

Teaching policy at ETH Zurich

The ETH Zurich teaching policy sets out the guiding values that shape the university's understanding of teaching quality. The teaching policy is the foundation for the development and evaluation of teaching at the institution. It is also the basis for the university's quality criteria for curricula and courses and its expectations of all persons engaged in teaching, as recorded in the document "Quality in teaching at ETH Zurich".¹

The teaching policy does not address organisational matters related to teaching. These are governed by the ETH Zurich Organisational Ordinance.²

Self-image and task

ETH prepares its students to shape the future as members of society, who think independently and act responsibly.

Under the terms of its formal task³ ETH educates students to a high level of disciplinary expertise and scientific competence in core areas of engineering, the sciences, architecture, mathematics, management, humanities, the social sciences and political science. Their education incorporates the humanities and the social and political sciences. Teaching at ETH is carried out by internationally known researchers.

Guiding values

Unity of teaching and research

ETH imparts knowledge and competences at the highest scientific level, with a view to application. Teaching and research are equivalent in status, are closely linked, and are competitive internationally. All ETH scientific staff are involved in teaching. Students are engaged in research as early as possible.

The range of courses at ETH is subject to ongoing critical examination and development. ETH's degree programme portfolio is oriented towards the long-term requirements of science, society and the economy; it strengthens Switzerland's reputation for thought and action with its international focus. ETH degree programmes enable their graduates to recognise, and address, new issues and challenges in science and practice.

¹ Quality in teaching at ETH Zurich (4 October 2016)

² ETH Zurich Organisational Ordinance (16 December 2003)

³ Federal Act on the Federal Institutes of Technology (4 October 1991), Performance mandate of the Federal Council to the ETH Domain for the period 2013-2016 (29 November 2012), *Zielvereinbarung 2013-2016 zwischen dem ETH-Rat und der ETH Zürich* [Statement of objectives 2013-2016 between the ETH Board and ETH Zurich] (31 October 2012)

Unity of knowledge, thought and action

ETH degree programmes impart not only disciplinary knowledge, but also training in critical thinking, thus equipping graduates with the tools of responsible conduct.

In addition to content, ETH lecturers present the strengths and weaknesses of their disciplines and build connections to neighbouring disciplines. Students are ready to engage in this critical approach.

Performance orientation

An ETH education is open to all those who fulfil the formal criteria and have the motivation to succeed in their studies. ETH selects its lecturers according to profile, performance and potential. The resulting diversity among lecturers and the student body and ETH's responsible approach to this diversity are significant features of the university's culture.

Student achievement is rewarded. The degree programmes offer several vehicles and scope for students to demonstrate outstanding performance in addition to that documented in the academic record and the curriculum. Teaching and learning environments motivate and foster achievement.

The transcript of records promotes student learning and development. It presents the knowledge, understanding and skills that students acquire in an appropriate form. The transcript of records is meaningful, fair and unambiguous.⁴

Personal responsibility

ETH lecturers teach under their own responsibility and within the framework of their disciplines. They orient their teaching towards the respective degree programme qualification profile and shape it according to pedagogical and didactic criteria.

Students are responsible for shaping their own learning processes. Their departments and the Rectorate assist them in this.

Students, lecturers and all those involved in teaching are open to innovation in teaching. They initiate and promote innovations. All persons affected by changes in the organisation and design of teaching processes have the opportunity to take part.⁵ ETH members are aware of this possibility and take advantage of it.

All those engaged in teaching, including the relevant university bodies, are engaged in an ongoing dialogue on the subject of teaching. Diversity of views enriches this dialogue.

Adopted by the Executive Board on 4 October 2016

⁴ Guidelines on Grading Written Examinations (November 2013)

⁵ ETH Law (4 October 1991), *Verordnung des ETH-Rates über die Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschulen Zürich und Lausanne* [ETH Board ordinance regarding the Federal Institutes of Technology Zurich and Lausanne] (13 November 2003)