

Project PAKETH:
Prüfungen und akademischer Kalender an der ETH

Concept **pre-version**

In March 2024
(with addition from 12 March, s. page 4)



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Appendix: Glossary of key terms

Important note: This presentation is intended to provide an initial overview of the key elements of PAKETH in order to start the discussions in the departments. It does not yet address all the topics that will form part of the final PAKETH concept. The detailed consultation documents (Vernehmlassungsunterlagen) will also contain explanations, reasonings and an outlook on the implementation phase.

1 Why PAKETH?

ETH wants to secure and further expand its outstanding position in the training of specialists for science and industry.

This means offering students an attractive, inspiring, but also manageable education; enabling teaching to constantly adapt to the ever-changing requirements; and ensuring the quality of teaching even in times of large student growth.

It does this by preserving strengths ...

Leading scientists as lecturers, research-oriented teaching, strong emphasis on fundamentals, consistent selection in the first year of studies, etc.

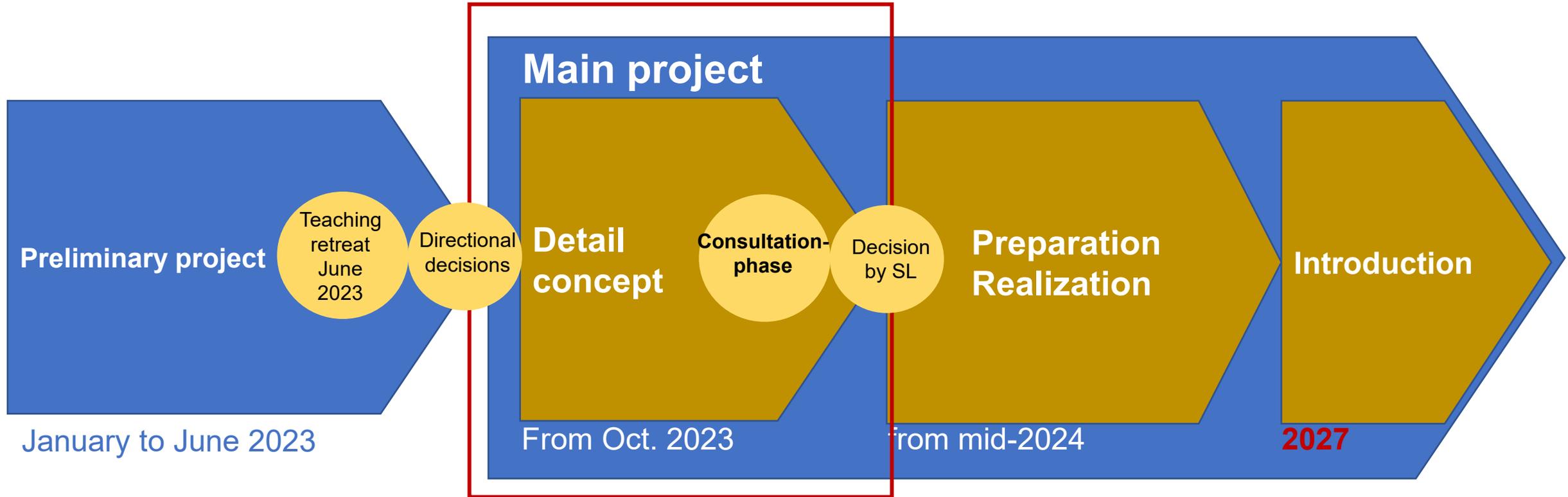
and eliminating hindering factors.

Overloaded curricula combined with a busy academic calendar; lack of time and space for students to regenerate and for extracurricular experiences and commitments; structures that have become complicated and inflexible are costly and that slow down further developments in teaching.

PAKETH wants to simplify and create freedom.

