ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

Zurich, 1 March 2021   Dr Andrea Barrueto, www.pfyfferschmid.ch

rETHink, Workstream WS6 (Culture development)

Evaluation of the survey "Taking our pulse"
Dec 2020 / Jan 2021

1 Introduction

The Executive Board launched the rETHink organisational development project to ensure ETH Zurich continues along its successful path for the next 20 years. On the one hand, this requires responding to changing expectations and the overall climate outside ETH. On the other hand, the structures and processes also require a rethink in light of the growth our university has experienced in recent years.

Some things will change. What will remain the same, however, is the fact that our university's future success depends on the outstanding efforts of all members of the ETH community. And these efforts are shaped fundamentally by the culture and values we share and live. Over the course of the year, we hope that every member of the university community will reflect upon and discuss these values.

(picture: ETH Zurich)

To start the discussion, a survey "Taking our pulse" was carried out in December 2020 and January 2021 asking members of the ETH community to express their opinions on the values that shape – or should shape – the work we do together.

The results of the survey are presented in summarised form in what follows.

2 Quantitative part

The following part presents in the first section the evaluation according to the individually perceived importance of the values, followed by the individual impression of how much this value is lived at ETH.

Importance of particular values

The survey asked participants the following: **How important do you think the value "x" is to ETH's future success?** They were asked to indicate their opinion on a sliding scale from 1 to 10. The following values are listed according to their perceived importance. In addition, a distinction is made between the German and English surveys. Due to a technical error, some of the answers from English participants were lost.

Responsibility

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Verantwortung	1.00	10.00	9.25	1.23	1.52	289
2	Responsibility	1.00	10.00	8.97	1.71	2.94	64
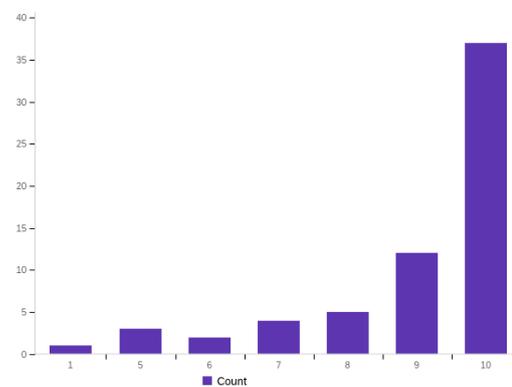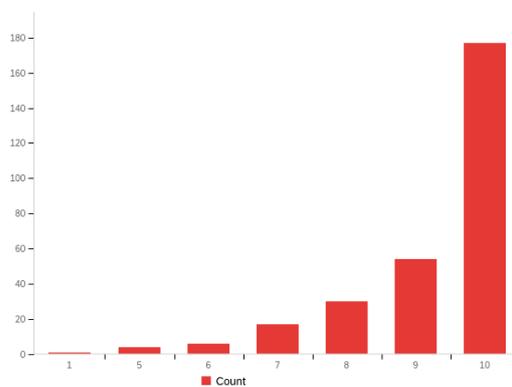
Openness

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Offenheit	1.00	10.00	8.80	1.67	2.80	289
2	Openness	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	64
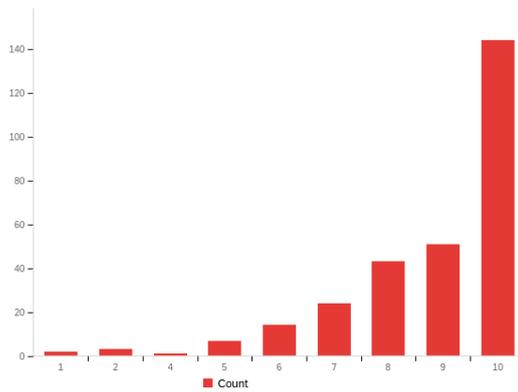
Team spirit

	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Teamgeist	1.00	10.00	8.43	1.87	3.49	287
2	Team spirit	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	0.00	64
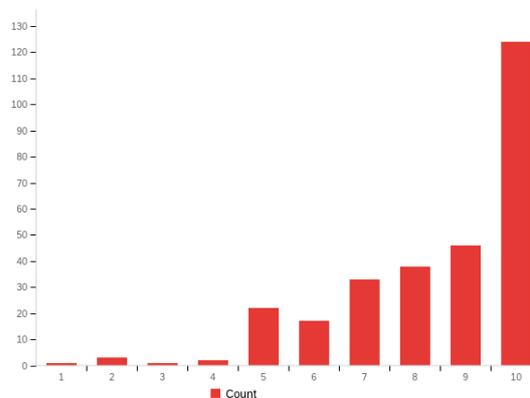
Diversity

