

#wiegETHs?

Final Report

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#wiegETHs? - The Most Important Facts Summarized

Background

In the spring semester of 2019, the umbrella organization of the students at ETH (VSETH) conducted a survey on equal opportunities and mental health among all students in Bachelor's and Master's programs at ETH Zurich under the title #wiegETHs/#howsETHgoing? A total of 6,400 students participated, which corresponds to 42.2% of all bachelor and Master students at ETH.

The ETH-wide results have already been published and discussed in an interim report in the spring of 2019. Based on the results, the VSETH has developed proposals for action in the form of five thematic action papers. These have been analyzed by the rectorate and, together with the VSETH, concrete possibilities for action have been worked out, which are now being implemented step by step.

Furthermore, the survey results were analyzed according to the study programs in order to identify any differences and study program-specific accumulations of problems. On the basis of this insightful analysis, discussions were held with all student associations. In addition, the student associations were supported in working with the department heads to develop program-specific measures. This process is still in full swing at the time of the publication of this final report.

Due to a lack of resources, it has not yet been possible to analyze the text responses to the open questions completely. Qualitative insights were incorporated into the discussion as part of the preparation of the action papers. We will be happy to answer any further questions that arise.

Key Results at a Glance

The results show that students are generally satisfied with ETH and its environment, but there is room for improvement in course support and workload.

To get a more detailed picture of the situation, the students were also asked about their general mental health. Half of the participants stated that they were doing well or very well. The students with a less good mental state were also asked, in a follow up, about symptoms of mental illness. Here, the number of students with a high number of symptoms indicates a need for action. Furthermore, it is important to add that the extent of the problem varies greatly from department to department, and gender-specific accumulations in certain degree programs are notable.

In another part of the survey, students were asked about sexual harassment and bullying. Of the participants, 4% stated that they had experienced intrusive behavior and 2% had been a victim of unwanted touching at the ETH. Given these numbers, we cannot view this as an ETH-wide problem, however course-specific accumulations point to acute problems in certain departments.

Finally, the topic of discrimination was observed more closely. In particular, the results on discrimination based on ethnicity, origin and language among foreign students are striking. We believe it important to get involved in this area as well.

Another group who was specifically surveyed were non-heterosexual students. About half of them perceive the ETH as a very respectful environment for people of different sexual orientations. Trans* and intersex students were also asked specific questions. Just under a third of these students feel

that they receive the best possible support so that their gender identity does not have a negative impact on their studies.

Results

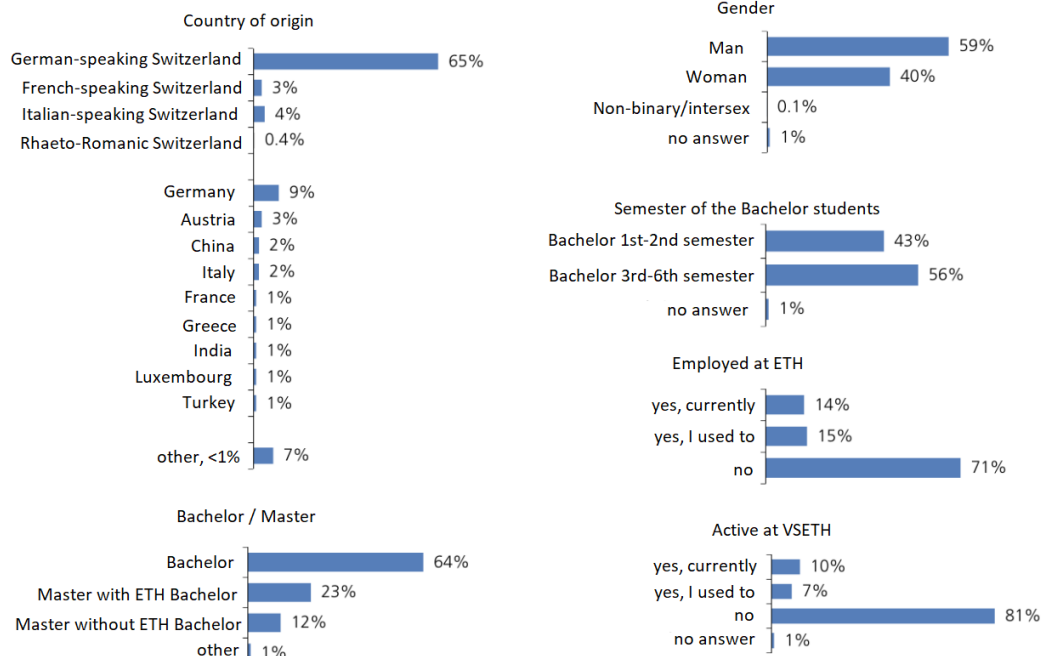
A selection of the most relevant results was made for the report. On request, we will gladly provide the complete overview of one or more departments or further ETH-wide results, provided that the respective student associations agree.

Demographics

All Bachelor and Master students at ETH Zurich were surveyed. 42.2% of the respondents, i.e. 6420 students, took part in the survey. Of the participants, 59% were men, 40% were women, 1% did not indicate their gender and 0.1% indicated a different gender. With an amount of 32% of the students at ETH, women are overrepresented in our sample. Similarly, individual courses of study programs are overrepresented. Due to the disproportionate participation of students by degree program and gender, the results were weighted.

Among the respondents, the proportion of students with Swiss origin was 72%. In our survey, the origin of the students was queried. The existing ETH data which contains students' nationality is therefore not exactly comparable, since origin and nationality do not necessarily have to coincide.

n= 6420



General Condition

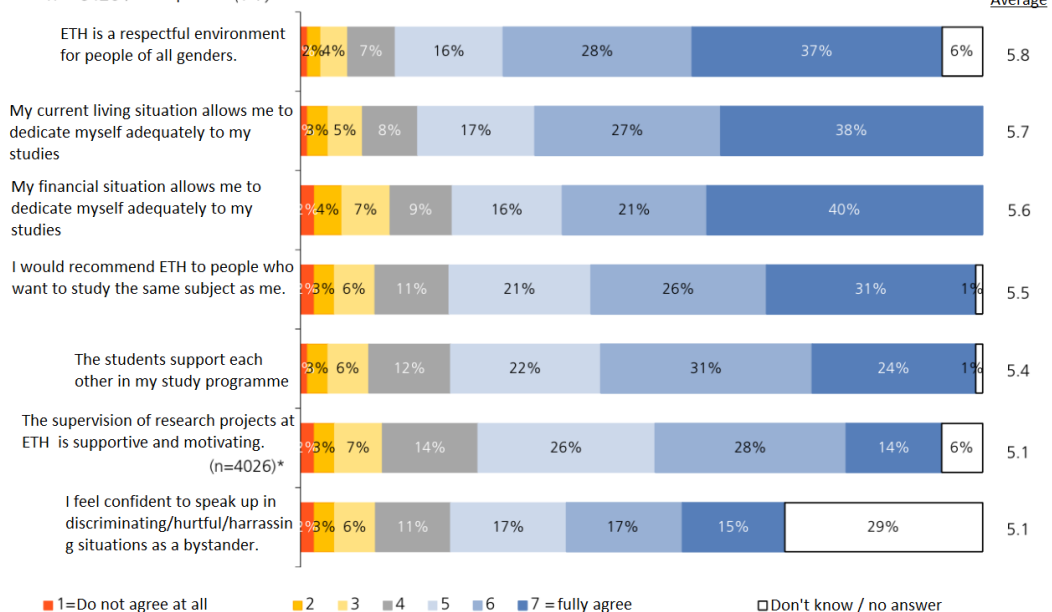
ETH-wide

In the survey, we asked about the general satisfaction students have with their studies and the living situation at ETH. There are relatively large differences between the various topics. These questions were asked by using a scale with which participants could show their level of agreement with the specific statements. We considered the highest agreement values (6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7) as positive and the lower values as to be in need of improvement.

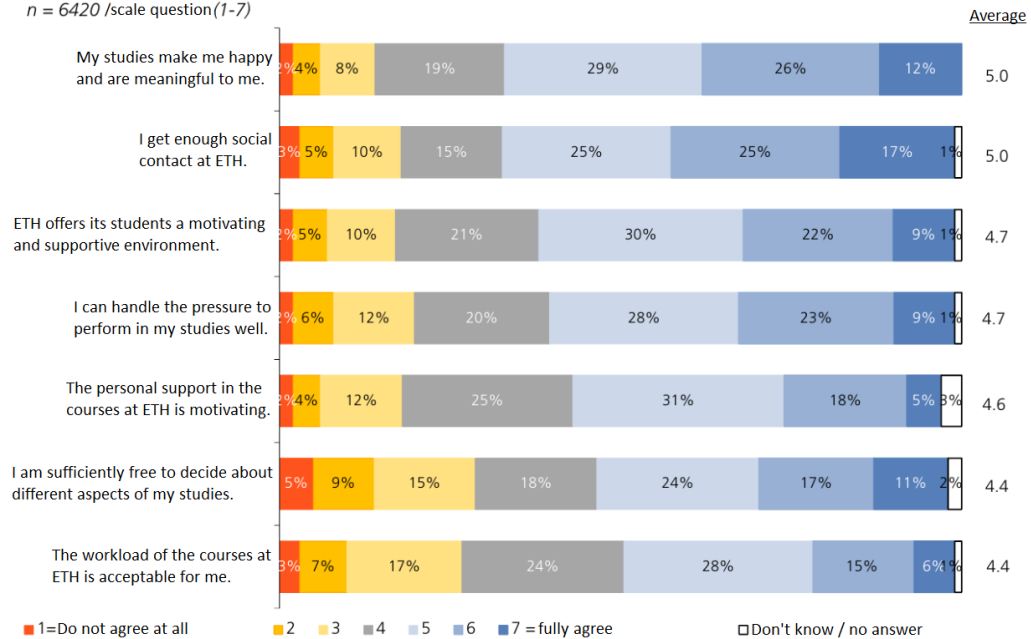
Over 60% of respondents feel that ETH is a very respectful environment for people of all genders (57% of women and 69% of men). Furthermore, very few students have problems with their housing situation and their finances. It should be emphasized that no conclusions can be drawn from this result regarding the permeability of university access. Most respondents also find that students at ETH support each other and many would recommend ETH to others.

