Applying for an exchange at ETH Zurich: Instructions for students within the IDEA League Student Grant Scheme

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1. Preparation (before online application) and application deadlines

Prior to applying at ETH Zurich, you must be nominated for the exchange by your home university. Please note the respective requirements.

Students coming to ETH Zurich for projects only (no courses) may apply up until 2 months before the planned starting date (online application completed and submitted, including all documents). Students who need a visa for Switzerland should submit their application earlier, because the visa application process may take up to 3 months and cannot be started without the official confirmation of the Student Exchange Office.

2. Important information about exchange studies at ETH Zurich

**Visa and residence permit**

Citizens of the European Union or EFTA states do not require a visa for Switzerland and therefore need do nothing in this regard before their arrival. Citizens of other countries must check with the Swiss Embassy whether they need a visa for Switzerland. You are responsible for obtaining the visa; you will receive detailed information about the visa application process and the necessary official confirmation from us if your application to ETH Zurich is successful. Please note that the process of obtaining a student visa will take up to 3 months, so timely application for your visa is essential. Do not enter Switzerland with a tourist visa or with a Schengen residence permit: these allow you to travel to Switzerland as a tourist, but not to study there!

Regardless of your nationality, to obtain a residence permit you must register with the appropriate authority within 8 days of your arrival in Switzerland. You will find more information about this procedure in your ETH Zurich admission letter.

**Health Insurance**

Everyone who lives in Switzerland for at least three months is required by law to have health and accident insurance coverage from a Swiss insurance company. In the framework of the Bilateral Agreements between the EU and Switzerland, exchange students from EU and EFTA countries can obtain an exemption from Swiss compulsory health insurance if they obtain a ‘European Health Insurance Card’ from their health insurance provider in the home country. Additional information is listed on our homepage.

**Studying with a disability: Where can I get help and advice?**

Please contact the Disability advisory service at an early stage for information on support options and procedures. This is particularly important with regard to study conditions, examination arrangements and the housing situation in Zurich.

**Accommodation**

Finding accommodation in Zurich is difficult and time-consuming. In the Spring Semester the availability of student housing is usually better than in the Autumn Semester. You will receive detailed information about accommodation in Zurich with your letter of acceptance. Please see our homepage for information on accommodation for exchange students in Zurich and its surroundings.

**Living costs in Zurich**

Please be aware that living costs in Switzerland are very high, and especially so in Zurich. The Immigration Authorities identify a sum of CHF 1750.- per month as necessary to support oneself financially. The actual amount needed may be slightly lower; this will depend largely on your monthly rent. Finding cheap housing in Zurich is difficult. For more information see the information on our homepage.

**German courses**

The joint Language Center of the University and ETH Zurich offers semester courses in ‘German as a foreign language’ for all levels of proficiency, as well as intensive German courses for three levels of proficiency in Spring and Autumn (in the two weeks before the respective semester starts). The intensive German course plus one semester course are free of charge for exchange students (there is a charge for copies and other course materials). Please note that pre-registration on the website of the Language Center is necessary and that there is a registration fee of CHF 100.- for the intensive German course.
**Arrival and enrolment at ETH Zurich**

Students enrol at the helpdesk of the Student Exchange Office after arrival. There is also an official welcome and information event on the first Monday of the semester in week 38 (Autumn) or the Friday just before the semester starts in week 7 (Spring). Its exact time and location will be specified at a later stage.

**Department of Biosystems Science and Engineering (D-BSSE) in Basel**

Note that certain conditions and services differ substantially for students applying for the department of Biosystems Sciences and Engineering (D-BSSE) which is located in Basel. Refer to the separate factsheet of D-BSSE for important details on immigration policies, housing, catering, sports facilities, etc. If you wish to do a research project/thesis in D-BSSE, note also the special information on projects in the section 'application procedure'.

**Living/Studying outside of the canton of Zurich**

Information provided by the Student Exchange Office concerning visa, residence permit and health insurance only applies to mobility students who live and study in the canton of Zurich. Mobility students in D-BSSE in Basel (canton Basel-Stadt) should consult the separate fact sheet. Mobility students with a place of residence or place of study in another canton are responsible on their own to clarify the necessary conditions, carry out the respective formalities and respect the regulations that are applicable. The Student Exchange Office cannot assist mobility students not living in the canton of Zurich or the canton of Basel-Stadt with respective questions.
3. Documents required for online application

ETH Zurich uses the ‘Mobility-Online’ tool to manage its exchange applications. See the chapter on the application process for information on how to start your online application. All documents except the photo should be uploaded as PDFs.

**Confirmation: D-BSSE project compulsory (if applicable)**

If you plan on undertaking a research project in the department of Biosystems Science and Engineering (D-BSSE) in Basel you need to confirm that your project is a compulsory part of your study programme at your home university (particularly applicable to students from non-EU/EFTA countries). During your application process in Mobility-Online, a specific form will be provided which you will need to download, fill in and sign.

