Module Description, available in: EN

Ethics and Corporate Responsibility

General Information

Number of ECTS Credits

3

Module code

CM_Ethics

Valid for academic year

2026-27

Last modification

2024-10-14

Coordinator of the module

Thorsten Busch (ZHAW, buth@zhaw.ch)

Explanations regarding the language definitions for each location:

- Instruction is given in the language specified for each location and module execution.
- Documentation is available in the language(s) listed for each location and module execution. If the documentation is in multiple languages, the percentage distributed is indicated (100% = all documentation provided).
- The examination, including both questions and answers, is provided entirely (100%) in the language(s) specified for each location and module execution. The exams are on-site.

	Lausanne			Lugano	Zurich		
Instruction					**X** E 100%		
Documentation					**X** E 100%		
Examination					**X** E 100%		

Module Category

CM Context module

Profile Recommendations

This module is recommended for the following profiles:

	Zurich
Profile	CE, DS, ICS, Med, ReLa

Lessons

2 lecture periods and 1 tutorial period per week

Entry level competences

Prerequisites, previous knowledge

none

Brief course description of module objectives and content

In an environment that is changing increasingly quickly, students will be taught the ability to assume social responsibility either as engineers or in management functions at companies. They will develop a profound awareness of the ethical aspects of their actions and for the ecological and social impacts of companies. In their subsequent professional careers, they will thus be better able to judge the consequences of their work for society, to deal with conflicts in these areas, and to contribute to the corporate responsibility strategies of their organizations in a manner appropriate to their positions.

Aims, content, methods

Learning objectives and competencies to be acquired

- Students know the theoretical foundations of various ethical theories
- They are familiar with various levels of ethics (individual ethics and corporate ethics)
- They can apply a wide range of ethical approaches to a specific situation
- They are familiar with the concept of the broader corporate responsibility of organizations
- They are familiar with the main elements of the implementation of corporate responsibility in companies
- They are able to analyze and critically judge the corporate responsibility strategy of a given company on the basis of publicly available information

Module content with weighting of different components

Ethics

- fundamental ethical concepts
- ethics of duties and ethics of consequences; human rights; the common good
- discourse ethics; justice; forming ethical judgements
- ethics of the environment and the future; sustainable development
- ethics of technology; estimating the consequences of technology, technology assessment
- ethics codices, guidelines, professional norms
- specific case studies from various disciplines

Corporate Responsibility:

- the role of organizations/companies in society
- the expectations of stakeholder groups and dealing with these expectations (stakeholder management)
- various classic concepts of corporate responsibility
- corporate responsibility in ecological, social, economic and technological areas, business case for CSR/sustainability
- elements of the implementation of corporate responsibility (issue identification, governance, guiding philosophy/policy, issue strategies, measurement and monitoring, non-financial reporting, auditing and certification

Teaching and learning methods

Lecture, case studies, individual and group exercises.

The final exam consists of a written work assignment and written questions.

Literature

References for literature will be provided during the lectures on a language-specific basis.

Assessment

Additional performance assessment during the semester

The module does not contain an additional performance assessment during the semester

Basic principle for exams

As a rule, all standard final exams are conducted in written form. For resit exams, lecturers will communicate the exam format (written/oral) together with the exam schedule.

Standard final exam for a module and written resit exam

Kind of exam

Written exam

Duration of exam

120 minutes

Permissible aids

Aids permitted as specified below:

Permissible electronic aids

Students will take an online exam via Moodle while being physically present in a lecture hall in Zurich. They can use their computers or other devices

to take the Moodle exam, which generally is open-book, i.e. students may use their lecture slides and personal notes.

Other permissible aids

Aside from the aids above, students may only use a dictionary because the exam will be held in English.

Exception: In case of an electronic Moodle exam, adjustments to the permissible aids may occur. Lecturers will announce the final permissible aids prior to the exam session.

Special case: Resit exam as oral exam

Kind of exam

Oral exam

Duration of exam

30 minutes

Permissible aids

No aids permitted