F10: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

n = 6420 / scale question (1-7)



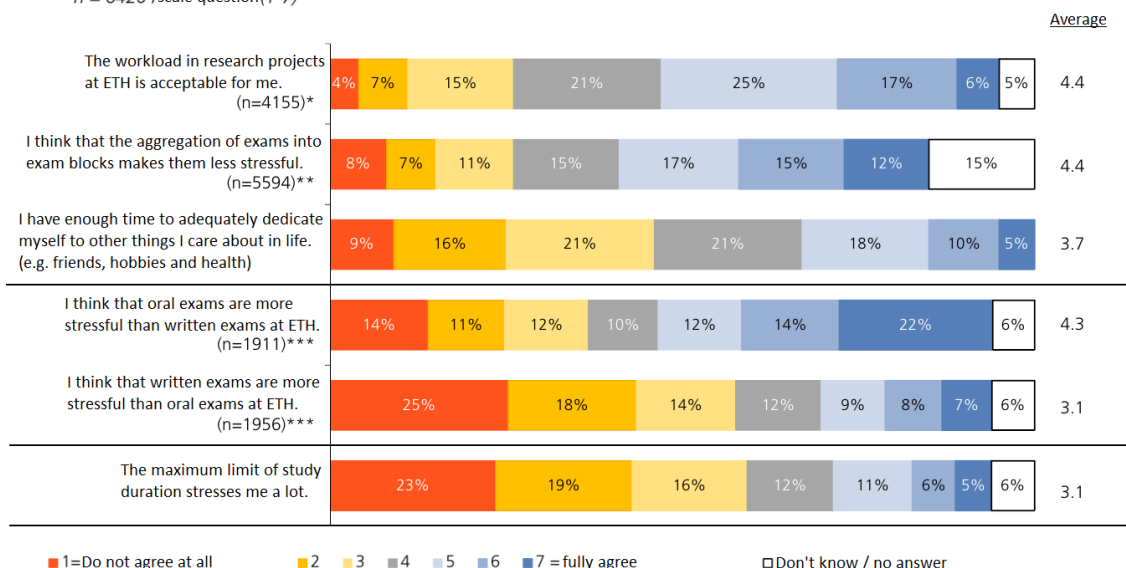
F10: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
n = 6420 / scale question (1-7)



However, if one looks at the concrete aspects of teaching, the overall picture starts looking worse. Only 23% of the students find the supervision of the courses satisfactory and only 31% find the ETH to be very motivating. It is striking that in these teaching-specific questions many answers lie in the middle scale range between 3 and 5. Hence, 66% of the students find the studies only moderately motivating and 70% would like more freedom in designing their studies.

The manageability of the pressure to perform and the lack of time for compensation in addition to ones studies at the ETH are cited as predominant problems. Just 15% of the students have enough time for hobbies, social contacts and health-promoting activities. It should be noted here that we did not ask whether the volume of work is high, but whether it is appropriate. Similarly, we asked whether students can cope well with the pressure to perform.

F10: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
n = 6420 /scale question (1-7)



* Excluding those who have never done a research project.

** Bachelor students or Master students with ETH Bachelor only

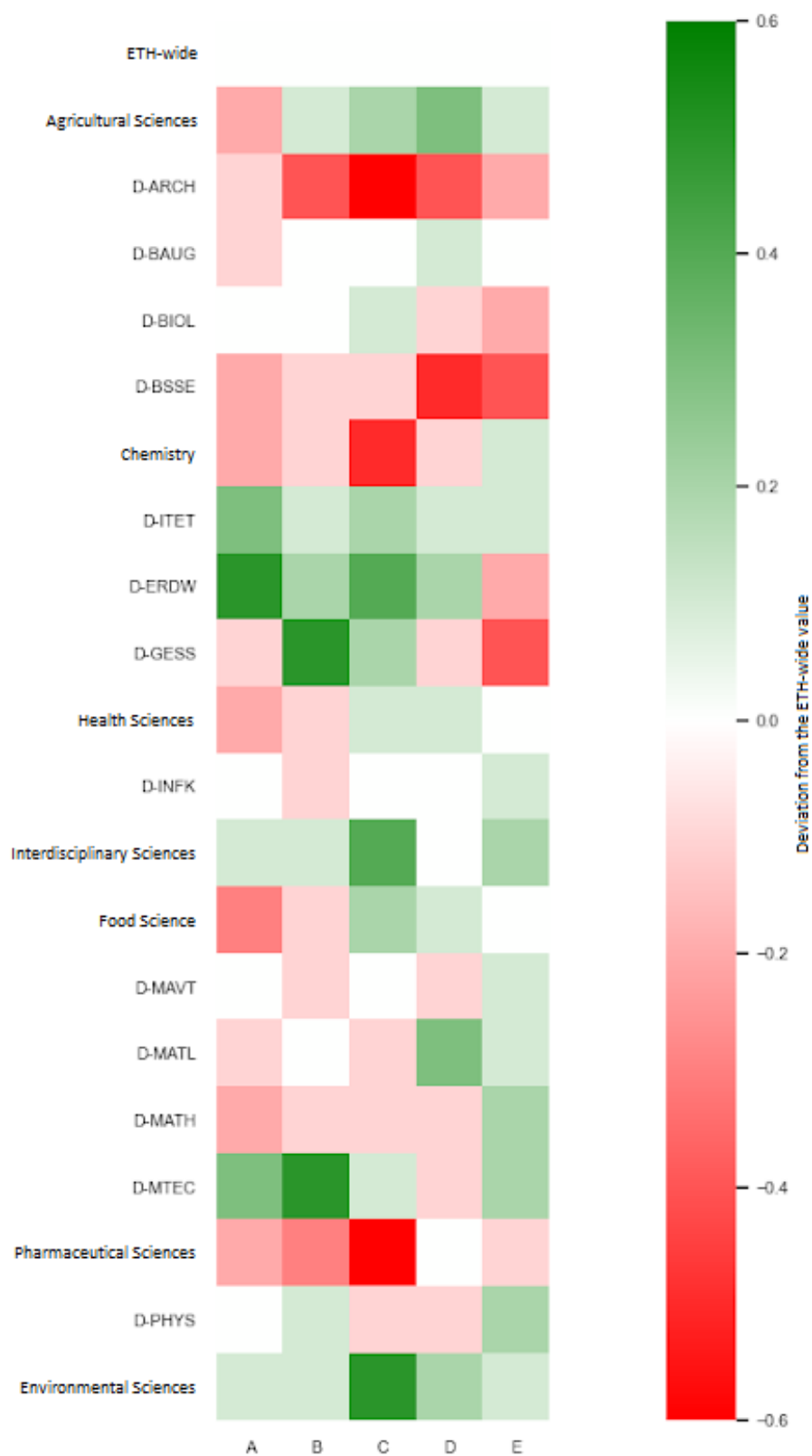
*** already had an oral exam at ETH, asked only 50% each (randomised)

Students are divided on whether they prefer written or oral exams. While there is a slight tendency towards written exams, overall this is an individual preference for students. The maximum length of study does not appear to be a burden for many students, although students in the first year and students with low grade point averages are more critical of this aspect. There is also no consensus among students at ETH regarding the grouping of examinations into examination blocks ("Prüfungsblöcke").

Departmental

In order to simplify comparisons between the departments and to clearly identify problem areas, we have, in collaboration with gfs Zurich, created a parameter for study satisfaction, personal situation, study situation, climate and personal freedom. In this parameter we bundle the results of similar questions. In the chapter "The project" on page 28 of this report more details concerning the calculation method of these parameters can be found.

Based on the departmental calculation of the five parameters, the following graph provides an ETH-wide overview. The plotted values are relative to the ETH-wide average and allow the identification of local problem areas as well as local best practices. Graphically, it is easy to see that the climate and the personal situation at the D-BSSE are rated quite negatively. The situation is similar at D-ARCH with regard to climate, study situation, and personal freedom. Pharmaceutical Students describe their personal freedom as very negative.



Characteristics: **A** Satisfaction with studies, **B** Study situation, **C** Personal freedom, **D** Climate, **E** Personal situation.

