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For further information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BSc/BA and MSc/MA degree programmes: Deputy Head of the Rectorate• University continuing education programmes: Centre for Continuing Education

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

DIRECTIVE

Languages of instruction in Bachelor's, Master's and university continuing education programmes

The Rector,

Pursuant to Art. 9, Para. 2 of the ETH Zurich Organisational Ordinance [*Organisationsverordnung ETH Zürich*] of 16 December 2003¹ and following consultation with the Study Conference on 5 March 2009 and the affirmative decision of the Executive Board 5 May 2009, issues the following directive:

Policy

ETH Zurich has a national mandate to train scientists for Swiss industry. Its Bachelor's degree students are recruited mostly from among graduates of Swiss secondary schools, and come mostly from German Switzerland. Optimal conditions should be created to facilitate the commencement of studies for these students. For this reason the language of instruction during Bachelor's degree studies will be *German during the first year of studies and mostly German during higher semesters of Bachelor's degree studies*. Even during Bachelor's degree studies some courses should also be taught in English: on the one hand to prepare students gradually for a new language of instruction at Master's level, and on the other to ensure that among ETH's very international body of professors there will be enough faculty to teach Bachelor's degree course units.

Master's degree programmes recruit internationally. For this reason the language of instruction of Master's degree studies will *as far as possible be English*. In this way Master's degree students will also be prepared in the language sense for careers in a globalised economy and society. Degree programmes which continue to be more nationally oriented may choose to continue in German or in a combination of German and English as teaching languages.

In ETH's university continuing education programmes (MAS/MBA, DAS, CAS) there must be enough flexibility regarding teaching language to accommodate the needs of participants and the availability of suitable lecturers.

¹ RSETHZ 201.021

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1. General provisions

Art. 1 Subject and scope of this directive

¹ This directive establishes the policy for the languages of instruction of course units which are offered by ETH Zurich and which belong to the curricula of a Bachelor's degree, Master's degree or university continuing education (MAS/MBA, DAS, CAS) programme.

² It does not apply to either of the following:

- a. Course units from other university further education programmes, including teaching certificate programmes or doctoral programmes
- b. Course units offered by other universities

Art. 2 Languages of instruction, course unit language

¹ The term "language of instruction" refers to both the language in which a course unit is taught and the language in which the corresponding performance assessment is conducted.

² The languages of instruction at ETH Zurich are

- a. German
- b. English
- c. Additional in some degree programmes: French
- d. Additional in performance assessments and in exercises and practicals: Italian

³ Performance assessments are as a rule conducted in the language in which the course unit is actually taught (subsequently "course unit language"). Exceptions are listed in Art. 10, Para. 2; Art. 15; and Art. 19.

Art. 3 Course Catalogue; retrospective changes

¹ The language of instruction of every course unit is listed in the Course Catalogue. This entry is binding after the semester begins. A retrospective change of language of instruction is only permitted if a significant majority of the students attending the course unit consent to it (e.g. via an email survey).

² Retrospective changes of language of instruction are ruled on by the Rector at the request of the department offering the respective course unit. Approval may be subject to the conditions set out in Art. 15 (a) (for example those regarding the language(s) of the performance assessment, teaching materials or any exercises).

³ Applications for retrospective changes of language of instruction must be submitted to the Vice-Rector for Study Programmes by the end of the fourth week of teaching at the latest.

Art. 4 Performance assessments in more than one language

If a performance assessment may be undertaken not only in the course unit language but also in one of the other languages listed in Art. 2, Para. 2, the following provisions apply:

- a. In written performance assessments, questions are formulated in the course unit language but may be answered in either the course unit language or the other language. There is no automatic right to a translation of the questions into the other language. Exceptions are listed in Art. 15 (a) and in Art. 19.
- b. Written work as a form of performance assessment (reports, presentation texts, semester papers etc.) may be authored in either the course unit language or the other language.
- c. Bachelor's and Master's theses should be authored in one of the languages designated by the degree programme. As long as the degree programme does not stipulate otherwise, with the consent of the respective supervisor theses may also be authored in another language. There is no automatic right to use another language.
- d. In oral performance assessments questions are posed in the course unit language and may be answered in either the course unit language or the other language. There is no automatic right to a translation of the questions into the other language. Exceptions are listed in Art. 15 and 19. In addition, it must be guaranteed that either the examiner or at least one co-examiner or the observer are proficient in the other language.
- e. If students wish to undertake a performance assessment in the other language they must inform the responsible examiner of this, in writing, by the end of the examination registration period at the latest.