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Vielfalt	0.00	10.00	8.12	2.18	4.73	283
2	Diversity	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	64
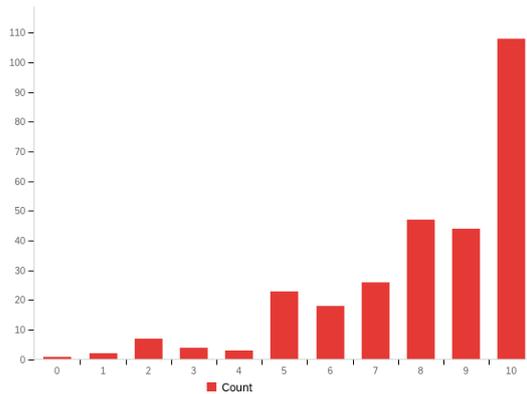
Excellence

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Exzellenz	0.00	10.00	7.52	2.60	6.77	285
2	Excellence	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	64
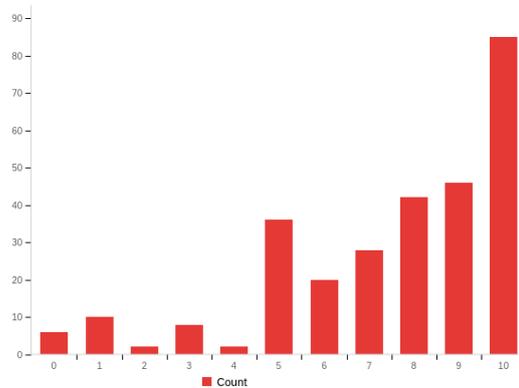
Summary of "Importance of particular values"

The evaluation of the importance of particular values shows that participants view Responsibility as the most important value for the university's future success. Looking at the distribution, it is noticeable that Responsibility is scored at 10 (i.e. maximum importance) for about 180 participants, at 9 (almost maximum importance) for just under 60 participants, and at 7 (high importance) for just under 40 participants. When looking at the other graphs for Openness, Team spirit, Diversity and Excellence, not as many participants give these values a score of 10 for maximum importance: 140 Openness, 130 Team spirit, 110 Diversity and 90 Excellence.

Summary of average scores:

Wert	Deutsch
Responsibility	9.25
Openness	8.8
Team spirit	8.43
Diversity	8.12
Excellence	7.52

Living the values

When enquiring about living the values, participants were asked the following question: **In your experience, how well do you think value "x" is applied around you at ETH**? To answer, they once again indicated their opinion on a sliding scale of 1 to 10. The following values are listed according to their perceived importance. In addition, a distinction is made between the German and English surveys.

Responsibility

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Verantwortung	0.00	10.00	6.49	2.47	6.12	286
2	Responsibility	0.00	10.00	6.13	2.48	6.14	64
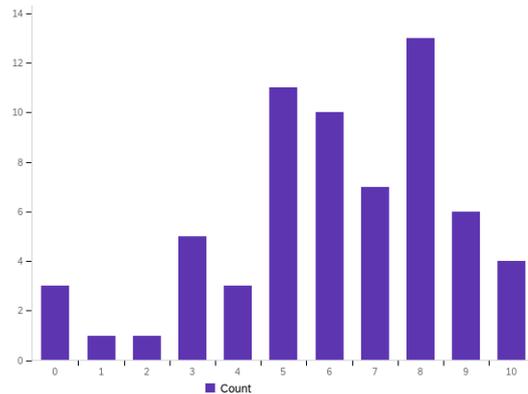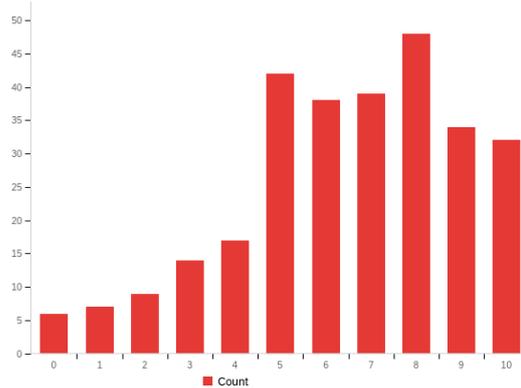
Openness