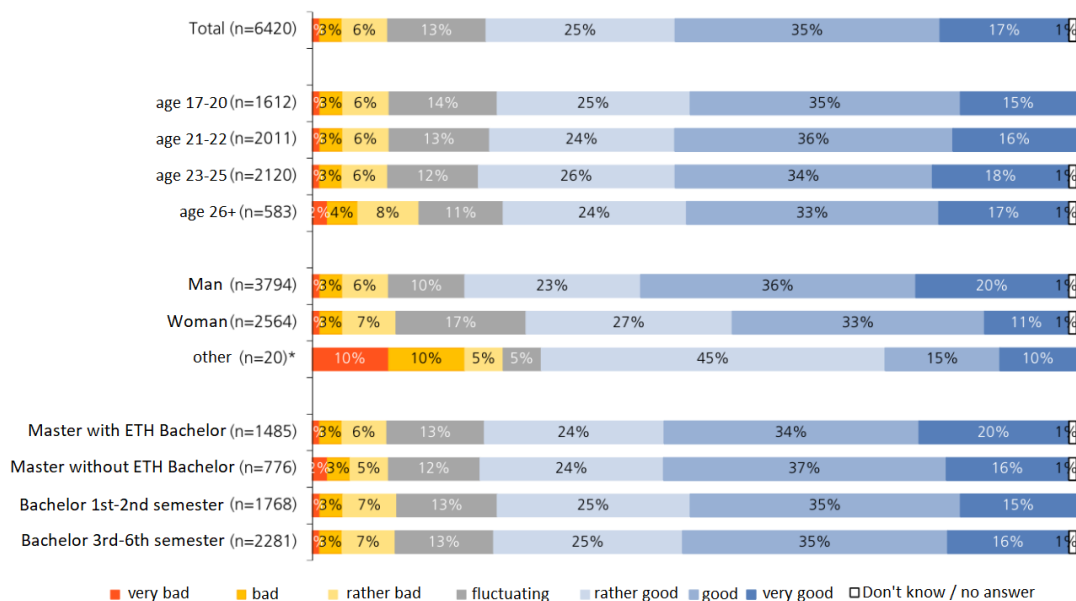
Even though in the D-MAVT and in the D-ITET the indicator of study satisfaction is better than or the same as the ETH average, a detailed examination of the results, with a focus on subgroups of respondents, reveals a different picture. Only 36% of the non-hetero students of the D-MAVT state that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their studies. Among all D-MAVT students, the figure is 58%. Women in D-ITET are also less satisfied with their studies (52% satisfied or very satisfied vs. 66% for all students) and with their study situation (18% satisfied or very satisfied vs. 31% for all students). In the D-PHYS and D-CHAB, a similar picture emerges not only with regard to satisfaction in studies and the study situation, but also with regard to the climate at ETH. Correlations between study level, origin and satisfaction with their studies are noticeable in certain departments, but not in all. For example, it is evident that at D-ITET students from Ticino or the French-speaking part of Switzerland are significantly less satisfied with their studies, with their study situation or with their personal freedoms at ETH than the students who come from the German-speaking part of Switzerland. In the Environmental Sciences program, it is noticeable that Master's students are significantly more satisfied with regard to their personal freedom in their studies than Bachelor's students. And this, despite the fact that bachelor's students in environmental sciences are already more satisfied than the average with the freedom they get during their studies.

Mental health

ETH-wide

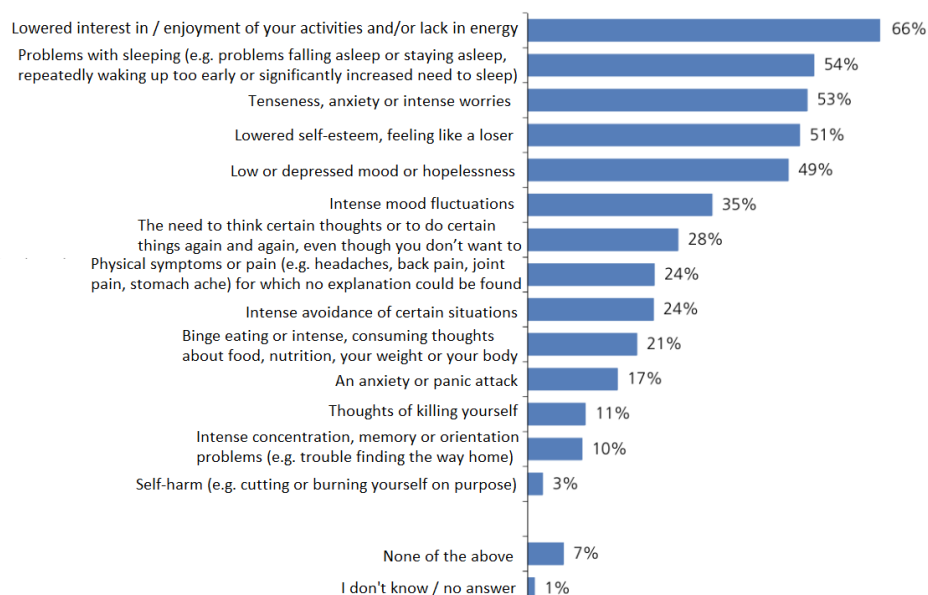
The picture painted here is similar to that of general satisfaction when it comes to mental health. Overall, 52% of respondents rate their mental health as good or very good. Another 25% as rather good, and the remaining 23% as very poor to rather poor or fluctuating. Globally, mental health is becoming more and more of a focus and the numbers portrayed in our survey are also concerning. Of the students who answered the survey, 9.5% have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder.

F11: How is your mental health in general?
n= 6420 / scale question (very bad to very good / fluctuating)



For those who stated that they did not consider their mental health to be good or very good and for those who had already received psychological treatment, we asked follow up questions about the signs of their psychological problems. Overall, 52% of all respondents answered these questions. The results are displayed here:

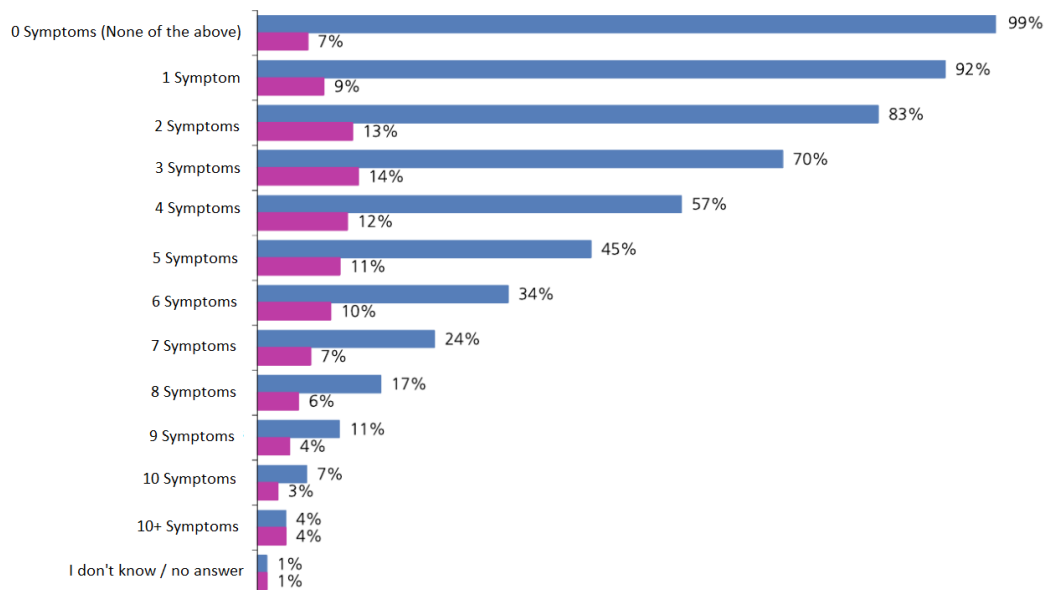
F14: Did you experience prolonged periods (more than two weeks) of one or several of the following during the last semester?
n=3370 / Filter: If mental health is very bad to rather good or fluctuating or currently/previously in psychological therapy/counseling / several answers possible



As can be seen in the graph below, 57% of the people who answered the question about their symptoms indicated that they had experienced four or more of the mentioned symptoms over a timespan of more than two weeks in the last semester. This represents approximately 30% of all survey participants. The questions are based on a survey tool used for self-assessment of symptoms of mental disorders. Although a response with multiple symptoms may be indicative of

a mental illness, it cannot be inferred that 30% of all respondents suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder. Corresponding diagnoses can only be made by specialists. Furthermore, the severity of this impairment depends not only on the number of symptoms, but also on their severity. However, the examples of panic and anxiety attacks, self-injury and suicidal thoughts, are serious enough within themselves.

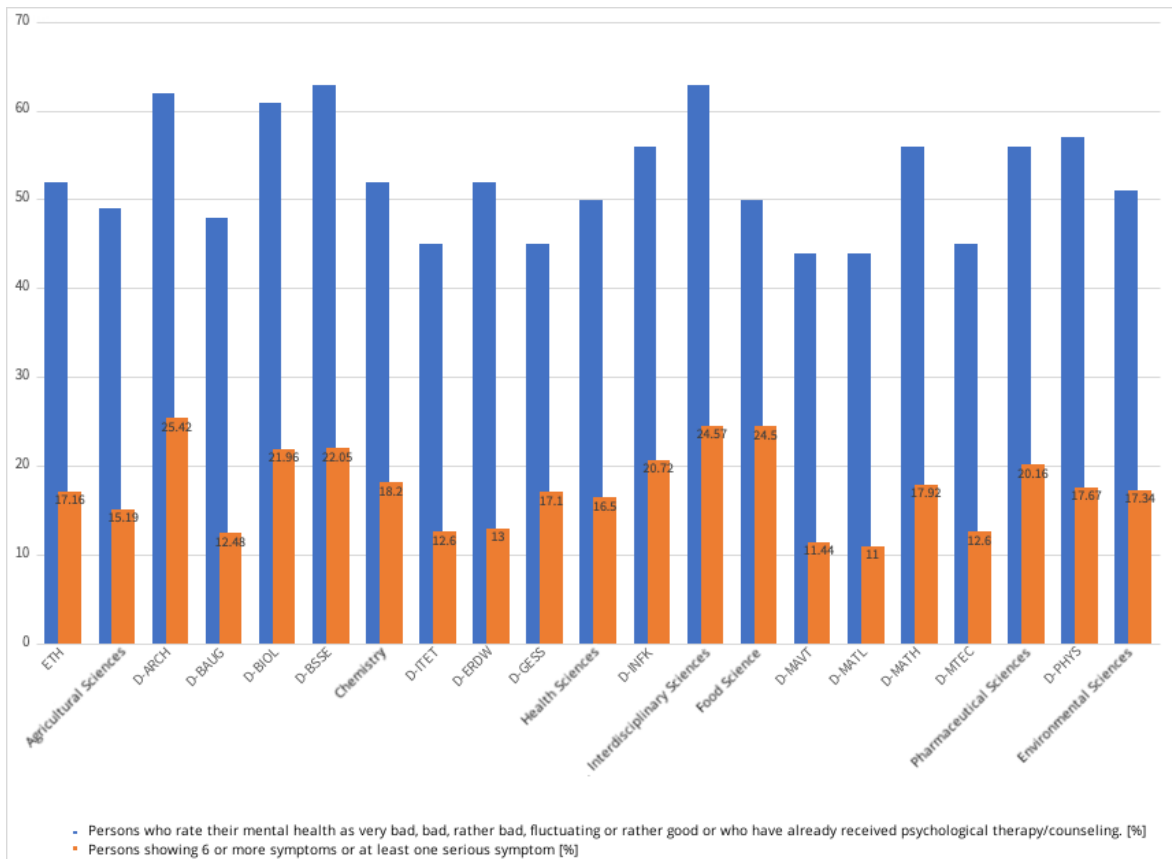
F14: Did you experience prolonged periods (more than two weeks) of one or several of the following during the last semester?
n=3370 / Filter: If mental health is very bad to rather good or fluctuating or currently/previously in psychological therapy/counseling / several answers possible



Here the cumulative proportion is shown in blue and the proportion for a specific number of symptoms is shown in purple

Departmental

The chart below shows the mental health responses broken down to departments/programs.