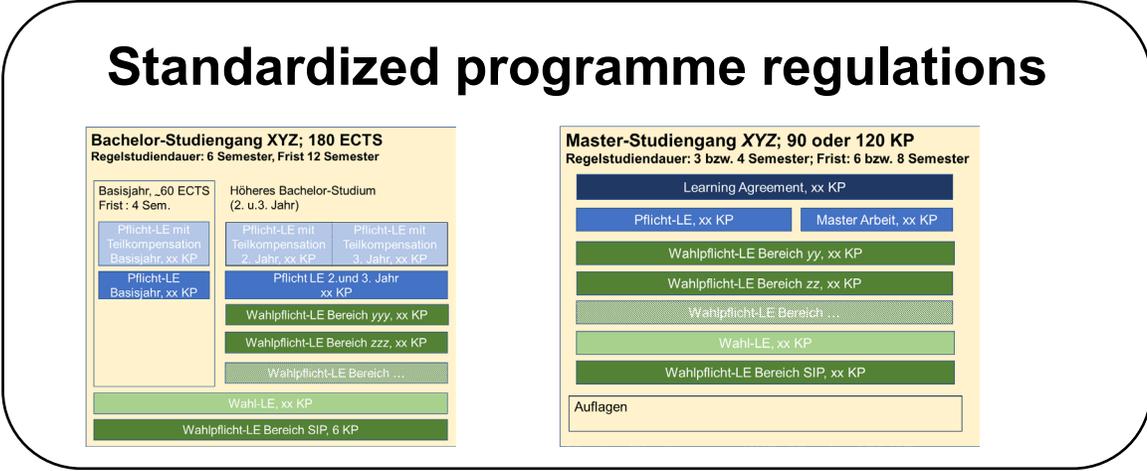
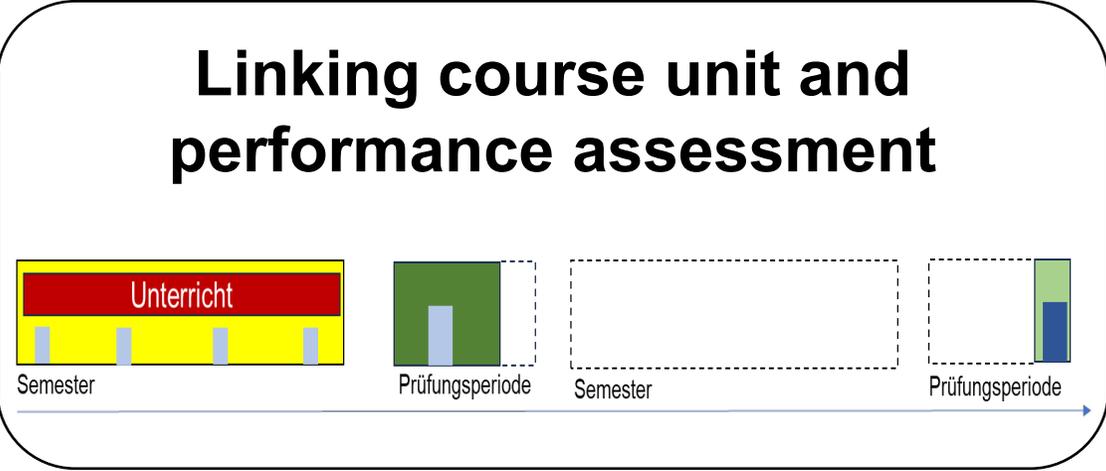
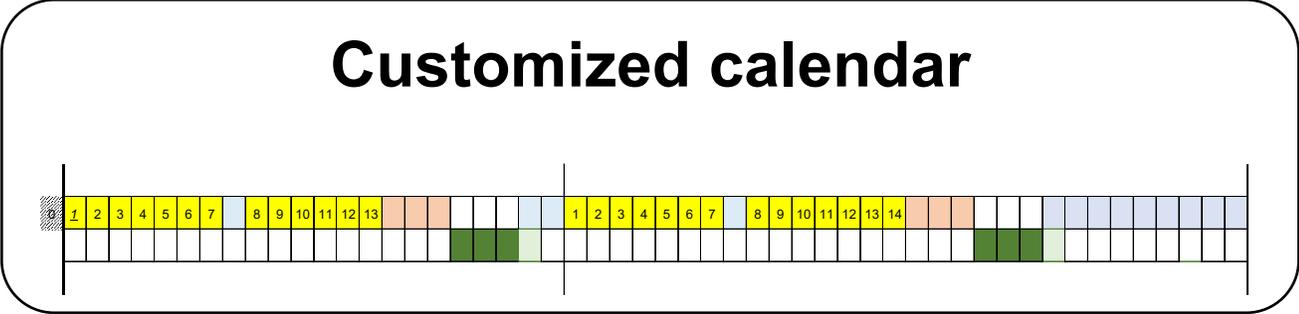
- Redesigning the academic calendar and creating freedom in the process;
- Simplify structures and processes, especially in auditing;
- create the basis for being able to implement further developments in teaching quickly and flexibly;
- Shift the emphasis from knowledge transfer to more understanding and application of knowledge; focus curricula on the essentials.