Art. 5 No legal right to other national languages

If a course unit is taught in German or English the performance assessment may be undertaken in French or Italian only with the consent of the examiner. There is no automatic right to use the national languages French or Italian.

2. Bachelor's degree programmes (BSc/BA)

Art. 6 Policy

¹ The language of instruction of Bachelor's degree programmes is as a rule German.

² English and French may be foreseen as further languages of instruction.

³ Languages of instruction are set out in the respective Programme Regulations.

Art. 7 First year of studies

Course units of the first year of studies must be conducted and examined in German (first-year examinations and other performance assessments during the first year of studies). Exceptions are listed in Art. 8. Exercises and practicals are subject to the special provisions set out in Art. 9.

Art. 8 Exceptions during the first year of studies

¹ If faculty availability leaves no other choice, the Rector may upon justified request grant exceptional permission for a first-year lecture to be delivered in English.

² Exceptions are granted only very restrictively. They are temporary and are always subject to conditions which take into account prevailing circumstances. These conditions may include exam questions/teaching materials in German, supervision by German-speaking Assistants, lectures videoed and made available to students, etc.

Art. 9 Special provisions for exercises and practicals during the first year of studies

¹ If the personnel situation does not permit otherwise, English-speaking (rather than German-speaking) Assistants may be deployed to supervise exercises and practicals during the first year of studies. The responsible lecturers must ensure that supervision is adequate for the students.

² Exercise and practicals groups may be supervised in French or Italian if necessary and if personnel are available.

Art. 10 Second and third years of Bachelor's degree studies

¹ The proportion of course units which are not conducted in German may not exceed one quarter of the range of courses during the second year of studies and one half during the third year of studies. The Rector may grant exceptions if cogent grounds are provided.

² If a course unit which is not conducted in German belongs to the curriculum of a Bachelor's degree programme its students may always undertake the corresponding performance assessment in German (answers in German; no automatic right to translation of the questions). The modalities are provided in Art. 4. This right does not apply if a course unit is offered by an English-language Master's degree programme and is attended by Bachelor's degree students as an elective.

Art. 11 Consent of the department if a course unit is not offered in German

The department responsible for the Bachelor's degree programme must give its consent for every course unit which is not offered in German. This also applies to service lectures (course units which are in the curriculum of a degree programme but are offered by another department). The responsible lecturers must also ensure that additional help in German is available to students during or outside class.

Art. 12 Language skills required for Bachelor's degree studies

¹ Admission to Bachelor's degree studies requires a sufficient, verified level of German (at least C1⁽²⁾).⁽³⁾ Further information is provided on the ETH Zurich Admissions Office website.

² It is essential to acquire sufficient knowledge of English early, on the one hand because some Bachelor's degree course units are conducted in English and on the other because most Master's degree programmes are in English.

3. Master's degree programmes (MSc/MA)

Art. 13 Policy

¹ The language of instruction of Master's degree programmes is as a rule English.

² If a Master's degree programme is strongly national in orientation, other important reasons apply or the current range of courses does not permit otherwise, German or a combination of German and English are foreseeable.

³ Languages of instruction are set out in the respective Programme Regulations.

² The required language level reflects the scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

³ Pursuant to the provisions of the ETH Zurich Admissions Ordinance of 30 November 2010 (SR 414.131.52).

Art. 14 Sufficient range of courses in the designated teaching language

The department responsible for the degree programme must ensure that all compulsory subjects and a sufficient number of electives are offered in the language of instruction set out in the Programme Regulations. This also applies analogously to bilingual Master's degree programmes (German/English).

Art. 15 Monolingual Master's degree programmes

The following points apply to monolingual Master's degree programmes (English or German).

