

## Studying at the ZHAW School of Management and Law: Academic Guidelines for Incoming Exchange Students



**ZHAW School of Management and Law  
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## 1) Information on Preregistration and Classes

The International Office requires all incoming Bachelor's and Master's students to preregister for the modules they want to take. To this end, you had to fill out the online form "Study Proposal" during the application process in the Mobility-Online system. Please note, however, that the preregistration is no guarantee that you will actually be able to enroll in these modules during Orientation Week (see "Module Registration").

The preregistration only applies to modules taught in English. Incoming students interested in taking modules taught in German<sup>1</sup> need to contact the International Office directly.

During their semester abroad, all incoming students attend 14 weeks of classes. A classroom session (lesson) lasts 45 minutes, with a module usually consisting of two to four weekly lessons. Depending on the workload required, each module is worth either three or six ECTS credits. Types of modules include core modules, electives, and modules specifically designed for incoming students.

Course materials such as lecturers' scripts, articles, or case studies can usually be downloaded from Moodle, our online learning platform, while textbooks can be ordered directly or, in many cases, borrowed from the university library.

## 2) Module Registration

During Orientation Week, incoming students create their individual class schedules based on the modules for which they have preregistered (see Study Proposal). EventoWeb, the platform used to choose and enroll in modules online is explained in a separate introduction session.

**Please note:** Enrollment via EventoWeb is not possible in the following three cases. Instead, enrollment requests must be submitted to the International Office no later than by the Friday of Orientation Week because all classes start the following Monday. This deadline is final.

- **Business English**

Incoming students who would like to take a Business or Legal English module are required to take part in a language placement test, which is administered by the International Office during the Orientation Week. Based on the results, students are enrolled in the module according to the appropriate language level. If a student believes that the assigned level is too high, he or she may request to be assigned to a lower-level Business or Legal English module.

Although Business and Legal English modules are designed for students whose native language is not English, native speakers of English may, exceptionally, be allowed to register for the Business English Advanced 2 module or the Legal English Advanced 2 module after consultation with the International Office.

- **Modules Taught in German**

The SML offers a wide selection of modules taught in German. Please be aware that the prerequisite for taking such a module is an official language certificate confirming at least a B2+ level according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

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<sup>1</sup> "Modules taught in German" refers to all modules in the Bachelor's and Master's programs whose language of instruction is German. The term does NOT refer to modules teaching the German language.

- **Modules Taught at Master's Level**

Incoming Master's students are entitled to choose modules at Master's level, at Bachelor's level, or a mix of the two. Master's modules take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays throughout the semester. Unlike the Bachelor's modules, Master's modules should be chosen from the same field of study. In addition, they have to be from the same semester in order to avoid time conflicts. For further information regarding the modules and your class schedule, please contact the International Office.

### **Prerequisites of Modules**

Some modules require specific advanced knowledge. Information about the necessary prerequisites can be found in the Module Offer list and, in more detail, in the individual module descriptions. Since the SML will not verify whether the prerequisites are met, it is the incoming student's responsibility to ensure that he or she has the necessary knowledge.

### **Drop-Add Period and Final Module Registration**

A so-called "drop-add" period enables incoming students to modify their module selection. The drop-add period starts with module registration during Orientation Week and lasts until the end of the first week of class (on Friday, 4 p.m.). During this period, incoming students can go on EventoWeb to make changes.

After the drop-add period has ended, the system is closed, and no further changes are possible. Based on their final module registration, all incoming students are automatically signed up for the end-of-module exams in each module, and all their modules will appear on the transcript of records, regardless of the results or whether they have actually attended. To avoid any inconvenience, all incoming students are thus obliged to carefully check their final module registration in EventoWeb before the drop-add period has ended.

### **80% Attendance Policy**

The university expects an 80% attendance rate for each module. If an incoming student is unable to attend a class for any reason, he or she must notify the respective lecturer in advance. Students who are absent for more than 20% of the class time may not be allowed to take the end-of-module exam in that module.

## **3) Exams**

End-of-module exams take place during the last three weeks of the semester and may be either in written or oral form. Some modules do not have an end-of-module exam. Instead, students have assignments during the semester (e.g., papers, presentations, or group projects).

**Please note:** The SML has a strict "no plagiarism" policy and uses anti-plagiarism software. Any instance of plagiarism will result in a failing grade, and the home university is notified.

### **Exam Schedule**

A provisional exam schedule (with individual exam dates and times) and the final seating plan (with details of examination venues/rooms, and your seat number) is published on the SML Intranet halfway through the semester. Students are notified by e-mail once the exam schedule and seating plan are available.

### **Online Exam Preparation and drop-in mentor sessions**

Since our exam formats and procedures may differ substantially from what incoming students are used to back home, the International Office launched an online platform for exam preparation, which will be available on the e-learning portal Moodle. Students are also welcome to attend the drop-in exam preparation sessions that will be hosted by the International Office

towards the end of the semester. In order to know what to expect, all incoming student are strongly advised to watch and read the content of the online exam preparation carefully.