2 Procedure / Project plan



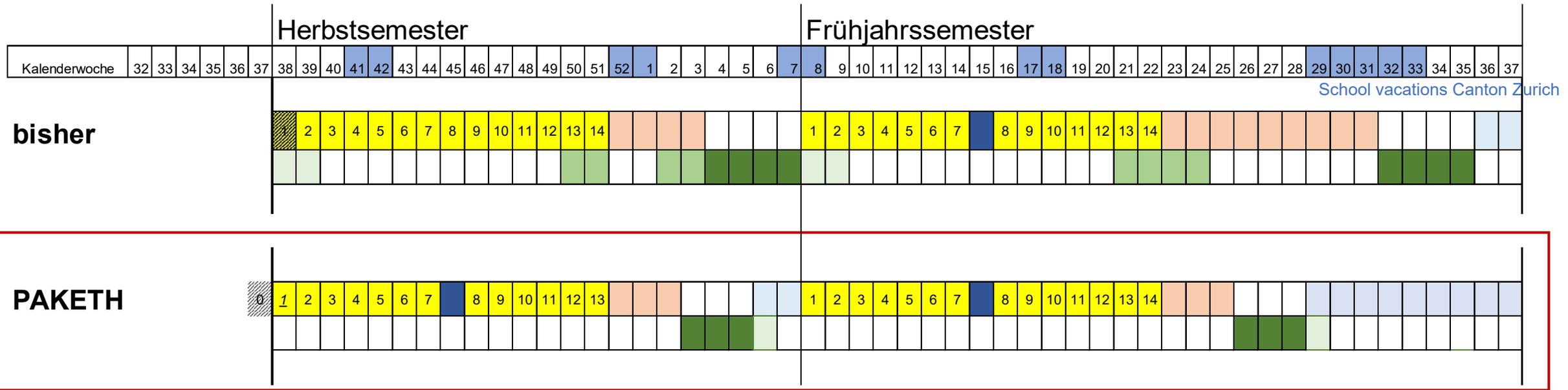
At the study conference of 7 March, the Rector announced that the introduction of PAKETH is planned for autumn 2027

3 Essential components of the concept



Teaching optimization and workload planning

3.a Redesign of the academic calendar



- Farbcode**
- Vorlesungszeit
 - Prüfungsvorbereitung
 - Onboarding
 - Vorlesungsunterbruch

- Prüfungen
- Repetitionsprüfungen
- Semesterendprüfungen (bisher)
- vorlesungsfreie Zeit

Weekly comparison	New HS	New FS
Lecture time	13 (14)	14 (14)
Exam preparation	3 (4)	3 (9)
Exam period	3 (4)	3 (4)
Repetition exams	1 (-)	1 (-)
Total	20 (22)	21 (27)

In brackets: previous calendar

Details of the new academic calendar

Lecture times:

Autumn Semester 13 weeks, Spring Semester 14 weeks. Taking public holidays into account, the *net* teaching time is practically the same in both semesters.

Calendar week 37:

There will be no lecture time. However, all onboarding and preparation activities will be brought forward to week 37 so that week 38 can be used 100% for teaching.

Lecture interruption (week 45 and Easter week):

Complete interruption of lecture time. This week may not be considered as compulsory work or study time.

Exam preparation time:

3 weeks each; in winter including holidays (alternative proposal 4 weeks; will be commented on in the consultation documents).

Examination periods:

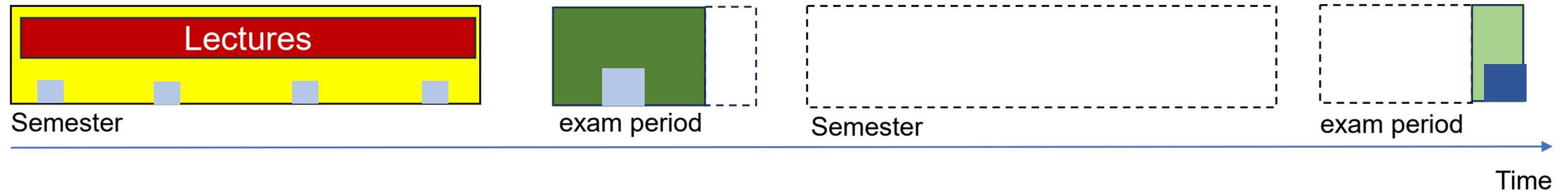
The exam periods are shortened to 3 weeks. Exam dates (date only) are set before the start of the semester. The exam period is followed by a week for repetition exams of the previous semester.

Lecture-free period in winter and summer:

1/2 resp. 8/9 weeks. The time in summer can be used by the departments for an optional range of courses and, if necessary, also for compulsory course units that cannot be accommodated in the semester (in particular excursions, laboratory courses).

