

Entry into effect:	1 November 2011
Version:	1 November 2016
For further information:	Admissions Office

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

## DIRECTIVE

### Admission to Master's degree programmes

*The ETH Executive Board,*

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

*decrees the following:*

#### Overview

- Part 1: General regulations
- Part 2: Specific prerequisites for admission
- Part 3: Particular stipulations for candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from certain universities
- Part 4: Particular stipulations for candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences
- Part 5: *Rescinded*
- Part 6: Admission with additional requirements
- Part 7: Fulfilling additional requirements
- Part 8: Admissions procedure
- Part 9: Entry into effect

---

<sup>1</sup> SR 414.131.52

---

## Part 1: General regulations

### Art. 1 Subject and scope

This directive determines:

- a. the policies and framework according to which the ETH departments must 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 in particular the knowledge and skills required to complete the Master's degree programme in the respective discipline.

<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
- c. *supplementary knowledge*: any further knowledge and skills which are not absolutely necessary to complete the respective Master's degree programme but are expected of all holders of an ETH Zurich Master's degree.

### 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 or from a German cooperative university (*Duale Hochschule*) 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 language certification required must be submitted by the time of entry to the Master's degree programme at the latest. This also applies to candidates with a degree from a Swiss university or university of applied sciences.

<sup>4</sup> No language certification is required:

- a. from candidates who hold the Swiss *Matura* (applies to both English and German);
- b. from candidates who hold a Bachelor's degree from ETH Zurich (applies to both English and German) or from EPF Lausanne (applies only to English);
- c. from candidates whose declared mother tongue is the language in question;
- d.<sup>(3)</sup> from candidates who have obtained a Bachelor's degree taught in the language required by their chosen Master's degree programme within one of the following countries<sup>(4)</sup>:
  - 1) for English: Australia, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand, UK, and USA,
  - 2) for German: Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein;
- e.<sup>(5)</sup> *rescinded*

## **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.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, p. 23f.  
[www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 02.10.2012. It applies to candidates who submit an application for admission to a Master's degree programme from 1 November 2012 onwards.

<sup>4</sup> Subpara. d applies only to degrees that were awarded by a university in the relevant country (no satellite campuses or international branch campuses in other countries, no correspondence course degrees).

<sup>5</sup> Rescinded pursuant to the resolution of 02.10.2012.

---

**Art. 6** Further admissions prerequisite for candidates from countries which are not signatories to the Bologna Declaration

The departments may also require candidates from countries which have not signed the Bologna Declaration to submit the results of a GRE 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> <sup>(6)</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 the candidate holds a degree in only one subject or in a major of this discipline.
- b. Admission remains subject to proof of sufficient knowledge of the languages of instruction (see Art. 4).

<sup>2</sup> The standard for determining a corresponding discipline is the Conference of Swiss University Rectors (CRUS) 'Regulations determining disciplines and the classification of Bachelor's degree programmes' (*Regelung der CRUS zur Festlegung der Studienrichtungen sowie für die Zuordnung der Bachelor-Studiengänge*) of 11 November 2005<sup>(7)</sup>.

**Art. 9** EPF Lausanne

Candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from EPF Lausanne are admitted to the consecutive Master's degree programme in the corresponding discipline at ETH Zurich without additional requirements. Admission remains subject to proof of sufficient knowledge of the languages of instruction (see Art. 4).

---

<sup>6</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 11.10.2016. It enters into effect on 01.11.2016.

<sup>7</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> The admission of candidates with a Bachelor's degree from a Swiss university of applied sciences is governed by the agreement of the Conference of Swiss University Rectors (CRUS), the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences (KFH) and the Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education (COHEP) of 5 November 2007 concerning mobility between the different types of university. The concordance list attached to this agreement identifies which Bachelor's degrees from Swiss universities of applied sciences guarantee admission, with additional requirements, to an ETH Zurich Master's degree programme in the corresponding discipline. The stipulations set out in Para. 3 and Art. 4 (language prerequisites) also apply in every case.

<sup>2</sup> Graduates of universities of applied sciences 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>3<sup>8</sup></sup> Admission to a Master's degree programme for holders of a Bachelor's degree from a Swiss university of applied sciences is in all cases only possible if the overall grade in the Bachelor's degree programme was at least a 5 (Swiss grading system using grades 1 to 6: 6 is the best, 4 is sufficient and 1 is the worst). The overall grade is always calculated by ETH Zurich; the method employed is set out in the appendix.

<sup>4</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>5</sup> Admission to a Master's degree programme for holders of a Bachelor's degree from a degree programme which spans more than one country or university type is in all cases only possible if the overall grade in the Bachelor's degree programme was at least a 5 (Swiss grading system). The overall grade is always calculated by ETH Zurich; the method employed is set out in the appendix.