### Exam Evaluation

Students receive a grade for each module in which they are enrolled. The evaluation of the end-of-module exams takes a few weeks. Students are informed by e-mail once their grades are available on their EventoWeb user accounts.

### Access to Exams and Reconsideration Request

Students are entitled to look over their exam documents to verify that the points they have received have been added correctly and that the correct grade has been transferred into the system. If students believe that a formal correction error (e.g., wrong number of points) has affected their final grade, they can file a reconsideration request. All students receive an e-mail with the required form and further details regarding the reconsideration procedure.

### Failed End-of-Module Exams

- Option 1: The incoming student returns to his or her home university  
Please note that **for some modules it is not possible to retake the end-of-module exam**. Together with the final exam schedule, the International Office will send a list to all incoming students **specifying which end-of-module exams can be retaken**. If a student wishes to retake an exam that is on the list, he or she needs to return to the SML at the end of the following semester/year. *(For example, a module offered only in the spring semester can only be retaken during the exam period of the following spring semester.)*
- Option 2: The incoming student stays on for a second semester  
If an incoming student stays on for a second semester, he or she may **retake all his or her failed modules**, regardless of whether they are on the “Retake Exam Options” list or not. The only prerequisite is that the respective module(s) must be offered as part of the regular program in the following semester. Retaking a module means that all its performance assessments have to be retaken. This includes the written and oral assignments (performance assessments) to be completed during the semester, as well as the end-of-module exam, if applicable, in accordance with the module’s attendance policy. The student will, therefore, have to inform him- or herself about the attendance policy and any other module requirements and has to contact the instructor(s) in order to arrange the retaking of the performance assessments (assignments).

**Please note:** No exceptions can be made. After one or more modules have been retaken successfully, a revised transcript of records (showing both grades) is issued and sent to the student’s home university.

**Please note:** A failed exam can only be retaken once. Hence, if a student does not pass the retake exam, there is no opportunity to retake the exam again at the ZHAW SML.

**Please note:** These rules do not apply to Master’s level modules. Master’s level modules can only be retaken the following year.

### Justifiable Reasons for Not Attending an End-of-Module Exam

An incoming student with a justifiable reason for not attending an end-of-module exam may take a substitute exam at the end of the following semester, regardless of whether the module is offered in that semester or not. *(For example, a module that is only offered during the spring semester can in this case also be retaken during the exam period of the following fall semester).* Justifiable reasons may include force majeure, illness, accident, death in the family, or another emergency. The student has to fill out a “Notice of Absence” form and submit it on time to Student Services together with the respective document attesting the reason for his or her absence.

- **Exception 1:** The student is in his or her final semester.  
If a student is in his or her final semester and his or her home university does not offer a substitute exam (confirmation of home university required), a substitute exam may be offered, which would take place about one week after the official exam period has ended.
- **Exception 2:** A module will no longer be offered at the SML, and a substitute exam has already been arranged for a local student.  
In exceptional cases, an incoming student may be offered the opportunity to retake an exam right after the regular exam period if a module will no longer be offered at the SML and a substitute exam has already been arranged for a local student. This solution requires the approval of Student Services, the instructor, and the International Office, and there is no guarantee that an exception can be made.

**Please note:** These rules do not apply to Master's level modules. Master's level modules can only be retaken the following year.

## 4) Academic Workload, Grading System, and Transcript of Records

### Academic Workload

The workload of a full-time student at the SML equals 30 ECTS credits per semester, with one credit requiring 25-30 hours of study. The number of credits an incoming student must acquire is determined by his or her home university. However, the SML expects all incoming students to earn between 15 (min.) and 45 (max.) ECTS credits during their exchange semester.

### ECTS System / Swiss Grading System

The credit system used at the SML is based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). It enables students to study abroad and receive full recognition in terms of academic credit towards the degree programs in which they are enrolled at their home universities. The six-level ECTS Grading Scale ranges from "A" to "F." The highest grade of "A" rates the performance as "excellent." The lowest one is "F" ("fail"), which reflects a performance that cannot be recognized or accredited.

In addition to ECTS, the SML utilizes the Swiss system of grading. The scale ranges from 6.0, the highest grade, to 1.0, the lowest one. Credits are awarded only for those modules in which the student has earned a passing grade of 4.0.

### Transcript of Records

At the end of the semester, the International Office prepares an official transcript of records for each student. This transcript contains the student's grades for each module taken (for both Bachelor's and Master's modules). Grades are published according to the Swiss and the ECTS grading systems, and the number of ECTS credits earned per module is listed. Failed modules also appear on the transcript of records. At the end of the exchange period, the transcript of records is sent to the respective home university via regular mail.