3.b Linking course unit and performance assessments

Cycle of one course unit with associated (timely) performance assessments:



Possible components of performance assessments:

- Integrated performance assessments during the semester
- Final exam (in the exam period at the end of the semester)
- Repetition of the final exam (following the exam period of the following semester)

Details on the course units / performance assessments

Modular performance assessments:

Lecturers decide in principle which of the components of performance assessments (integrated performance assessments, final exam, repetition of final exam) they use in their course. Lean guidelines and recommendations provide support for this. However, it is still possible to dispense integrated performance assessments and only conduct a final exam. The previous distinction between different types of performance assessments - semester performance, end-of-semester exam, session exam - no longer applies.

No annual courses (“Jahreskurse”):

Annual courses would violate the principle of linking course units and performance assessments, which is why they have been dispensed with.

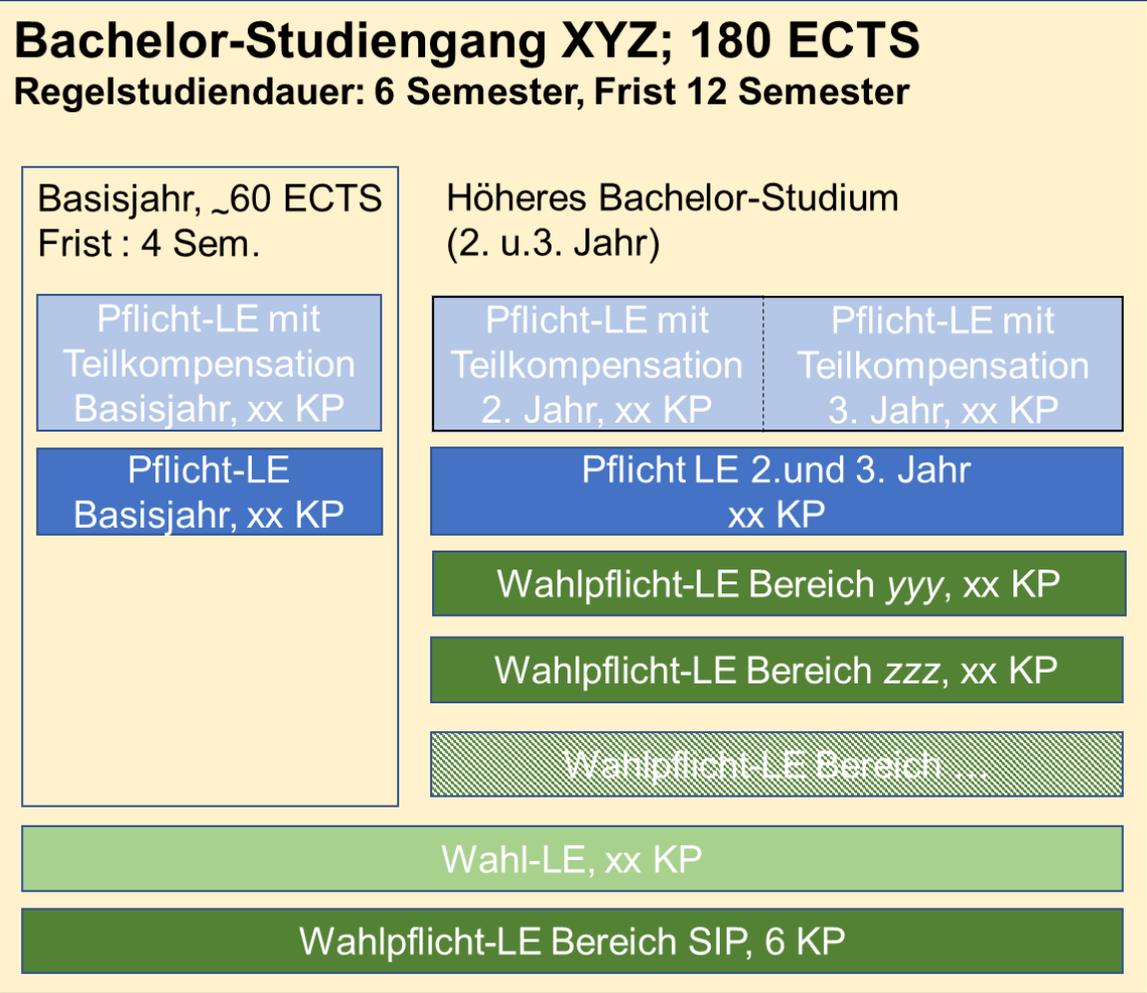
Registration for learning unit and performance assessments:

Registering for a course unit is also registration for the performance assessments. Deregistration is only possible up to a certain deregistration deadline.