The ETH-wide situation described above is already alarming, also because in some departments or fields of study even more than 60% of the students state that they do not consider their mental health to be good or very good or that they have already received psychological/psychiatric treatment (D-ARCH, D-BIOL, D-BSSE, 'interdisciplinary sciences'). Further, looking at the mental health of specific groups within individual departments is also revealing and, depending on the case, even more concerning. Specifically, in the programs 'health sciences' and 'environmental sciences', women are more than twice as likely as men to suffer from more than five symptoms or at least one serious symptom of mental illness. In the D-BAUG, the proportion of non-heterosexual students suffering from more than five symptoms or at least one serious symptom of mental illness is more than twice that of heterosexuals. These breakdowns clearly show that even departments and study programs that show relatively good average values for mental health in an ETH-wide comparison (e.g. D-BAUG, 'Health Sciences' and 'Environmental Sciences') are required to implement targeted measures to support the particularly affected groups.

Measures to ensure equal opportunities between genders and sexual orientations are essential. In other departments, this discrepancy is not as prominent (no more than double), but it exists almost everywhere. Furthermore it is noteworthy that in some departments (but not all) there is a correlation between language and mental health. Even if this relationship is less clear than that between mental health and gender or sexual orientation, it is still relevant in some departments. In the D-MAVT, for example, non-German-speaking students are more than one and a half times more likely than German-speaking students to report suffering from more than five symptoms or from one severe symptom.

Comparisons with other studies

Because the stress of studying varies greatly over the semester, to counteract bias we asked about symptomatology over the entire past semester rather than just the last month or two weeks, as is common in other mental health surveys. However, this reduces comparability with other studies. Even beyond that, comparisons can only be made with great caution. An internationally oriented metastudy¹ estimated the prevalence of depression symptoms among medical students at 27.2%. A general Swiss health survey² states that 11.3% of the 15-34- year-olds within the Swiss population suffer from symptoms of moderate to severe depression. Even if the results of our survey are in a similar range, the different diagnostic tools and the different conditions in other countries have to be considered as limiting.

Discrimination & Misconduct

Gender

Complementing to the above 57% of female students and 69% of male students who rate ETH as a respectful environment for all genders, 10% of female students reported having experienced discrimination based on gender or gender identity at ETH at some point.

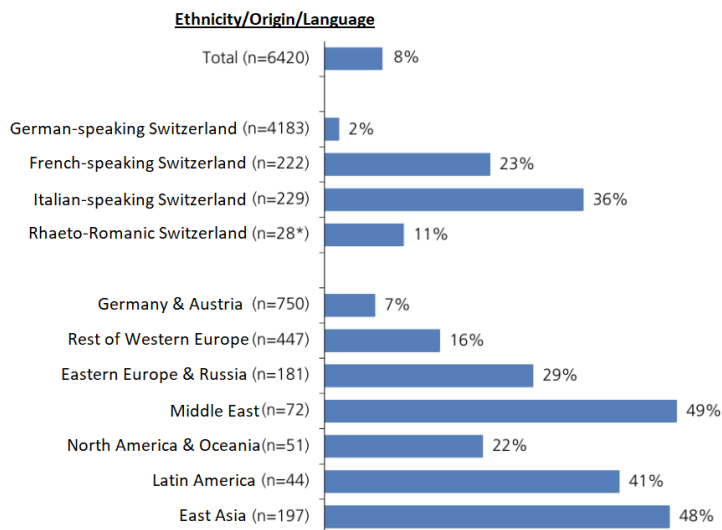
Origin

Overall, 21% of the students who are not from German-speaking Switzerland stated that they had been disadvantaged on the basis of ethnicity, origin or language. Based on the free-text responses, it also seems likely that this is at least partly due to disadvantage on the basis of language, as it was frequently stated that German was spoken in English-language courses and Swiss German instead of High German in German-language courses. The high percentages indicate that there is a need for action in this area.

¹ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2589340>

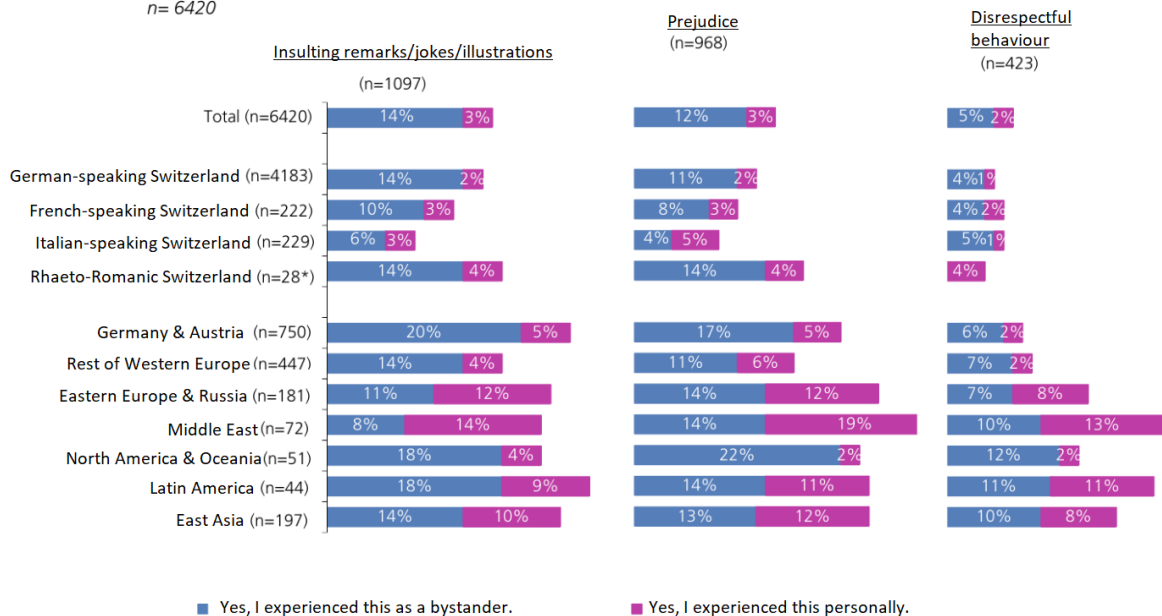
² <https://www.obsan.admin.ch/de/publikationen/depressionen-der-schweizer-bevoelkerung>

F15: Did you ever feel disadvantaged at ETH because of... ?
n= 6420 / several answers possible



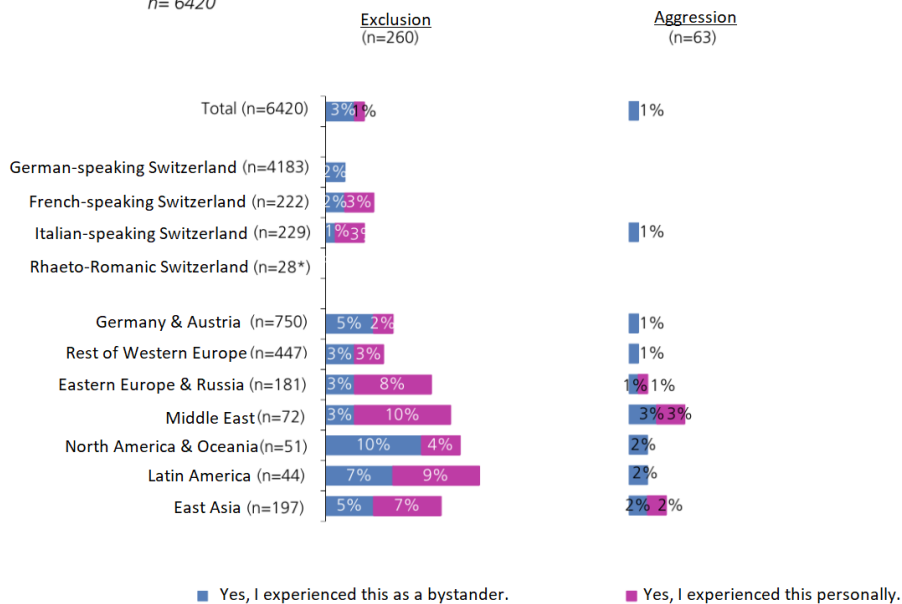
Prejudice, exclusion, disrespectful or aggressive behavior based on ethnicity, origin or religion were personally experienced by significantly fewer respondents. Aggressive behavior was experienced by only a few students. Students who were not from Western European or North American/Oceanic countries were more likely to report having experienced xenophobia. It should be added here, however, that few students from Latin America and East Asia participated in the survey and therefore this comparison can only be made cautiously. All in all, it becomes apparent that we, also in the VSETH, have to deal with possible causes of the experienced discrimination of foreign, respectively non-German speaking students.

