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Enquiries to:	Head of Student Administration or Deputy Head of the Rectorate

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DIRECTIVE

Compulsory Electives in Humanities, Social and Political Sciences

Objective

The ETH Zurich Executive Board decided to introduce compulsory attendance of general education courses in Humanities, Social and Political Sciences (GESS compulsory electives) valid for all students beginning their studies in or after Winter Semester 2000/2001. This measure should equip graduates to incorporate their expertise and actions within a social context.

The GESS compulsory electives comprise courses offered by the Department of Humanities, Social and Political Sciences (D-GESS), selected courses within this field offered by other departments and universities, particularly courses offered by the University of Zurich.

Based on the decision taken by the Executive Board on 7 September 1999, the Rector issues the following directives:

1. The departments at ETH Zurich are instructed to incorporate the GESS compulsory electives into all their curricula. Eight credits are normally to be acquired for the GESS compulsory electives (6 credits during the Bachelor programme and 2 credits during the Master programme).
2. Departments that have already incorporated courses in Humanities, Social and Political Sciences into their curricula can apply to the GESS Compulsory Electives Teaching Committee requesting a reduction of the eight credits normally to be acquired. The Rector decides about such applications at the request of the GESS Compulsory Electives Teaching Committee.
3. The courses that can be attended for the GESS compulsory electives are listed in the course catalogue under "GESS compulsory electives". Both the course content and the performance required to obtain the credits are also outlined in the course catalogue.
4. The range of courses is grouped according to focus areas (Behaviorial Studies, Governance, and History and Philosophy of Knowledge). Students are recommended to acquire the required number of credits within one focus area.

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5. The departments can recommend students to attend courses on certain focus areas. This should not place any restriction on their selection of courses.
 6. A maximum of four credits acquired for language courses can be recognised for the GESS compulsory electives. The following restrictions are applicable: Only advanced courses (from Level B2 upwards) for European language courses (English, French, Italian and Spanish) are recognised. German language courses from Level C2 upwards are recognised.
 7. A maximum of four credits can be recognised for the GESS compulsory electives for study performances carried out at ETH Zurich within the framework of a supplementary didactical programme¹ on condition that courses in Educational Sciences are attended, and that students simultaneously follow a Bachelor / Master programme and a supplementary didactical programme.
 8. In exceptional cases, students may include, as possible electives, courses in Humanities, Social and Political Sciences that are not listed amongst the courses available for selection. Such courses can be chosen from those offered in Humanities, Social and Political Sciences at ETH Zurich or at other universities. This must be approved in advance by the Director of Studies for the programme in question and the GESS Compulsory Electives Teaching Committee. This committee specifies the number of credits allocated to courses offered by other universities.
 9. At the request of the GESS Compulsory Electives Teaching Committee, D-GESS decides on including courses from outside the D-GESS department in the list of courses available for the GESS Compulsory Electives, and on the number of credits allocated to each course. The Rector decides in the case of disagreement between D-GESS and the institute offering the courses following a hearing with the GESS Compulsory Electives Teaching Committee.
 10. If a student changes study programmes at ETH, credits already acquired for the GESS Compulsory Electives can, upon request, be recognised for the new study programme, on condition that the corresponding credits have not already been considered for the Bachelor / Master degree or for the diploma studies. This does not apply for students re-entering ETH.
 11. Should a student transfer from another university to ETH Zurich, the required number of credits for the GESS Compulsory Electives are proportionally calculated in accordance with the total number of credits still to be acquired for the degree in question. This principle applies regardless of the scientific discipline chosen for his/her previous studies.

¹ MAS SHE programme or Teaching Certificate programme.

12. The following also applies:

- a. for tiered programmes: ETH Zurich General Ordinance on Performance Assessments issued on 10 September 2002² (AVL ETHZ – acronym for German document);
- b. for non-tiered diploma studies: ETH Zurich General Examination Regulations (APrV ETHZ) issued on 8 October 1996.

13. These directives come into effect on 24 September 2007. They replace the previous directives on the GESS Compulsory Electives issued on 1 June 2000.

Zurich, 24 September 2007

The Rector

Heidi Wunderli-Allenspach

² SR 414.135.1, RSETHZ 322.021 (available in German only)