Principles for repeating the final examination

- For course units that are compulsory in at least one degree programme and in which a final examination takes place, a repetition must also be offered.
- In all other course units, the lecturer decides whether to offer a repetition
- To be deepened in the implementation:
 - Which students have access to the repetition exam?
 - Are exceptions to the obligation to offer a repetition possible?
 - Under what conditions is it possible to change the examination mode (written/oral)?

3.c Standardized programme regulations - Bachelor



- Pflicht-Lerneinheiten mit Teilkompensation (Pflicht-LE mit Teilkompensation) [compulsory course unit with partial compensation]
- Pflicht-Lerneinheiten (Pflicht-LE) [compulsory course unit]
- Wahlpflicht-Lerneinheiten (Wahlpflicht-LE) [compulsory elective course unit]
- Wahl-Lerneinheiten (Wahl-LE) [elective course unit]

← Replacement of the previous examination blocks with the new category "Compulsory course units with partial compensation"

The departments decide which of these categories they use for their programmes.

Details of the standardized Bachelor programme regulations

Structuring into categories and course units (LE):

As before, the degree programmes are based on course units, which are assigned to categories. The categories are fulfilled by earning the required number of credits.

The names of the categories should be standardized as far as possible across all degree programmes.

Elimination of examination blocks and "compensation subjects":

Examination blocks will be replaced by a new category "Compulsory LEs with partial compensation" (see following pages 12 and 13). Likewise, the principle of "compensation subjects", which is currently used in several degree programmes when students fail compulsory LEs twice, will no longer be used.

First year of studies:

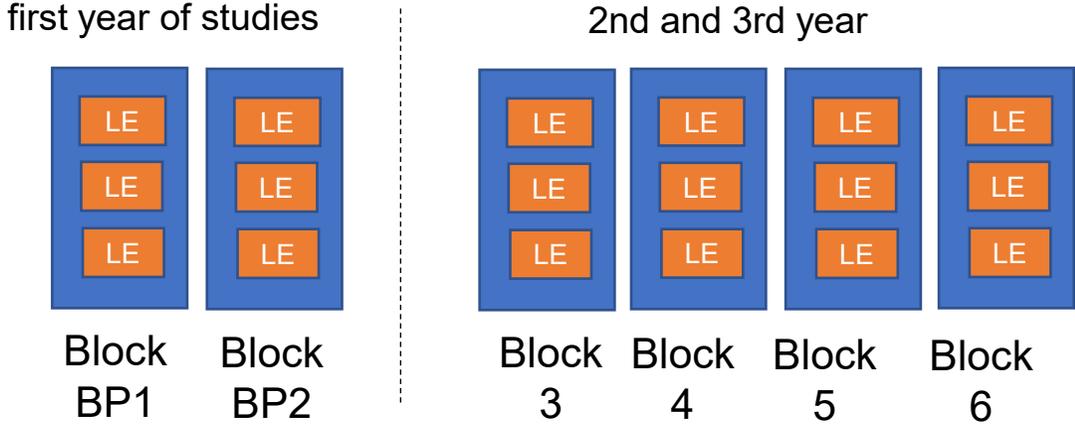
The first year of studies continues to be the first stage of the undergraduate degree programme, which must be completed within 4 semesters. Among other things, it serves to select suitable students.

Programme duration:

The standard duration of study for Bachelor's studies remains at 6 semesters. The maximum deadline to complete studies will be increased to 12 semesters.

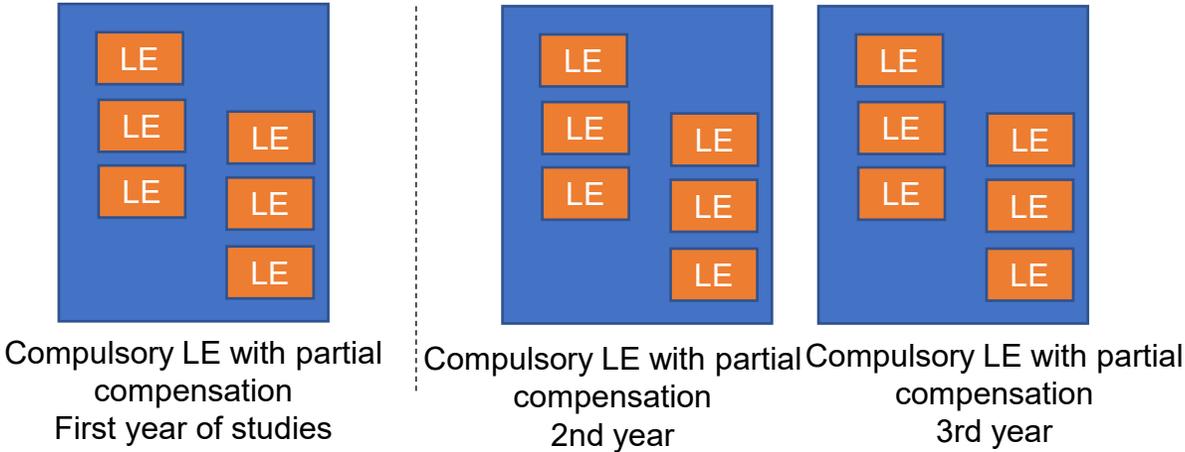
"Compulsory LE with partial compensation" as a replacement for examination blocks