F19: Did you ever experience one of the following with respect to people of a certain race/nationality/religion at ETH?
n= 6420



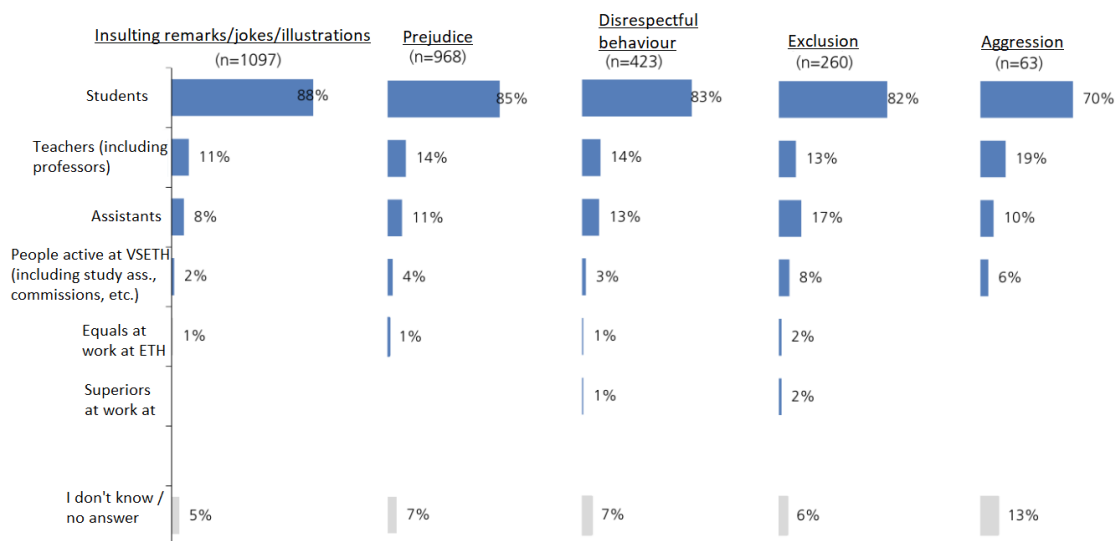
F19: Did you ever experience one of the following with respect to people of a certain race/nationality/religion at ETH?

n= 6420



F21: By whom did you witness the following?

Filter: If disadvantage experienced / several answers possible



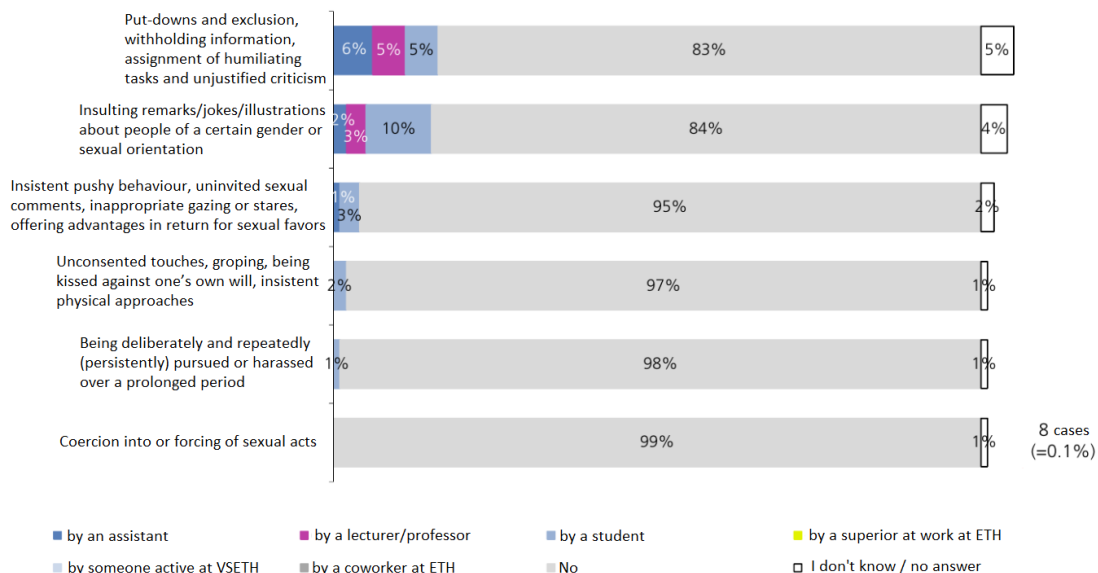
Misconduct

ETH-wide

In regard to sexual harassment, 3% of respondents reported to having experienced "insistent pushy behaviour, uninvited sexual comments, inappropriate gazing or stares or offering advantages in return for sexual favors"; among women the number reached 7%. A total of 2% of participants reported having once experienced "unconsented touches, groping, being kissed against one's own will or insistent physical approaches"; among women, this was 4%. Each such case is one too many, and one must always reckon with the chance of a dark figure in investigations. Nevertheless,

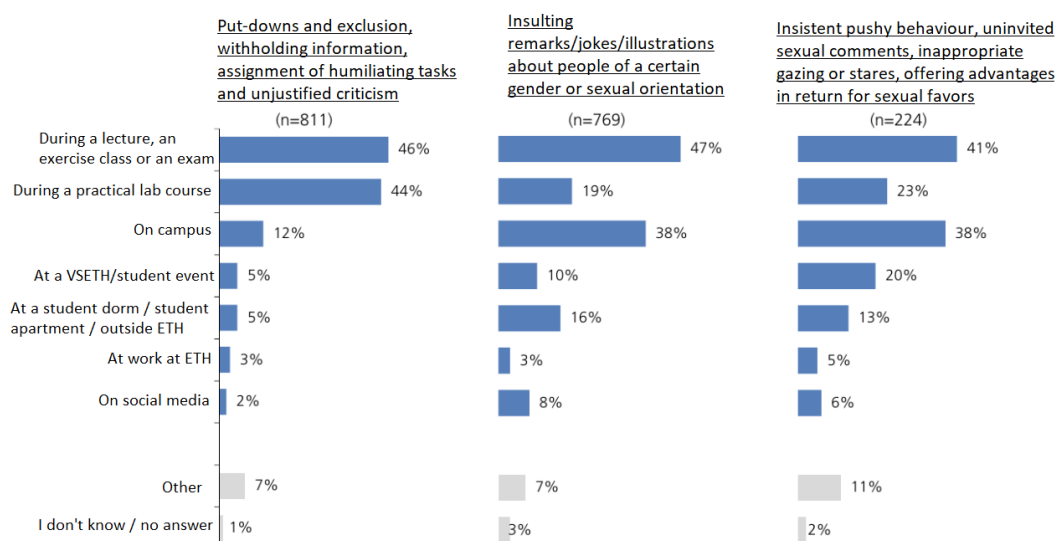
these figures show that there is no ETH-wide problem with sexual harassment. They are also very similar to a comparable study by the student council at the University of Bern³.

F16: Did you ever personally experience one or several of the following at ETH?
n= 6420 / several answers possible



With regard to bullying, concretized as "Put-downs and exclusion, withholding information, assignment of humiliating tasks and unjustified criticism", the figures are higher than for sexual harassment. There were 12% of respondents who said they had already experienced such behavior at ETH. Such experiences were mainly made in the context of studies in lectures or internships.

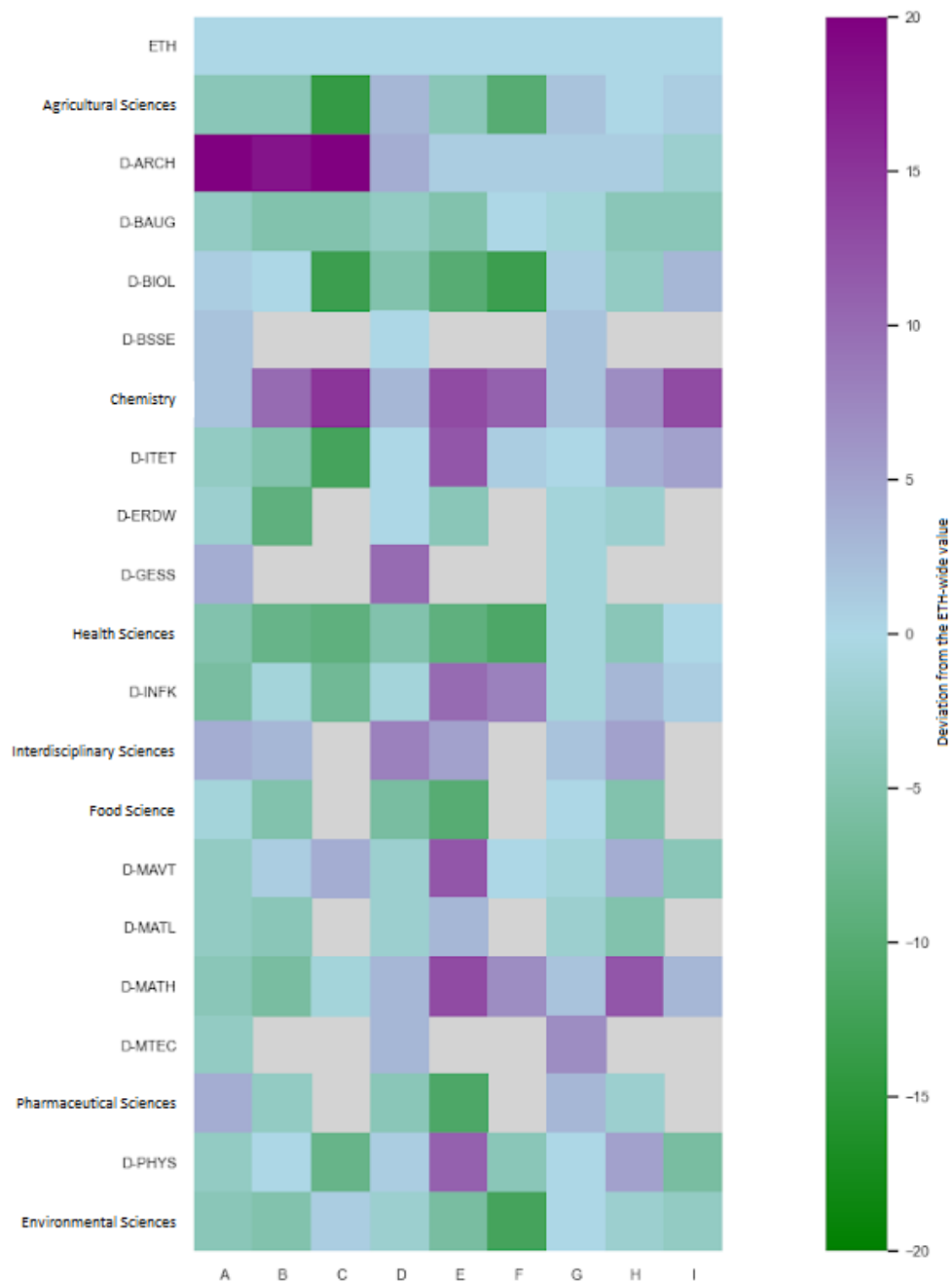
F17: In which situations did you experience the following?
Filter: If disadvantage experienced / several answers possible



³ www.sub.unibe.ch/images/content/SUB_Umfrage_Bericht_Final.pdf

Departmental

The following chart shows the corresponding figures for the individual departments/programs relative to the ETH-wide average.



