

## Information sheet

# Studying as a parent

Are you expecting a child, or are you parents? Congratulations! Take your time to find out about studying as a parent, and think about how you wish to organise yourselves. ETH Zurich offers mothers and fathers many types of assistance in balancing family obligations and full-time studies.

### Organising your studies

Studying parents may take advantage of several options to help them plan their studies:

- Flexibility options
- Parental leave
- Absence from class if the child is ill
- Examination options

### Flexibility options

Your available duration of studies is composed of a minimum, or normal, duration of studies and several semester extensions, or “tolerance semesters”. Tolerance semesters are intended to offset contingencies such as repetition of examinations, illness, accidents and maternity/paternity leave.

- A Bachelor's degree programme of 180 credits may take up to 10 semesters: the normal duration of studies of 6 semesters plus 4 tolerance semesters.
- A Master's degree programme of 90 credits may take up to 6 semesters: the normal duration of studies of 3 semesters plus 3 tolerance semesters.
- A Master's degree programme of 120 credits may take up to 8 semesters: the normal duration of studies of 4 semesters plus 4 tolerance semesters.

Studying parents may also request the following options to make their studies more flexible:

### Dividing of examination blocks

Up to one year after the birth of your child, you may submit a written request to split an examination block and distribute it across two examination sessions. You must submit your request by the end of the fourth week of the semester (final registration deadline for examinations).

The following rules apply to the distribution of an examination block:

- Credits must be divided either half / half or one-third / two-thirds.
- Each part-block must comprise at least 7 credits.

Any deviation from these guidelines requires a written statement of grounds from the student advisor. This should summarise all the facts relevant to the course of study to ensure that they are taken into account in the decision-making process.

### Deadline extension

If your family obligations mean that the duration of studies is insufficient, you may request an extension for the first-year examinations or an extension of the maximum duration of studies.

Before submitting a request to divide an examination block or extend a deadline, we recommend that you contact the student advisor of your degree programme or a consultant from Student Services to discuss your curriculum and suitable flexibility options.

You must submit your request to the Head of Student Administration. The Vice-Rector for Study Programmes will then decide on your flexibility options.

ETH Zurich  
Vice-Rector Study Programmes  
c/o Student Administration Office  
Rämistrasse 101  
8092 Zurich

[Deadline duration of studies](#) → [Deadline first-year examinations](#) →



[Ordinance on performance assessments: Implementation stipulations](#) →



If you wish to interrupt your studies during maternity/paternity leave you may withdraw from your programme and re-matriculate later, as long as you face no immediate academic deadlines such as a deadline for the first-year examinations, the Bachelor's or the Master's degree. Please note that Master's degree students are subject to the re-entry provisions set out in the admissions decision.

If you have any questions, please contact the Registrar's Office.

Contact:  
[kanzlei@ethz.ch](mailto:kanzlei@ethz.ch)  
[www.kanzlei.ethz.ch](http://www.kanzlei.ethz.ch) →

[Semester leave](#) →



[Withdrawal](#) →



[Re-entry BSc](#) →



[Re-entry MSc](#) →



## Parental leave

You may take parental leave of a defined length. Leave of two consecutive semesters is generally possible. Requests for approval of exceptions, citing reasons, must be submitted in writing to the Registrar's Office.

During your leave of absence you remain matriculated. You pay no semester fees, only the compulsory and (if any) voluntary semester contributions. Please note that your duration of studies is neither interrupted nor extended if you take a leave of absence.

## Examinations

If the deadline for exam registration has passed or the examination session has started and you cannot sit (further) examinations for any of the reasons listed below, please contact the Examinations Office immediately by telephone:

- Health problems during pregnancy
- Birth of a child
- Illness of a child and no suitable childcare found

The Examinations Office will inform you of the next steps. A doctor's note stating the reasons for non-attendance must be provided within two working days of your communication.

Contact:  
Examinations Office, +41 44 632 20 68

[Directive on the exam schedule](#) →



## Absence from class if your child is ill

If you cannot attend classes for more than a week because your child is ill or for other urgent reasons, please inform the responsible lecturers.

## Maternity health protection

As a mother-to-be or if you are breastfeeding, you are entitled to special health protection. During pregnancy and breastfeeding you are more sensitive to arduous work, certain physical influences, chemical substances and microorganisms. Exposure to such impact can have serious consequences for the development of your child. Suitable pre-emptive measures can protect you.

If you are exposed to any of these hazards, speak with those responsible for your laboratory or practical work about protective measures or contact the Safety, Security, Health and Environment department (SSHE).

