

Press Release

ETH Zurich launches new bachelor's degree in Medicine

Record start and new study programmes

Zurich, 14 September 2017

Next Monday sees a record number of students – just over 20,000 – starting the Autumn Semester at ETH Zurich. The latest rise is partly down to the students enrolling in two new courses: a bachelor's programme in Human Medicine and a master's degree in Data Science.

Next Monday, 3,016 undergraduates are expected to attend their first lecture at ETH Zurich. New enrolments across a total of 23 bachelor's programmes are therefore roughly 6 percent up on the prior year. Counting the study programmes at all levels – bachelor's, master's, doctorate, continuing education, and exchange/visiting studies – enrolments for the Autumn Semester have hit a new record of more than 20,000 students. The proportion of female students in bachelor's programmes is virtually unchanged, at 33.7 percent. The percentage of foreign students has increased slightly to 12.8 percent, compared with 11.9 percent last year.

Enrolments for one of the University's 44 master's programmes are also higher this year. "The steady increase in students in our bachelor's programmes ultimately has an impact at master's level as well, albeit with a slight delay," Dieter Wüest, Head of Academic Services explains, "because 95 percent of undergraduates stay on at ETH to complete their master's degree." However, the proportion of non-ETH graduates enrolling for its master's courses has also risen. ETH received around 4,000 applications (another record) from graduates of other universities, of which almost 1,000 were accepted into master's programmes.

100 new places to study Human Medicine

One particularly exciting development this year is the new bachelor's course in Human Medicine, for which 100 students have enrolled. This is the first time in its history that ETH Zurich has offered this study programme, which is the only ETH course with a limited number of places ("*numerus clausus*"). New entrants were therefore required to pass a qualifying examination for medical studies set by Swiss universities. The degree programme is administered by the Department of Health Sciences and Technology. When they move on to the master's degree in Medicine, the students will switch to one of

ETH Zurich's partner universities. This innovative course of study is made possible by the close collaboration with different partners in clinical medicine and the University of Zurich, University of Basel and Università della Svizzera Italiana (USI) in Lugano, which offer guaranteed study places for master's students. ETH Rector Sarah Springman is delighted: "The new course is finally going ahead after extensive planning and preparation. It will be fascinating to see how the students respond to the ground-breaking combination of subjects and teaching model we have devised."

Branching out in IT as well

Another innovation this year is the master's degree in Data Science, offered in collaboration with the Department of Computer Science, Mathematics as well as the Department of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering. The new study programme provides high-quality education for nurturing the next generation of data scientists, one of ETH Zurich's key areas of research. Given the enormous growth in global data volumes, Switzerland needs specialists capable of extracting valuable information from the masses of data collected. It is precisely these skills which the new course focuses on: managing and storing vast quantities of data or developing efficient algorithms for data analysis. The University sees its role as helping to shape the digital future of Switzerland, which now has the chance to grow its information technology sector into a highly productive industry.

Further information

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Important collaboration with partner universities

It is not only in the field of Human Medicine that ETH Zurich works closely with partner institutions. A total of nine master's programmes are now offered as joint degrees in partnership with other institutions, two of them international universities. Here ETH is teaming up with strategically important partners in order to produce the very best quality of learning. For the master's degree in Computational Biology and Bioinformatics, for example, which was previously offered in collaboration with the University of Zurich, the University of Basel was added as a new partner. By basing the course in the Department for Biosystems in Basel, the students also benefit from the proximity to the pharmaceutical industry. Another joint initiative with partner universities sees ETH Zurich involved in promoting the MINT subjects – mathematics, information technology, natural sciences and technology – in secondary schools. Together with the Zurich University of Teacher Education and the University of Zurich, ETH offers two teaching courses: an MA in Science Didactics and now also an MA in Maths Didactics. This course trains specialists who will be responsible for educating the next generation of teachers in the MINT subjects.