Legend: **A** bullying average, **B** bullying women, **C** bullying non-heterosexual persons, **D** sexism/homophobia average, **E** sexism/homophobia women, **F** sexism/homophobia non-heterosexual persons, **G** sexual harassment average, **H** sexual harassment women, **I** sexual harassment non-heterosexual persons. The specific survey questions are listed in Appendix B. In the fields listed in gray, there is too little data to classify.

The specific breakdown shows that there is a need for local action. At D-ARCH, the numbers in the area of bullying are alarmingly high in all groups analyzed. The D-CHAB shows worryingly high figures in all areas (bullying, sexism/homophobia, sexual harassment). This is not related to the average, but specifically among women and non-heterosexual persons.

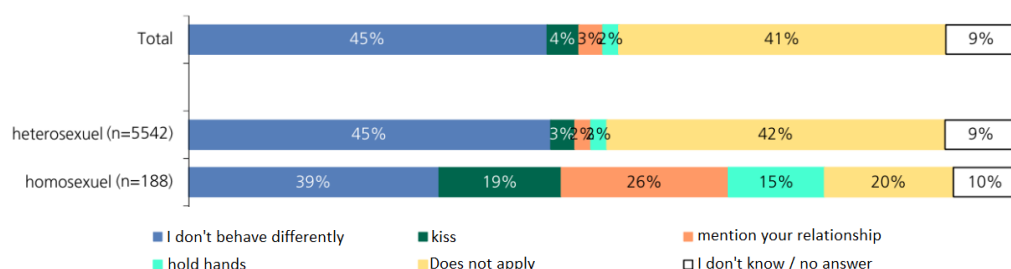
In the areas of sexism, homophobia and sexual harassment, relevant differences from the average value were only found in the groups of women and non-heterosexual persons. In the area of bullying, on the other hand, further relevant differences were evident in relation to the study level and origin of the respondents. In the following fields of study and departments, Master students reported having experienced bullying more frequently than bachelor's students: 'Food Science' (MSc with ETH BSc 22%, BSc 8%), 'Health Science' (MSc with ETH BSc 17%, BSc 5%), 'Chemistry' (MSc with ETH BSc 23%, MoEB 21%, BSc 10%), D-MAVT (MSc with ETH BSc 21%, MoEB 10%, BSc 6%). At D-INFK (German-speaking Switzerland 7%, Eastern Europe, Russia, Middle East, Latin America, East Asia 13%), D-MATH (German-speaking Switzerland 10%, Eastern Europe, Russia, Middle East, Latin America, East Asia 19%) and in the field of study 'Environmental Sciences (German-speaking 8%, non-German-speaking 17%)' the number of people who experienced bullying varies due to language and origin.

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

People who indicated that they were homosexual, bisexual, asexual, or otherwise non-heterosexual were asked specific questions about their experiences in the survey. Overall, 46% of these rated ETH as a very respectful environment for people of different sexual orientations (6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). There are no major differences between the various sexual orientations in this regard. The statement that they feel supported in the best possible way and that their sexual orientation does not have a negative impact on their studies was agreed to by 49% of the non-heterosexual students (6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7).

A closer look reveals potential for improvement. Currently, students in same-sex relationships at ETH more often consciously behave differently about their relationship than people in opposite-sex relationships. This is certainly influenced by general social perceptions and is therefore in line with other studies on this topic ⁴.

F35: Do you ever behave differently at ETH than you would elsewhere, because you are uncomfortable about your romantic relationships when you... ?
n= 5755 / Filter: If heterosexual, homosexual or asexual / several answers possible



Only 24 people indicated that they were trans*, non-binary or intersex. These 24 people answered questions about their experience at ETH regarding their gender identity, making them 0.3% of all respondents. With this small number, quantitative statements are difficult to make. Qualitative research is needed to get a comprehensive picture of the situation of trans* and intersex people at ETH.

⁴ www.tagesanzeiger.ch/28071170

Only five of the 24 people stated that they felt supported in the best possible way so that their gender identity/transition did not have a negative impact on their studies/work. 12 people stated that they have felt unsafe in ETH/ASVZ restrooms. Nine individuals have had unpleasant experiences in ETH/ASVZ restrooms. Also, six people stated that they are not treated as their correct gender by people at ETH, even though they know they identify as trans*/intersex. For example, they are called by the wrong name, addressed with the wrong pronouns, or told that they are in the wrong restroom. We therefore conclude that the topic of trans* and intersex also represents an important area for action.

Proposed measures

The VSETH would like not only to stimulate discussion on the causes of the problems identified, but above all to make realistic proposals on how these can be reduced in the future. To this end, the VSETH has prepared five thematic action papers in which concrete possibilities for action are outlined. The papers are published on the VSETH website⁵ and attached to the german version of this final report. For overview purposes, the content of the papers is briefly explained below. Following the summary of each paper is the Rectorate's statement on that topic. The statement was written by Regula Christen in October of the year 2020.

General condition

Summary of the action paper

It is undisputed that studying at ETH is demanding and that a high degree of will to perform and perseverance is required from students. Nevertheless, it is important that the expected performance does not lead to dissatisfaction and a poorer quality of life. In particular, studying at ETH should be motivating and foster curiosity for science. If 66% of the students describe the studies as only moderately motivating, actions are necessary to increase the attractiveness of the studies and to improve the study situation, especially in the following areas:

- Freedom in studies
- Performance pressure, volume of work and scope of courses
- Financial and housing situation

In order to create more freedom in the study program, more electives should be anchored in the curricula of all departments. To ensure that the workload is evenly distributed throughout the academic year, the entire academic year should be questioned and alternatives to the current model should be sought. Appropriate and transparent communication to students regarding expected performance and the expected level of performance is also addressed in the paper.

To counteract the pressure to perform, we propose in the paper that supervision of Master semester and bachelor's theses should be improved, for example through leadership courses for supervisors and their assistants. In addition, clear rules should be created regarding working hours and the active avoidance against misconduct. Furthermore, a review of the scope of lectures seems to be a central point. Finally, we have listed some measures to increase the fairness of exams in order to reduce stress.

Likewise, to ensure equal opportunities, it is essential that the financial and housing situation allows all students to have optimal study conditions. In light of the recent tuition increase, measures to improve the financial situation of the most financially vulnerable students is more important than ever. Promising approaches include increasing the fund to finance the construction of student housing, as well as expanding ETH's political commitment in regards to the reviews of the awarding modalities of cantonal scholarships and to ask for higher federal contributions to the scholarship system.

⁵ <https://vseth.ethz.ch/politik/wiegeths/>

Statement of the rectorate (translated to english by VSETH - original text found in the german version)

The paper proposes 23 measures.

Several suggestions relate to the design and implementation of the curricula. Under the direction of the Prorektor for Curriculum Development, the individual points will be discussed and - if feasible - included in further planning, for example, the measure seeking a more balanced (work) effort between spring and fall semesters or the better coherence of courses which has been desired. Other proposals seem (too) rigid in the way they are formulated to be profitably compatible with the ETH culture. Other approaches should be sought there. For example, the demand for a clear regulation regarding working hours of students. This is not realistic, since the individual differences between students are considerable. However, the relevance of the workload issue is recognized and accordingly the "workload" is addressed in all curriculum development projects and a reasonable weighting of the ECTS points is strived for. A regular weekly workload of more than 50 hours per week must be avoided.

Another cluster of topics deals with audits. Many points are covered by the existing guides and regulations. An additional guide on oral examinations is already being worked on.

We can understand the strong desire for clear communication in regards to the requirements for students; this is in the interest of all involved and should be taken into account in communication at all levels and channels. One simply has to be aware here that the line between "sugar coating" and "discouraging" is a very fine one and is also very dependent on the personality of the sender and the recipient. Unfortunately, here the model "one size fits all" does not work.

We currently see no need for action in the area of scholarships. In the context of the increase in tuition fees, the regulations were carefully revised and, based on our experience with the students, no adjustments are necessary. The desire for a Swiss harmonization of the scholarship system is understandable, but the corresponding referendum that was held about 2 years ago failed.

Mental health

Summary of the action paper

Pressure to perform, very high workloads or social isolation can lead to a psychologically unhealthy condition. Mental health is not only absolutely necessary for the well-being of students, but also represents the basis of the willingness to perform which is necessary for ETH studies and is crucial for success in studies. The results of the survey do not show a particularly good picture of the mental health of ETH students. The ETH Rectorate has recognized this problem and has prepared an action plan, led by Dr. Betty Friedrich. The purpose of this paper is to highlight a few measures that are part of the mentioned action plan of Dr. Betty Friedrich, to highlight them, and to connect them specifically with the results of our survey, as well as to propose a few additional measures which we consider to be useful. The proposed measures can be divided into the following areas:

- Early detection and awareness
- Expansion of the contact points and dealing with the affected students

Of course, it would be best if students did not develop mental illness in the first place. For this reason, it is important that students know which symptoms are not necessarily normal and are a sign of an early form of mental illness. Likewise, they should be told that existing contact points are not just for students with mental illness. The corresponding communication requires various

approaches such as an awareness campaign, a new elective subject on this topic or a website offering a self-test. Professors and supervisors should also be made aware of the causes and dangers of mental illness. The importance of adequate communication of the requirements of ETH studies is addressed in the paper. We also support a system of so-called peer helpers.

