granted admission may only enrol in the Master's degree programme when they have completed the preceding (Bachelor's) degree.

**Art. 27** No postponement of entry date of studies

Postponement of the entry date of studies is not possible. Anyone unable to enter the Master's degree programme on the date designated in the admissions decision must re-apply.

**Part 9: Entry into effect**

**Art. 28**

<sup>1</sup> This directive enters into effect on 1 November 2011. It applies to students who commence a Master's degree programme in Autumn Semester 2012 or later.

<sup>2</sup> For students who enter/entered a Master's degree programme before Autumn Semester 2012 the previous stipulations apply.

On behalf of the Executive Board:  
The President: Ralph Eichler  
General Secretary: Hugo Bretscher

## Appendix

Calculation of the overall grade of a Bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences (UAS) for the purpose of admission to a Master's degree programme at ETH Zurich

(Reference: Art. 11, Para. 3 and 5 of this directive)      Version: 06.07.2023

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**1.** Calculation of the overall grade of a Bachelor's degree from a UAS for the purpose of admission to a Master's degree programme at ETH Zurich (Reference: Art. 11, Para. 3 of this directive)

**1.1** ETH Zurich recognises the overall grade calculated by the UAS if:

- a. the overall grade is indicated on an official degree document (diploma or bachelor's degree certificate, transcript of records or diploma certificate); and
- b. the overall grade has been calculated according to a method specified in the regulations of the respective university of applied sciences' degree programme.

If the conditions for the recognition of the university of applied sciences' overall grade according Subparas. a and b are not fulfilled – this applies in particular to ad hoc calculated overall grades without a method explicitly defined in the regulations – ETH Zurich calculates the overall grade in accordance with Para. 1.2 of this appendix.

**1.2** If the university of applied sciences does not report an overall grade or if recognition of the overall grade by ETH Zurich is precluded, ETH Zurich calculates the overall grade as the weighted arithmetic average of all individual grades reported in the transcript of records of the UAS (all academic years). The weight of an individual grade corresponds to the number of credit points assigned to the underlying course unit. The weighted arithmetic average is rounded to two decimal points.

The following performance assessments are not taken into account for the calculation of the overall grade:

- a. performance assessments that have been graded as 'passed'; and
- b. grades obtained in the context of a mobility study programme, unless they have been listed in the transcript of the home university and have been credited towards the degree.

**1.3** If the academic achievements are reported by the university of applied sciences in ECTS grades or in a foreign grading system, they will be converted by ETH Zurich into the Swiss grading system<sup>28</sup> and taken into account for the overall grade calculation in accordance with Para. 1.2.

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<sup>28</sup> For further information see <https://ethz.ch/en/studies/master.html>

- 2.** Calculation of the overall grade of a Bachelor's degree from a degree programme offered jointly by universities of different university types for admission to the Master's programme at ETH Zurich (Reference: Art. 11, Para. 5 of this directive)
  - 2.1** ETH Zurich calculates the overall grade in accordance with the provisions of section 1.2 of this appendix.
  - 2.2** *rescinded*
  - 2.3** If the academic achievements are reported in ECTS grades or in a foreign grading system, they will be converted by ETH Zurich into the Swiss grading system<sup>29</sup>. These grades are used for the overall grade calculation in accordance with 1.2.

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<sup>29</sup> For further information see <https://ethz.ch/en/studies/master.html>