**Confirmation of supervisor / recommendation letter**

Students who come to ETH Zurich to conduct a research project or prepare a thesis must upload a confirmation letter or email from the professor who will act as their supervisor at ETH Zurich, including the approximate start and end dates of the project. A recommendation letter of the professor who will act as supervisor at your home university must also be uploaded.

**Transcript of records**

You must upload a complete transcript of records in English or German of all your studies to date, i.e. including your Bachelor’s degree studies if you are already a Master’s degree student. The transcript must contain a grading key.

**Language skills**

To be active in an academic context, you will need at least a B2 language level as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; however, we strongly recommend that you have a C1 level. Depending on the language of instruction of your choice of courses, you must have these language skills in English and/or German.

**You are NOT required to upload a confirmation/certificate of your language skills**, though you may do so if you have one. **By submitting your application, you confirm that you have the necessary language skills to study in English and/or German.**

**Passport / identity card**

You will also be required to upload a scan of your passport or identity card: page(s) with your photo and personal details (name, date of birth) only.

**Photo**

You must upload a photo for your student ID card. Make sure that the image quality is good and that you are recognisable in the photo (full-face, well-lit, neutral background, etc.). The photo may be no larger than 800x600 pixels (height x width) and 1 MB maximum.

**CV**

You are required to upload a curriculum vitae (CV) in English or German. Please make sure that it is up-to-date.

**Motivation Letter**

You must upload a motivation letter in which you state your motivation for an exchange at ETH Zurich. Maximum 1 page (A4), in English or German.
4. Application procedure

Begin your application process by clicking [here](#) (for the German version of the search portal, please click [here](#)) and follow the procedure outlined below.

**Search portal**

First select your home university and the desired academic year and exchange programme. Then click on the button on the below left and view the search result.

The detailed display of exchange possibilities:

Clicking on the paper icon next to the university name calls up detailed information regarding contract and university. Clicking on the green button calls up the online application function. If the button is red, this means that application is currently not possible.

**Application form**

Enter the required information and submit the form. As your email address it is preferable to give your student email address from the home university (universities are normally less restrictive in sorting potential spam than private providers) and/or to set the domain ethz.ch on your whitelist, so that you are sure to receive ETH Zurich emails.

After submitting your form you will receive an email which details how to set up a user account. After setting it up you will receive a further email with details of how to log in to Mobility-Online to complete your application. You may only submit the application when you have completed all the necessary steps! Please note that you must submit it by the given deadline.
Login

Always enter Mobility-Online by entering your details in the upper half of the login page (even after you begin your stay at ETH Zurich):

Note for Mac users: Please first activate the ‘Always show scrollbar’ setting; otherwise, depending on your browser setting, the scrollbar function may be deactivated and you may not be able to view your workflow correctly.

Logging in will call up your workflow with all pending steps. Complete these steps by clicking on the link to the corresponding step on the right. The compulsory steps must be completed in the designated order:

Adding data

Add a contact person in case of emergencies. Click on the ‘Forward to update’ button to make changes.

Projects

All projects must be entered in the study plan as course units (see above). In a separate step, also enter the exact details of the project. Check with your home university whether you are expected to earn a certain number of ECTS for the project and if yes, make sure that your ETH Zurich supervisor understands and agrees with this requirement (which may be different from the standard at ETH Zurich). The number of ECTS can be 0 if there are no specific requirements from your home university.

The confirmation of the ETH Zurich supervisor must be uploaded to the documents, completing the application. You are responsible for finding a project supervisor. Please apply directly with professors or scientists.
Special conditions as outlined in the separate factsheet apply for students undertaking a research project/thesis in the department of Biosystems Science and Engineering (D-BSSE) in Basel. Projects in Basel have to be a compulsory part of your study programme at your home university (particularly applicable to students from non-EU/EFTA countries) and must be declared from the very beginning of your application process.

**Documents**

Depending on the exchange programme, different documents should be uploaded: see the information above.

> PDF documents only are accepted, with no images (except photo). See that the resolution is good and that scans are high-quality.

Upload the documents according to the respective step in the application procedure.

If you wish to submit more than one document in one category, you may upload the second (and any following) document by clicking on the paper icon on the top left in the workflow step:

For entering details on your project: Check with your home university whether you are expected to earn a certain number of ECTS for the project and if yes, make sure that your ETH Zurich supervisor understands and agrees with this requirement (which may be different from the standard at ETH Zurich). The number of ECTS can be 0 if there are no specific requirements from your home university.

**Submitting the application**

After entering all of your information and uploading the documents, finish the application by confirming that it is complete and submitting it. You will receive an automatic confirmation by email. It normally takes a few weeks for the Student Exchange Office and the responsible person in the department to process your application.

**Next steps**

Your application will now be perused in form and content. If it is accepted you will receive an email which states that ETH Zurich has officially admitted you for your mobility period. Depending on the programme, there will be various further steps; you will receive a corresponding email which describes them. You may log in to Mobility-Online at any time to view what information has already been sent, and which step comes next.