Unfortunately, however, it will never be possible to completely prevent mental illness. Therefore, it is also necessary that those affected are cared for as well as possible and that, in particularly hard cases, their return to a normalized everyday study is facilitated. Therefore, the VSETH proposes an expansion of the psychological counseling center of the ETH and the UZH and the flexibilization of processes, such as exam deregistration, in the case of a proven mental illness. Finally, the survey showed that sleep problems are very common among students. This issue is to be specifically addressed by ETH.

Statement of the rectorate (translated to english by VSETH - original text found in the german version)

The paper proposes 18 measures.

The mental health of students is also a central element for the Rectorate and is of the highest priority. Accordingly, the rector has launched the "mental health" project. In it, the topic is dealt with on different levels and individual actions are continuously implemented on a timeline. At the beginning of HS2020, a website with information and a self-assessment checklist was launched. A large-scale awareness campaign is planned for FS 2021. Students are also to be trained as "peer helpers" (via student associations) in order to create further low-threshold contact points. Existing counseling services will be made better known. A large part of the proposed measures will be taken up within the framework of this project.

Sensitization of lecturers on the topic should be included in the courses that are offered by the LET.

The desire for more comfortable places at ETH and equipping learning rooms with sofas will be difficult to fulfill and implement in view of the limited space available and the fire police regulations.

LGBTQIA+ students

Summary of the action paper

Diversity and openness to diversity are among ETHs core values. However, it can be observed from the survey data that non-heterosexual students live their relationships less openly than heterosexual students at ETH. Furthermore, there are some everyday obstacles that stand in the way of trans students. VSETH is convinced that sexual orientation and gender identity should not have an impact on student success or satisfaction. It is therefore central to promote the well-being of LGBTQIA+ through ensuring and examining the measures for equal opportunities of students. In particular, the following two areas seem important:

- Elimination of institutional discrimination against trans students
- Social inclusion of LGBTQIA+ students.

First, we propose that ETH consistently uses inclusive and gender-sensitive language. This includes that all students are contacted and addressed with the form they wish to be used. Likewise, a self-determined and low-threshold change of name and gender should be possible in all ETH directories. In addition, ETH departments should act effectively and transparently in cases of discrimination (especially against trans students) on or off campus. Gender-neutral toilets should be available to a sufficient extent and marked in a non-discriminatory manner.

For a better social integration of LGBTQIA+ students, an awareness campaign on the topic of diversity would be seen as helpful. Events that make a specific reference to the topic of LGBTQIA+ should be especially supported and promoted, also in financial terms. In addition, ETH could have itself certified by the Swiss LGBTI Label.

Statement of the rectorate (translated to english by VSETH - original text found in the german version)

The paper proposes 8 measures.

Regular meetings take place once a semester between a group of stakeholders and representatives from the school management. From these discussions, two concrete suggestions have already been taken up or implemented.

- A working group has already been established to address the project for the creation of gender-neutral restrooms.

- The desired self-determined and low-threshold changing of ones name and gender entry is already made possible by a directive of the Rector since HS2019.

Further points concerning awareness and discrimination were included in the respect campaign and will be continued in further diversity projects (e.g. new regulations concerning reports of inappropriate behavior by members of ETH Zurich; creation of (new) internal and external contact points, etc.).

Foreign students

Summary of the action paper

Analogous to the situation of LGBTQIA+ students, we have also identified potential for an improvement in the integration of foreign students in the ETH community. VSETH is convinced that measures are necessary to prevent discrimination with regard to origin, ethnicity and language. In the action paper, we have listed a few approaches that have been implemented by other universities to promote equal opportunities between foreign and domestic students. Furthermore, we suggest that the topic be more broadly anchored in the structures of ETH. In the main part of the paper, concrete measures are proposed in the following three areas:

- Language barrier
- Discrimination
- Social integration

In order to promote the social integration of international students, the organization of a “Welcome Week” before the start of the semester, or at least the expansion of the current introductory events, would be helpful and important. Buddy programs could also be helpful in tackling this issue. The targeted promotion of events by international student organizations and/or for international students, as well as the founding of an international student association are further measures that are worthy of support. For the elimination of discrimination, on the one hand it is important to raise awareness among Swiss members of ETH, but on the other hand it is also necessary to inform international students about their rights. Regarding the language barrier, more resources should be made available for the language center and the compliance in regard to the language of courses should be systematically checked. Furthermore, a translation service for appeals and the translation of documents for the political participation and representation of international students is very important.

Statement of the rectorate (translated to english by VSETH - original text found in the german version)

The paper proposes 17 measures.

Several of the proposed measures relate to the "onboarding" of new students, especially international Master's students. We share the assessment that the beginning of studies is an important phase for successful studies. Already, a number of events and activities have been offered for this purpose for several years. As a result of the impact of the Corona pandemic, this year many of them could not be held in the usual framework, but in an adapted format. We will use this circumstance as the basis for a survey of needs among the target group. This should reveal which formats are best suited to their needs from the point of view of those affected for future reference.

Likewise, Student Services is currently looking into adding specific offers for international Master students to its coaching services.

Furthermore, we believe the student associations have the responsibility to develop appropriate offers on the student level and to make these available to all.

Another point concerns the sensitization of the ETH community in regard to the topic of racism. The ETH-wide "Respect" campaign has already laid a good foundation for this. However, it is certainly important to address this topic again and again within the framework of the various diversity projects to consistently prevent misconduct.

A special concern of ETH is the welcoming culture, which is also reflected in the values "openness" and "diversity" for the planning period 2020. Through various directly communicated channels, it is and should be consistently emphasized that everyone is welcome at ETH.

The desire and need for additional accommodations is known at the highest level of school management and is included in their strategic planning. Here, one must be aware that it is a very long process until any implementation is visible. For example, it took around 10 years (!) from the planning to the implementation stage in the occupation of the 130 rooms in the "Rosengarten" superstructure.

Sexism and sexual harassment

Summary of the action paper

The Respect Code of Conduct states that ETH does not tolerate sexual harassment. Nevertheless, 7% of female students state that they have been affected by "insistent pushy behaviour, uninvited sexual comments, inappropriate gazing or stares or offering advantages in return for sexual favors." In one department, as many as 19% of female students reported this. Given that the ETH environment is male-dominated (in 2018, just 32% of students and 13% of full professors* were female), we think that ETH should actively fight a reduction of latent sexism and work towards an elimination of sexual harassment. We propose measures in the following three areas:

- Prevention of sexual violence
- Sexism
- Support for incidents of sexual violence

For the prevention of sexual violence, one approach could be to sensitize students to this topic through targeted and mandatory courses and/or workshops. Online modules are also conceivable here. Not only students, but also lecturers and assistants should be sensitized to this topic as part of existing or new leadership courses. On the topic of sexism, quality assurance elements should be introduced (in addition to the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and the promotion of women in general) in order to recognize "unconscious bias", for example in exams or lectures. In dealing with specific incidents, it is important to make the contact and advice services better known and to periodically remind them of the content of the Code of Conduct. Furthermore, supportive and efficient advice and assistance from the departments is essential.

Statement of the rectorate (translated to english by VSETH - original text found in the german version)

The paper proposes 18 measures.

The respect campaign provides a solid basis for communicating "zero tolerance" for misconduct, including sexual harassment. For the sensitization of new students - as suggested - the thematization in the introductory event of the SGU is suitable. However, this is outside the responsibility of the Rectorate and should be addressed directly.

The newly adopted regulations "concerning reports of inappropriate behavior by members of ETH Zurich" and the creation of (new) internal and external points of contact provide clarity on the processes in the event of misconduct.

We also see it as the duty of the student associations to make it absolutely clear and communicate unequivocally at the peer level that there is no leeway in this regard - even at social events and parties.

The topic of "unconscious bias" in examinations has already been taken up by the rectorate and a pilot for pseudonymized examinations has been carried out. A follow-up is currently being worked on.

General position of the rectorate

In addition to the specific comments on the individual measure papers, the Rectorate has written an introductory text to show the context of the survey and the statement. For completeness and transparency, we would also like to share this text:

In addition to the institution's periodic "satisfaction surveys", VSETH took the initiative in FS19 to launch its own survey among students. The main results were published in an interim report. During the next two semesters, a VSETH working group further analyzed the results in detail and developed proposals for packages of measures on five topics. These were submitted to the rectorate with the request for a statement on selected points.

By way of introduction, we would like to state that we very much welcome and support this initiative of the VSETH. Fortunately, the feedback from the students does not reveal any completely unexpected and untenable results, but - all in all - a thoroughly positive picture emerges when it comes to the well-being of the students. Nevertheless, selective topics were identified where there is a need for action and where the current situation can be improved.

It is in the interest of all concerned to recognize these points and implement appropriate measures. In the following, we take up what we consider to be the relevant points from the individual action papers.

[The specific opinions can be found earlier in this report under the appropriate topics].

We would like to thank VSETH for its great commitment to the welfare of students and look forward to continuing our constructive collaboration.

Departmental procedure

Subsidiarity is an important part of the ETH culture. Decisions at ETH are often made decentrally in the departments. Many decisions relevant to student satisfaction and equal opportunities also lie within the competence of the departments. In addition, the departments have the possibility to define and implement various measures that can contribute significantly to improving the study situation and the mental health of students and to eliminating misconduct.

