

Guidelines on Admission to Bachelor's Degree Programmes

These guidelines govern the responsibilities for recognising the equivalence of foreign school-leaving certificates for admission to a Bachelor's degree programme at the ZHAW.

1. Principles and terms

These guidelines are based on Art. 25, Admission to universities of applied sciences, and on the transitional provisions of Art. 73 of the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (Higher Education Act, HEdA) as well as on the subordinate legislation.

School-leaving certificates are pre-tertiary educational qualifications. Recognised qualifications for studying at a tertiary institution are upper secondary school-leaving certificates that allow the holder to be admitted directly or after an admission process to a Bachelor's degree programme at a university in Switzerland and/or abroad.

2. Best practices

Except as otherwise specified internally by the ZHAW, the recognition of equivalency for admission is in line with the best practices defined by the chamber of universities of applied sciences and arts ([Zulassung zum Bachelorstudium an Fachhochschulen](#), available in German).

3. Purpose

These guidelines ensure a uniform recognition practice that treats applicants equally unless explicitly excepted by the governing legislation.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Admission process by the Schools

4.1.1 Admission to degree programmes

Admission to the ZHAW is linked to a specific degree programme. The admission process is organised by the academic offices responsible in the respective Schools on the basis of the Higher Education Act (HEdA) and the academic regulations as well as the [ZHAW's own regulations](#). The Schools are responsible for specifying the details of the process.

The academic offices ensure that the submitted documents are evaluated and that the results of the evaluation process are conveyed and entered into the administration software foreseen for this purpose.

4.1.2 Foreign qualifications for university admission: Evaluation of equivalency

The foreign qualification submitted is evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. The ZHAW reviews all upper secondary school-leaving certificates that allow the holder access to a Bachelor's degree programme at a university or university of applied sciences in the country in which they were issued. In addition, the ZHAW reviews the European Baccalaureate and the International Baccalaureate.

2. The ZHAW requires that at minimum the following subjects must have been studied during the last three years before obtaining the school-leaving certificate or be listed as subjects of the final exam in the certificate that qualifies the holder to access to university education.
 1. First language (native language)
 2. Second language
 3. Mathematics
 4. Another subject from at least one of the following areas: natural sciences (biology, chemistry or physics), technology (informatics or engineering) or humanities and social sciences (geography, history or economics/law).In addition, there must be proof of the required proficiency in the language of instruction in the Bachelor's degree programme of interest. The requirement specified in the [Regulations on Admission, Matriculation and Ex-matriculation at the ZHAW](#) applies.

3. If these criteria are met, then:

- the equivalency of the qualification is recognised (as long as the subject requirement is met).

This holds for certificates qualifying for access to university according to the federal law of the countries involved in one of the agreements below:

 - Signatory states of the European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas Leading to Admission to Universities No. 15/1953 of the Council of Europe
 - Signatory states of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region Nr. 165/1997 ("Lisbon Convention")
 - Bilateral agreements with Germany, Austria, France and Italy concerning higher education equivalency

These countries are indicated with E, L and B, respectively, in the [swissuniversities list of countries](#).

In addition, the following international diplomas are recognised

- European Baccalaureate (unconditionally)
- International Baccalaureate (minimum of 32 out of 45 points).
- Proof of the ability to study can be established through an entrance examination (as long as the subject requirement is met).

This applies for certificates qualifying for access for which no agreement stated above exists.

Potential students with certificates qualifying for university admission from states E, L or B, or with European Baccalaureate who do not meet the subject requirements or who have an International Baccalaureate with less than 32 points can be admitted if they pass the entrance examination.

4.1.3 Entrance examination

The conditions specified for a reduced entrance examination hold for the desired degree programme.



4.2 Evaluation of equivalency by Academic Affairs

Academic Affairs is responsible for evaluating the equivalency of foreign school-leaving certificates and other qualifications. This ensures uniform practice. The decision is finalised without a signature.

Academic Affairs can delegate the evaluation of frequently submitted and easily verified foreign school-leaving certificates to the Schools concerned. These exceptions are listed in the instructions for admission to a Bachelor's programme ([Arbeitsanweisung zur Zulassungsprüfung zum Bachelorstudium](#), in German).

5. Validity

These regulations take effect upon the President's decision of 23/09/2020 for admissions as of spring semester 2021. Previously confirmed admissions remain valid.

6. Issued by

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