---

<sup>8</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 27.02.2015. It enters into effect on 01.01.2015.

---

<sup>6</sup><sup>9</sup> Bachelor's degrees from German universities of applied sciences or from Austrian universities of applied sciences are in principle regarded as equivalent to those of Swiss universities of applied sciences (this does not apply to the Swiss concordance list mentioned in Para. 1). Candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a German or Austrian university of applied sciences may be admitted to Master's degree studies at ETH Zurich if, besides satisfying the discipline-specific and language prerequisites, they fulfil the following performance criteria:

- a. They have completed their studies with at least 'very good' grades (Germany);
- b. They have completed their studies with an average grade of 2 or higher (Austria). The pertaining provisions in the Appendix apply analogously to the computation of the total grade.

<sup>7</sup><sup>10</sup> Candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a German cooperative university (*Duale Hochschule*) are subject to the same stipulations as those holding a Bachelor's degree from a German university of applied sciences.

## **Part 5:**<sup>(11)</sup>

*Rescinded*

## **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, cognisance and performance assessments to a course unit in the Course Catalogue.

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

<sup>4</sup><sup>(12)</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 (CEs).

---

<sup>9</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 11.10.2016. It enters into effect on 01.11.2016.

<sup>10</sup> Pursuant to the Rector's letter dated 19.08.2014.

<sup>11</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 2013 onwards.

<sup>12</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 26.03.2013. It enters into effect at the beginning of Autumn Semester 2013.

---

<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 or from a German cooperative university (*Duale Hochschule*): 60 credits

<sup>2</sup> The differing educational background of candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences or from a German cooperative university (*Duale Hochschule*) is taken into account in that admission is always subject to additional requirements comprising 40 – 60 credits.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Para. 2 also applies to candidates holding a *Master's* degree from a university of applied sciences or from a German cooperative university (*Duale Hochschule*) 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).

---

<sup>13</sup> See also the agreement of CRUS, KFH and COHEP of 5 November 2007 concerning mobility between the different types of university.

---

## 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>14</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 the 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.

**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.
- 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 or from a German cooperative university (*Duale Hochschule*)

<sup>1</sup> Candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences or from a German cooperative university (*Duale Hochschule*):

- a. 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) Examinations 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.

---

<sup>14</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. The examinations belonging to one examination block must always be undertaken during the same examination session.
  - d. 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 examinations belonging to it must be repeated.
  - e. 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 15)</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).

**Art. 20**<sup>(16)</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. Exceptions are listed in Para. 2.

<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 Academic Services and the responsible department / degree programme.

---

<sup>15</sup> Detailed version of 24.08.2012.

<sup>16</sup> Version pursuant to the resolution of 26.03.2013. It enters into effect at the beginning of Autumn Semester 2013.

---

<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 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 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 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 Academic Services accordingly in advance.

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

<sup>4</sup> In the context of additional requirements, any requests for reconsideration which are submitted more than 30 days into the entry semester will no longer be considered.

**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.<sup>(17)</sup>
- 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.

---

<sup>17</sup> The permitted number of missing credits is set out in the Programme Regulations of the respective consecutive Master's degree programme (e.g., B.Sc. Physics > M.Sc. Physics).

---

**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 for the purpose of admission to a Master's degree programme at ETH Zurich

(Reference: Art. 11, Para. 3 and 4 of this directive)

Version: 1 November 2016

---

1. Calculation of the overall grade of a Bachelor's degree from a Swiss university of applied sciences 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 computes the overall grade as the unweighted arithmetical average of all the individual grades listed in the transcript of records from the university of applied sciences. This arithmetical average is rounded to two decimal points. Performance assessments graded on a pass/fail basis are not taken into account in the calculation of the overall grade.

1.2 If study performance at the university of applied sciences was evaluated in the form of ECTS grades the following conversion table<sup>18</sup> is used to compute the individual grades which determine the overall grade mentioned in (1.1).

<b>A</b>	<b>5.75</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>5.25</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>4.75</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>4.25</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>4</b>

2. Calculation of the overall grade of a Bachelor's degree from a degree programme which spans more than one country or university type  
(Reference: Art. 11, Para. 4 of this directive)

2.1 ETH Zurich computes the overall grade as the unweighted arithmetical average of all the individual grades listed in the transcript of records. This arithmetical average is rounded to two decimal points. Performance assessments graded on a pass/fail basis are not taken into account in the calculation of the overall grade.

2.2 Every participating university is responsible for supplying ECTS grades equivalent to each grade awarded according to the respective national grading system. The respective university stipulates how said ECTS grades are computed.

2.3 The ECTS grades supplied are converted by ETH Zurich according to the table in 1.2 above. The results are then used to compute the overall grade according to 2.1.

---

<sup>18</sup> ETH Zurich class average (individual grades).