Previously: Examination blocks



Target:
Eliminate the rigid structure of the examination blocks, but continue to allow grade compensation between the selective units of the curriculum, especially in the first year of studies.

New: Categories compulsory LE with partial compensation



Comparison: previous examination blocks and new "compulsory LE with partial compensation"

examination block

Composition:

- several compulsory LE
- The form of performance assessment must be a session examination (Sessionsprüfung).
- All LE in the examination block must be completed in the same session examination.

Passing the examination block:

Average grade of all LE at least 4.0

Repetition in case of failure:

The examination block must be repeated in its entirety, again all LEs simultaneously in one session.

compulsory LE with partial compensation

Composition:

- several compulsory LE
- The form of performance assessment is arbitrary, but it must be *graded*.
- The LE can be taken in different semesters and be examined at different times.

Passing the category by means of two conditions:

- a) Minimum grade (3.0) achieved in all LE
- b) Average grade of all LE ≥ 4.0

Repetition in case of failure*:

The units are repeated **individually**:

- if grade below 3.0 → Repetition mandatory
- if grade between 3.0 and 4.0 → Repetition if required for average (range of partial compensation)
- if grade 4.0 or higher → no repetition

* Repetition exam or new registration of the LE

Details of the other categories

Compulsory course units:

Course units that are mandatory for all students on a degree programme and must be passed individually (e.g. laboratory practicals, Bachelor's thesis, design courses). Substitution is not possible.

Compulsory elective course units:

Course units that are to be selected and completed from a given area in the given scope. A failed compulsory elective course unit can be substituted by another course unit from the specified area.

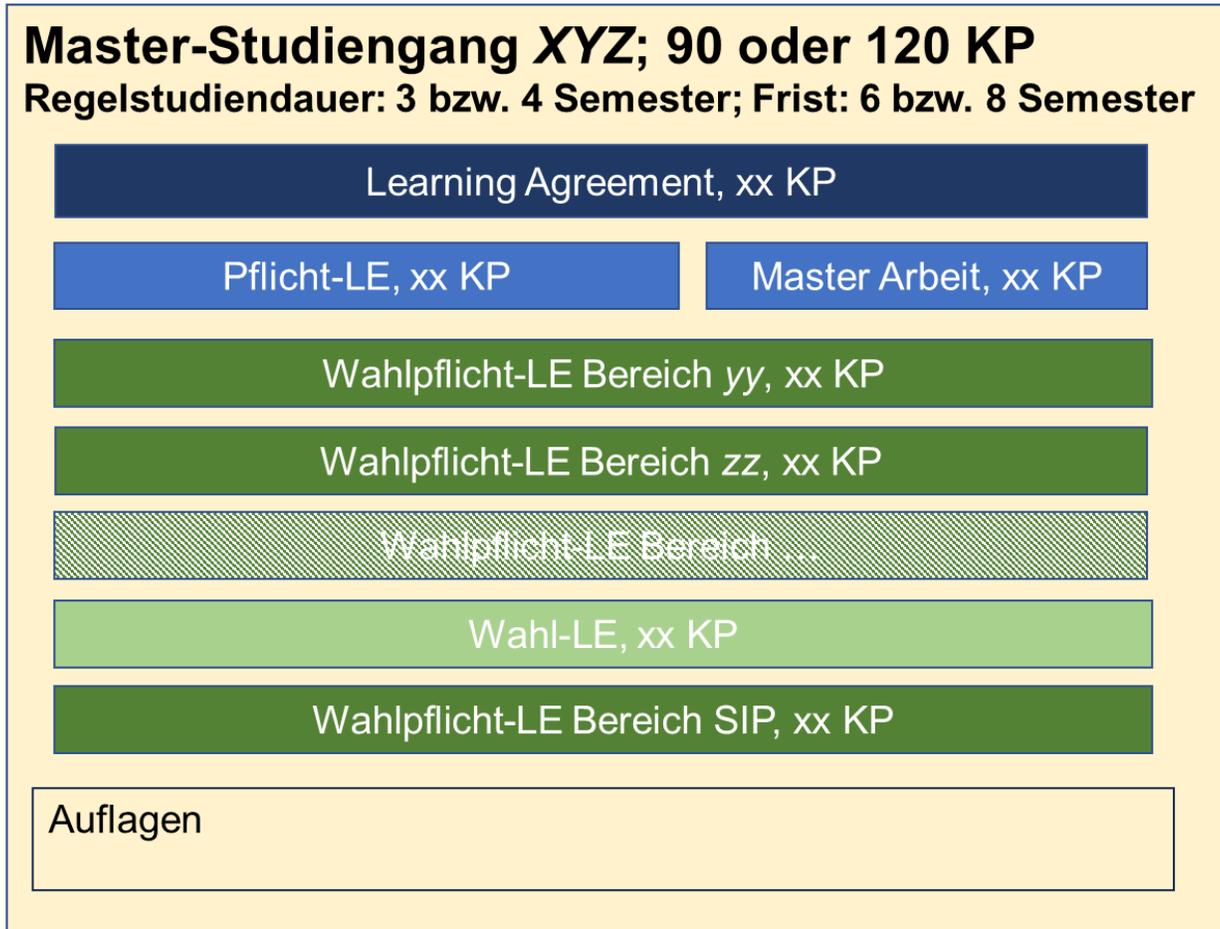
The compulsory elective course unit category can also be used to create specializations.

