

## Press Release

Autumn Semester 2015 / 16

# More female students than ever before

Zurich, 10 September 2015

**On Monday 2,837 students are expected to take up their places on undergraduate degree programmes at ETH Zurich. The courses in engineering sciences are especially popular. The proportion of female students has risen markedly and now stands for the first time at just under 33 percent. The total number of people studying at ETH continues to grow.**

This year 2,837 young women and men have enrolled on one of ETH Zurich's 23 undergraduate degree programmes. According to preliminary figures, this is roughly the same number of first-year students as last year (2,805); however, the percentage of women has risen and now stands at 32.5 percent (compared with 30.8 percent last year). ETH Rector Sarah Springman is particularly delighted with the fact that an increasing number of young women are choosing to study at ETH. "Diversity is essential for a university, so I am convinced that a more equal gender balance will also bring significant benefits for ETH as a whole," she says. For Springman, the figures are also proof of the success of ETH's incentive programmes to inspire young women to pursue careers in technology and sciences. "This is one of the ways in which we are actively helping to do something about the shortage of skilled workers in Switzerland," she says.

The proportion of international undergraduate students has fallen slightly. In the current autumn semester, 17.7 percent of students do not hold a Swiss passport (compared with 19.5 percent last year). The percentage of students who achieved their entry qualification in a foreign country and have come to Switzerland to study is 10.9 percent, the lowest level in recent years.

### **Engineering sciences continue to gain ground**

By far the most popular undergraduate course of study continues to be Mechanical Engineering with 468 new students; the figures for this course remain similar to those of last year (447). With 285 new students, Architecture is once again the second most frequently chosen undergraduate programme.

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Continuing the trend of recent years, Computer Sciences with 256 admissions and Electrical Engineering and Information Technology with 231 move into third and fourth, respectively, on the popularity scale. Following close behind comes Health Sciences and Technology, a course introduced in 2011, with 214 new undergraduates this year.

ETH Zurich is also very popular for master's degrees, both with its own students and those who have completed bachelor's degrees at other universities. Based on past experience, roughly two thirds of new master's students achieved their first degree at ETH Zurich. In the spring of this year, 401 students moved up into a master's programme and about 1,200 more will complete the move in the autumn semester. They will be joined by the approximately 750 graduates from other universities, who were selected from a pool of 2,900 applicants. Most admissions from external bachelor's graduates are to the master's programmes Computer Science and Architecture. The exact admission figures for master's study are not yet known because registration can continue until the second week of the semester.

### **Guiding decision-making processes**

The master's programme Science, Technology and Policy is being offered for the first time, and is designed to enable scientists, engineers and architects to use their scientific knowledge to guide and shape decision-making processes in politics, economics and society. This new programme of study is in line with the Critical Thinking initiative, which aims to train ETH Zurich students to think critically and independently.

### **Total number of students continues to grow**

Counting the incoming undergraduate students, external master's students, and visiting and exchange students, an estimated 3,900 new students will attend their first lectures at ETH Zurich this coming Monday. The total number of students has again increased slightly: together with the 4,100 doctoral students, about 19,000 women and men will be studying at ETH Zurich. Dieter Wüest, Head of the Rectorate, explains that ETH expects this growth to slow down in the coming years, with the total number of students stabilising at around 20,000 by the end of the decade.

### **Further Information**

ETH Zurich  
Dieter Wüest  
Head of the Rectorate  
Phone: +41 44 632 20 58  
dieter.wueest@rektorat.ethz.ch

ETH Zurich  
Claudia Naegeli  
Media Relations  
Phone: +41 44 632 41 41  
mediarelations@hk.ethz.ch

### **ETH Zurich also very popular for exchange programmes**

This autumn semester, ETH Zurich expects approximately 340 additional exchange and visiting students, who will attend ETH for one or two semesters. Slightly less than half of these students are from European universities; the rest come from the US, Asia and Australia. The majority of these students come to Zurich as part of exchange programmes, which means that ETH, in turn, sends its own students to the various partner universities. During the 2015/16 academic year, around 300 ETH students will benefit from this opportunity.