- a. In exceptional cases where a course unit in the compulsory subject category cannot be offered in the language of instruction designated for the degree programme, lecturers must ensure that students with insufficient language skills receive help in an appropriate form, e.g. via extra accompanying materials in the designated language. Lecturers must also guarantee that these students are able to undertake the performance assessment in the language of instruction foreseen for the degree programme, including translation of the questions.
- b. It is in general up to lecturers whether to grant students the option to undertake a performance assessment in the language designated for the respective degree programme or in another language (no automatic right to a translation of the questions: see Art. 4).

Art. 16 Bilingual Master's degree programmes

The following points apply to bilingual Master's degree programmes (English or German):

- a. Course units may be offered in one or both languages of instruction.
- b. It is up to lecturers whether to grant students the option to undertake a performance assessment in the language designated for the degree programme or in the other respective language (no automatic right to a translation of the questions: see Art. 4). The exception is where differing stipulations decreed outside the ETH domain apply (e.g. in Pharmaceutical Sciences); these stipulations must be listed in detail in the respective Programme Regulations.

Art. 17 Language skills required for Master's degree studies

Admission to Master's degree studies requires a sufficient, verified level of competence in each language listed in the respective Programme Regulations (at least level C1⁽⁴⁾).⁽⁵⁾ Further information is set out in the Directive on Admission to Master's degree programmes⁽⁶⁾ (and also published on the ETH Zurich Admissions Office website).

⁴ The required language level reflects the scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

⁵ Pursuant to the provisions of the ETH Zurich Admissions Ordinance of 30 November 2010 (SR 414.131.52).

⁶ See www.rektorat.ethz.ch/directives

4. Additional requirements for admission to Master's degree programmes (MSc/MA)

Art. 18 Existing situation

Additional requirements for admission to Master's degree programmes always involve the acquisition of the subject and methodological knowledge and skills imparted at Bachelor's degree level at ETH Zurich. The corresponding course units are generally taught in German (Bachelor's level). This presents a problem for those foreign-language applicants from whom no proof of sufficient knowledge of German is required due to the language of the selected Master's degree programme.

Art. 19 Fulfilling additional requirements in English

¹ If foreign-language applicants with a university Bachelor's degree are admitted to a Master's degree programme which requires no verification of sufficient knowledge of German, the department responsible for the Master's degree programme must ensure that any additional requirements can be fulfilled in English. This also applies to service lectures (course units which are on the respective Bachelor's degree curriculum but are offered by another department).

² If there are sound reasons why attendance of a course unit which is taught in German is essential, lecturers must ensure that students with no or insufficient knowledge of German receive support in an appropriate form analogous to Art. 15 (a).

Art. 20 German language skills necessary for additional requirements comprising more than 30 credits

Applicants who are graduates of a university of applied sciences must fulfil additional requirements comprising more than 30 credits. They must be in a position to undertake the corresponding performance assessments in German, and must therefore supply proof of sufficient knowledge of German (level C1).

5. University continuing education programmes (MAS/MBA, DAS, CAS)

Art. 21 Languages of instruction in MAS, MBA, DAS and CAS programmes

¹ The languages of instruction of MAS, MBA, DAS and CAS programmes are oriented towards their respective target groups and the available range of courses. They are either

- a. Monolingual (German or English)
- b. Bilingual (German and English)

² The Rector may approve exceptions if cogent grounds are provided.

Art. 22 Main and secondary languages in bilingual programmes

If two languages of instruction are involved, the respective programme will designate one as the main language and the other as the secondary language.

Art. 23 Performance assessment in the main language

Course units may be taught in both languages of instruction. However, the respective programme must allow students to undertake all oral and written performance assessments in the main language. The provisions of Art. 4 apply analogously. Excepted are those programmes described in Art. 25, where the provisions of Art. 25 apply.

Art. 24 Required language skills

Depending on the designated languages of instruction and the composition of the actual range of courses, the respective programme determines the language requirements for applicants in the main and secondary languages.

Art. 25 Programmes linked to MSc/MA degree programmes

If the course units of a programme are also part of an MSc/MA degree programme, these course units are governed by the stipulations of the respective MSc/MA degree programme.

6. Final clauses

Art. 26 Entry into effect

This directive enters into effect on 1 August 2010. It applies to course units and performance assessments offered or conducted from Autumn Semester 2010 onwards.

The Rector: Prof. Dr. Heidi Wunderli-Allenspach