Elective course units:

Elective course units are course units that must be selected and completed from an extended area (e.g. the entire ETH-Domain). An elective course unit that has not been passed can be substituted by another course unit from the extended area.

The change compared to the previous situation in these categories is the standardization of terminology and the elimination of programme-specific special regulations.

Standardized programme regulations - Master



The template for the Master's degree studies is also based on the following category types:

- Compulsory LE
- Compulsory elective LE
- Elective LE

In addition, the type

- "Learning Agreement"

which includes the units agreed with the tutor.

The compulsory elective areas can be used to create specializations without a Learning Agreement.

As with the Masters programmes Departments choose the categories they need.

3.d Teaching optimization and workload planning - Guidelines for student workload

- 1) European Credit Transfer System credits (ECTS credits) are a measure of the "typical" workload for students to achieve the learning objectives; 1 credit = 25-30 h
- 2) The study programme at ETH is a full-time course: 60 credits per year correspond to 1500 to 1800 working hours
- 3) The academic calendar determines the work rhythm to a large extent; in addition, it is up to the students to decide how they organize their work and leisure time.
- 4) A workload of 45 hours per week is the upper limit for planning course units and curricula. In this way, the annual workload can be completed in the most compact form in approx. 40 weeks (cf. academic calendar p. 6)
- 5) It is at the discretion of the students to extend their studies over a longer period of time by using the maximum deadlines to complete studies. However, ETH does not offer its own "part-time curricula" for this purpose.

Teaching optimization and workload planning - Conditions and support

Workload-sensitive planning of degree programmes and course units is a condition for PAKETH to succeed. This includes:

- internal workload analysis;
- Coordination of performance assessments (types and timing) across degree programs to avoid "assessment peaks";
- Creation of free space for continuous processing of content during the semester;
- Optimization of curricula through stringent focus on skills and learning objectives, reduction of redundancies and focusing of content.

The Rectorate will support the lecturers and degree programs during the implementation phase and beyond by:

- Methods and tools for monitoring and planning the workload;
- Tools for curriculum mapping with visualizations of workload and "assessment peaks" in the semester;
- Provision of data (scoring) at ETH level and program-specific level on workload;
- Training, counselling and promotion of the exchange of know-how on workload-sensitive teaching and curriculum planning against the background of a continuously growing body of knowledge.

4 Outlook on consultation procedure (Vernehmlassung)

The detailed concept for PAKETH will be submitted to the departments and university groups for consultation in spring:

Start of consultation: **April 12, 2024**

Response deadline: **June 10, 2024**

The concept will build on the proposed solutions presented here, address further topics and, in particular, provide explanations, reasoning and evidence. Alternative proposals that were not included in the final concept by the project team will also be commented on.

5 Outlook on implementation phase

Decision by the Executive Board:

After thoroughly analyzing the consultation feedback and making the resulting additions and adjustments, the concept is to be submitted to the Executive Board for approval in August. The implementation preparation phase will then begin.