For these reasons, the VSETH presented the results above to the directors of studies during the second regular study conference of the spring semester 2020. As a next step, the VSETH contacted the student associations to discuss the detailed evaluations for their respective departments. Based on these results, all student associations have decided to take further steps to raise awareness among departmental leaders about the problems highlighted. Some student associations also developed their own demands and presented them to the department heads. Depending on the department either the teaching commission, the department conference, the director of studies or the department management were approached. The departments had mixed reactions to the results. While certain departments were critical and doubted the representativeness and significance of the survey, other departments were very open to the

concerns of the students and recognized the need to improve the situation. We very much regret that in some cases the statements of the survey were not taken seriously and the reasons for this were based on specious arguments.

In addition to the interviews, departments were asked to write a statement on their department's findings and potential measures. All departments except D-INFK have written such a statement so far. The D-INFK decided not to write one when approached about the procedure. The VSETH regrets this decision very much. The written statements can be found in the appendix of the german version of this report. The feedback listed there varies much. Basically, the attitude of the departments can be divided into four categories. The first group (D-MTEC, D-BSSE) supports the survey, reflects on the problems within their department and tries to define fields of action. The second group of departments (D-ITET, D-BIOL, D-MAVT, D-USYS, D-MATH, D-PHYS, D-MATL, D-HEST (Food Science)) welcome the implementation of the survey and present concrete measures themselves that they are already implementing or plan to implement in the near future. The third category includes departments (D-BAUG, D-ERDW, D-GEISS, D-ARCH) that want to define targeted measures based on the survey by means of a working group or their own detailed survey. Unfortunately, the remaining departments (D-CHAB, D-HEST(Medicine/HST)) do not respond much to the measures proposed by the student associations and the VSETH and/or do not see a great need to improve the situation. Due to the lack of concretization, it remains unclear on what basis, for example by means of measures for quality assurance, this category of departments assumes that they can ensure student satisfaction in all areas.

The project

Motivation

VSETH is the representative of ETH students and works for an optimal study environment and the well-being of students. This is done in various ways, often in cooperation with those responsible on the side of ETH and its departments. In order to be able to proceed in an evidence-based manner, VSETH, with the support of ETH Zurich, launched this anonymous survey on equal opportunities, respectful interaction and mental health in the spring semester of 2019. On the one hand, this is intended to provide a picture of the culture at the university and, on the other hand, to serve the identification of concrete fields of action to be tackled collectively. The project, from planning to implementation to evaluation and elaboration of concrete measures, as well as the resulting university policy work, was led by the respective VSETH board members for university politics and the VSETH presidents. Parts of the work were supported by persons of the AG Chancengleichheit.

Questionnaire

The topics of the survey were deliberately chosen broadly: First, it was intended to prevent people who are close to a certain topic for personal reasons from filling out the questionnaire more often. Second, conducting such a survey entails effort for both the surveyor (the VSETH) and the respondents (the students). It is more efficient to conduct a few broader surveys than several specialized ones. The specific topics of the survey were: overall satisfaction with the university, mental health, misconduct, and minority integration.

Based on this framework, a questionnaire was developed to examine the topics. For this purpose, representatives of minorities as well as experts from the fields of sociology and psychology were consulted. The first draft of the questionnaire was then discussed and further improved in an advisory group consisting of representatives of VSETH, AVETH and ETH Zurich. Finally, the set of questions was reviewed and finalized by the survey institute gfs-zürich.

Survey

The survey was conducted online by gfs-zürich between March 18, 2019 and April 2, 2019. All Bachelor and Master students received a personalized link with which they could complete the survey exactly once. The day before the survey, the Rector and VSETH sent out a joint call to complete the survey. There was a reminder during the second week of the survey. During this time, VSETH representatives advertised the survey in 36 lectures and the lecturers of these lectures gave 5-10 minutes of their lecture time to the students to fill out the survey. There was also awareness of the survey on campus through using posters. There was an info-website⁶, which clarified the main questions about the survey. The average time to complete the survey was 15 minutes and between 5% and 10% of the questionnaires were not completed in this time. These were removed from the data.

⁶ www.wiegeths.vseth.ethz.ch

Evaluation

The evaluation was primarily carried out by gfs-zürich. They processed the raw data and passed it on to us in evaluated form as graphs or tables. The open text responses were anonymized by gfs-zürich (names and course-specific words, as well as locations, were removed). The interpretation of the data in this report was carried out by VSETH in collaboration with ETH Zurich. In accordance with data protection regulations, the VSETH does not at any time receive raw data that allow conclusions to be drawn about individual persons.

The evaluation was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, all questions of a fundamental nature were evaluated according to a category (gender, origin, field of study, ...). In the second phase, particularly revealing questions were selected and partially bundled into parameters. The selected questions and indicators are related to study satisfaction, mental health and misconduct. They were analyzed by field of study or department and another category (gender, origin, ...). The merging of several questions into one parameter was done by averaging the different percentages of the questions per answer choice (1 to 7). The compositions of the various parameters are explained in Appendix A.

Definition of measures

After evaluating the survey, it was important to VSETH not only to stimulate discussion about equal opportunities and student satisfaction at ETH Zurich, but also to work constructively on solutions to the problem areas identified. For this purpose, topics were selected in which particularly worrying conditions were identified. This resulted in five action papers, which were published between November 2019 and June 2020. They are to be understood as support for decision-makers from the rectorate, school management and department on how problems can be tackled from the students' point of view. Also included in some of the action papers are recommendations for student organizations such as the VSETH itself or the student associations. The basis for the development of the included proposals for measures is primarily the evaluation of the survey. In some cases, discussions were also held with expert groups or *stakeholders* (such as ETH Global or the women's organizations of student associations) in order to gain qualitative insights into a topic area and to test the relevance of certain proposed measures.

Conversations

In order to achieve impact, it is important not only to define concerns, but also to communicate them to the relevant decision makers. Within the framework of this project, communication took place, for example, in bilateral discussions between VSETH and student associations, between student services and VSETH, between directors of studies and student associations, in the teaching commissions of the various departments or within the framework of the institutionalized monthly discussions between VSETH and the rectorate. In addition, a presentation was given twice to the study conference with subsequent discussion with the directors of studies. In addition, the results were disseminated to the broader institution in meetings of the project's support group (consisting of representatives of VSETH, AVETH and ETH Zurich).

Closing words

From the point of view of VSETH, the survey was necessary in order to be able to verify fields of action that were being discussed within VSETH. The results form a basis on which ETH can define measures to further improve university life and to integrate minorities even better. Many of the fields of action addressed fit into topics that affect Swiss society as a whole. In addition to the proposed measures and the joint implementation with ETH, VSETH also sees the survey results as a basis for the work for future student university politics.

As is always the case in the subject matter, ETH should also strive for excellence in the area of integration of minorities, mental health of its members and equal opportunities. For this, a continuous development process is necessary in order to be able to guarantee the best achievable overall situation for the students. Quality assurance also plays an important role in this process, and it would therefore be very welcome if as many of the questions of this survey as possible could be taken up in the context of the Rectorate's future student surveys, in order to be able to quantify the improvements achieved, if necessary. We hope that the data collected in the #wiegETHs? project, its evaluation and the resulting proposals for measures will be helpful for decision-makers at ETH Zurich, and we look forward to participating in the implementation of concrete measures.

Acknowledgements

Lastly, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has worked on this project over the three years. In particular, I would like to thank the following people:

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- Kolja Frahm, Dominique Grimm, Julia Fähnrich, and Simon Grunwald, who supported the project as University Politics Board members and/or worked with several departments to implement it.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Prof. Sarah M. Springman and the Rectorate team for their comments and collaboration on this issue. VSETH looks forward to continued collaboration in all areas. Likewise, I would like to thank the Department Heads and Coordinators, Student Services, and the student associations for their openness and commitment to improving student conditions. I would also like to thank the survey institute gfs.zürich for their valuable expertise in the survey. Furthermore, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all members of the advisory group (Lukas Vonesch, Prof. Renate Schubert, Martin Rozkowski, Prof. Gerhard Tröster, Dr. Peter Mark Frischknecht, Katharina Poiger, Ulrich U. Schutz, Regula Christen, Roland Baumann and Rainer Bohrer) and to all other people involved for their input and valuable expertise in higher education policy.

Last but not least, I would like to thank you for your interest in the study conditions at ETH Zurich and for paying attention to the students' perspective! For further information, I am available with my fellow board members at hopo@vseth.ethz.ch.

Stella Harper



Appendix A: Summary of questions on parameters

Satisfaction with the study

1. "I would recommend ETH to people who want to study the same subject as me."
2. "My studies make me happy and are meaningful to me."

Study situation

1. "The workload of the courses at ETH is acceptable for me."
2. "The workload in research projects at ETH is acceptable for me."
3. "The personal support in the courses at ETH is motivating."
4. "The supervision of research projects at ETH is supportive and motivating."
5. "I can handle the pressure to perform in my studies well."
6. "The maximum limit of study duration stresses me a lot." (after reversal)

Personal freedom

1. "I have enough time to adequately dedicate myself to other things I care about in life. (e.g. friends, hobbies and health)"
2. "I get enough social contact at ETH."
3. "I am sufficiently free to decide about different aspects of my studies."

Climate

1. "The students support each other in my study programme."
2. "ETH is a respectful environment for people of all genders."
3. "I feel confident to speak up in discriminating/hurtful/harassing situations as a bystander."
4. "ETH is a respectful environment for people of all sexual orientations."

Personal situation

1. "My financial situation allows me to dedicate myself adequately to my studies."
2. "My current living situation allows me to dedicate myself adequately to my studies."

Appendix B: Formulation of the misconduct questions

Bullying

Did you ever personally experience one or several of the following at ETH: Put-downs and exclusion, withholding information, assignment of humiliating tasks and unjustified criticism?

Sexist and homophobic remarks

Did you ever personally experience one or several of the following at ETH: Insulting remarks/jokes/illustrations about people of a certain gender or sexual orientation?

Sexual harassment

Did you ever personally experience one or several of the following at ETH: insistent pushy behaviour, uninvited sexual comments, inappropriate gazing or stares, offering advantages in return for sexual favors?