Contact:

[mutterschutz@ethz.ch](mailto:mutterschutz@ethz.ch)  
[www.sgu.ethz.ch](http://www.sgu.ethz.ch) →

Information sheet:  
[Maternity protection](#) →



Course: [Maternity protection](#) →



## Childcare

As a studying parent you have access to the same childcare options as ETH employees. Here are the contact points:

### Hello Kids!

Hello Kids! is the ETH service point for all childcare queries. This unit helps parents to find extra-familial childcare and makes suggestions which are tailored to the needs of parents.

Contact:

Carole Siegfried, +41 44 632 88 67  
[hellokids@ethz.ch](mailto:hellokids@ethz.ch)  
[www.ethz.ch/hellokids](http://www.ethz.ch/hellokids) →



### kihZ Foundation

The kihz Foundation offers various childcare options to members of both ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich: childcare facilities; holiday clubs during Zurich's school holidays; childcare during conferences, in the workplace and at home; and flexible care.

Contact:

kihZ Foundation, +41 44 634 40 90  
[www.kihz.ch](http://www.kihz.ch) →

## Breastfeeding and changing your baby

ETH Zurich follows the recommendations of Breastfeeding Promotion Switzerland. If you are breastfeeding you may contact SSHE for a key to all first aid rooms at ETH Zurich. There are also various further possibilities for changing and breastfeeding your baby on the Höggerberg and in the Zentrum.

Contact:

[sgu\\_betriebssanitaet@ethz.ch](mailto:sgu_betriebssanitaet@ethz.ch)

[Breastfeeding rooms and changing tables](#) →



## Financial questions

ETH Zurich offers various forms of financial help to mothers and fathers.

### Scholarships and loans

In addition to cantonal scholarships, you may apply for scholarships at ETH Zurich. Childcare duties are taken into account in the scholarship amount.

If you have passed the first-year examinations and find yourself in a verifiably difficult financial situation, you may apply for an interest-free loan of up to CHF 12,000.- A request may be submitted to the Financial Aid Office at any time.

To tide you over if you are in temporary financial difficulties, you may take out an interest-free loan of up to CHF 2000.-. This is usually possible from the first semester onwards.

Contact:

Financial Aid Office, +41 44 632 20 40/88  
[studienfinanzierung@sts.ethz.ch](mailto:studienfinanzierung@sts.ethz.ch)

Scholarships →



Loans →



### Continuation of salary as a student employee

Student employees are entitled to paid maternity leave. The continuation of payments is based upon the average number of hours worked per month.

Contact:

Human Resources  
[www.hr.ethz.ch/contact](http://www.hr.ethz.ch/contact) →

### Financial support for baby's nursery places

ETH Zurich provides financial support for baby's nursery places. Parents whose babies under 18 months are cared for outside of the family can apply for a refund of the price difference between a baby's nursery place and an infant's nursery place in accordance with the Guidelines on financial support for baby's nursery places.

If your baby is in an ETH Zurich daycare facility (kihZ, ETH KIKRI Zentrum, Spielchischte or Irchelkrippe) or you have a subsidised place in a crèche in the city of Zurich, you will not be charged with a higher baby's fee. Applications for financial support are therefore unnecessary

Contact:

Carole Siegfried, +41 44 632 88 67,  
[hellokids@ethz.ch](mailto:hellokids@ethz.ch)  
[www.ethz.ch/hellokids](http://www.ethz.ch/hellokids) →

[Guidelines on financial support for baby nursery places](#)



## Further information

### Networking

Student Services will, if you agree, put you in touch with other studying parents so that you can exchange experiences.

Contact:

[www.ethz.ch/beratung-coaching](http://www.ethz.ch/beratung-coaching) →

### Information events

Equal!, ETH Zurich's equal opportunities office, regularly organises events for ETH Zurich parents on topics such as balancing work/studies and parenthood, and maternity.

Contact:

[www.equal.ethz.ch](http://www.equal.ethz.ch) →

### Tools for balancing studies and parenthood

Checklists, tools and guidelines for balancing work/studies and parenthood may be found on the UND website.

Contact:

[www.und-online.ch](http://www.und-online.ch) →  
[www.gemeinsam-regie-fuehren.ch](http://www.gemeinsam-regie-fuehren.ch) →

ETH Zurich  
Student Services  
Student Advisory and Coaching  
[www.ethz.ch/beratung-coaching](http://www.ethz.ch/beratung-coaching) →