Implementation as a collective project:

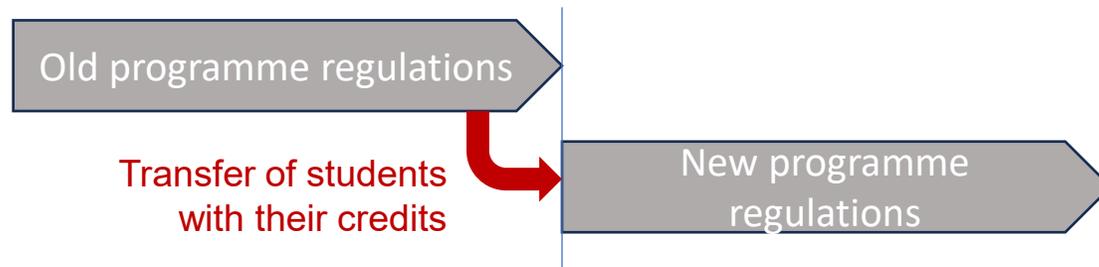
Implementation will be an ETH-wide project in which both the Rectorate and the departments will take on a responsible role. The implementation plan will be drawn up in summer 2024 and will form part of the Executive Board's application.

Link with the "Digital Campus" project:

The implementation of PAKETH is closely linked to the "Digital Campus" project, which provides essential system support for the changed structures and processes.

No parallel management of *old* and *new*:

On the planned introduction date, all students at both study levels should be transferred to the new system with the credit points they have already earned and continue their studies there. This will avoid the parallel management of *old* and *new*. The details of this transfer are part of the implementation plan.



6 Opportunities for additional information / touching points before and during the consultation process

- Website www.paketh.ethz.ch (with feedback option)
- Contact persons of the degree programmes for PAKETH, see www.ethz.ch/paketh/kontakt
- Core project team: Dieter Wüest (Head), Nora Dittmann, Franziska Moll, Urs Brändle, Kornel Le Grand (paketh@ethz.ch)
- Study Conference on March 7, agenda item PAKETH
- Rector's visit to the PreDVK on March 14
- Rector's information events: April 23 (Hönggerberg) and May 14 (Zentrum) over lunchtime
- Q&A sessions VSETH April 22 (Center) and (tba) (Hönggerberg)
- Visits by the core team to the departments upon request

Appendix: Glossary of key terms

PAKETH	" <u>P</u> erformance <u>a</u> ssessments and <u>a</u> cademic <u>c</u> alendar at <u>E</u> TH; project initiated by the Rector.
Digital campus	Project initiated by the Rector to renew and expand system support in teaching; including the replacement of academic applications.
Course unit (LE)	A course unit is complete in terms of content and time and consists of one or more courses. Performance assessment is offered for a course unit and credit points are awarded. The term "course unit" is used at ETH Zurich instead of the Bologna term "module".
Credits (KP)	Based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), credits describe the typical student workload required to complete an academic performance; 1 credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of student work.
course	Parts of a course unit, e.g. a lecture and an exercise are each a course.
Performance assessment (or: proof of academic achievements)	Generic term for all forms of verification of the achievement of the learning objectives of a course; a distinction is no longer made between different types (semester performance, end-of-semester examination, session examination); a proof of academic achievements has a modular structure consisting of integrated performance assessments, final examination and repetition examination.
Integrated performance assessment	Performance assessment, which takes place during lecture times.
Final exam	Final exam that takes place in the exam period after the semester; if the performance assessment consists exclusively of one exam, this is usually declared as the final examination.
Repetition exam	Offer for students who have not passed the course in the first attempt; the repetition examination only replaces the result of the final examination and should not be confused with the re-taking of the course.
Degree programme, curriculum	Degree programme and curriculum both refer to an academic course of study, whereby degree programme refers more to the structure and curriculum more to the content.
Categories	Course units are grouped into categories within the degree program. The category type defines how course units contribute to passing the category.

Partial compensation (of grades) vs. substitution (of learning units)	<p>Compensation: an unsatisfactory grade is compensated by another, sufficient grade, so that the overall average is "sufficient".</p> <p>Substitution: a course unit that has not been passed is replaced by another one that has been (or will be) passed and thus substituted.</p>
Autumn Semester, Spring Semester	The academic year consists of two semesters, each of which comprises a lecture time, an exam preparation period, an exam period and a repetition week, as well as the subsequent lecture-free period.
lecture time	Time window in which normal classes take place; 13 weeks in Autumn Semester, 14 weeks in Spring Semester, interrupted by 1 week break each.
Exam period (previously: exam session)	Time slot in which the final exams of the course units of the current semester take place; the exams are scheduled by the Rectorate.
Repetition week	The week after the examination period in which the repetition exams of the previous semester take place; the exams are scheduled by the Rectorate.
Lecture-free period in summer	Time window after the repetition week and before the start of the new semester; offers of block courses can take place during this time; they count as part of the Spring Semester for administrative purposes.
(student) workload	Work performed by students for all activities binding to the study programme.