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Offenheit	0.00	10.00	5.65	2.62	6.85	284
2	Openness	0.00	10.00	5.23	2.66	7.05	64
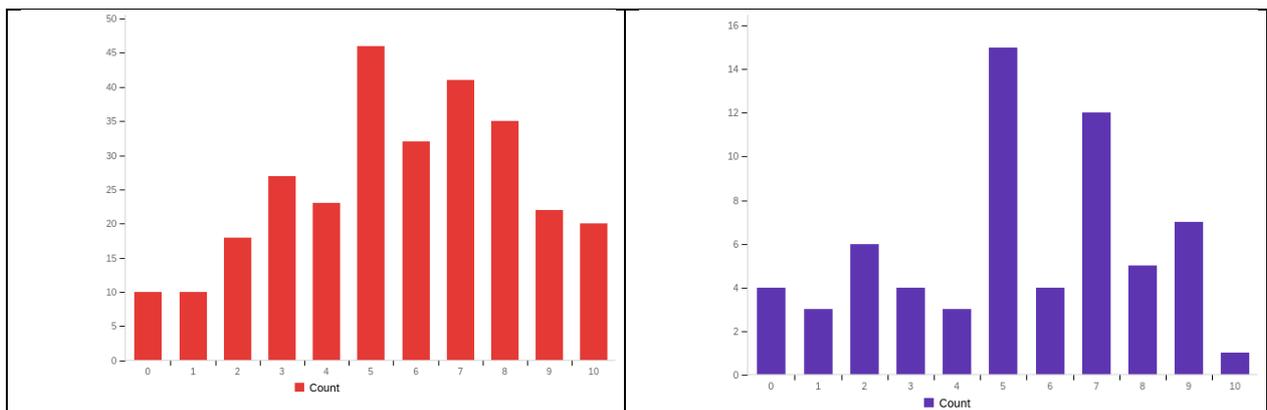
Team spirit

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Teamgeist	0.00	10.00	5.63	2.88	8.30	284
2	Team spirit	1.00	10.00	5.91	2.29	5.24	64
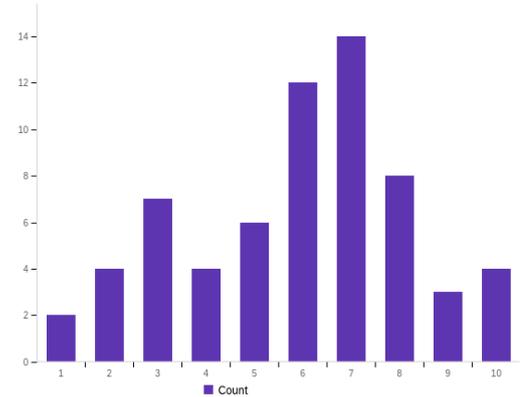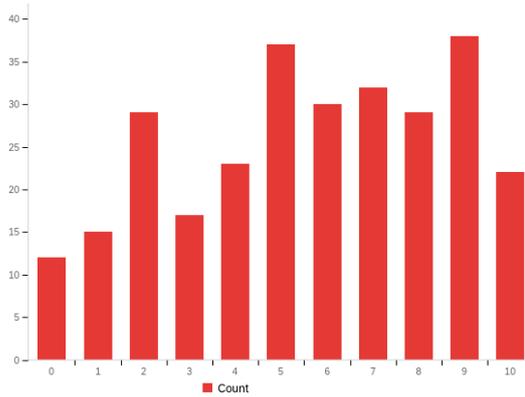
Diversity

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Vielfalt	0.00	10.00	6.04	2.66	7.10	284
2	Diversity	0.00	10.00	4.53	2.92	8.50	64
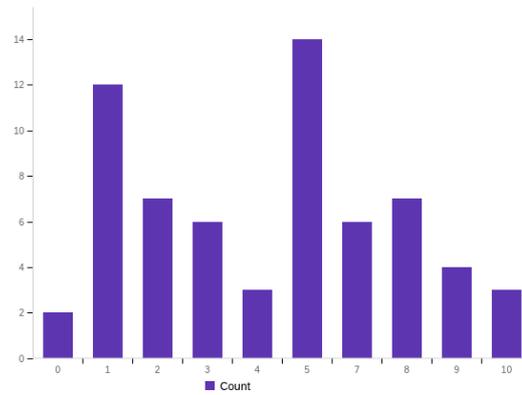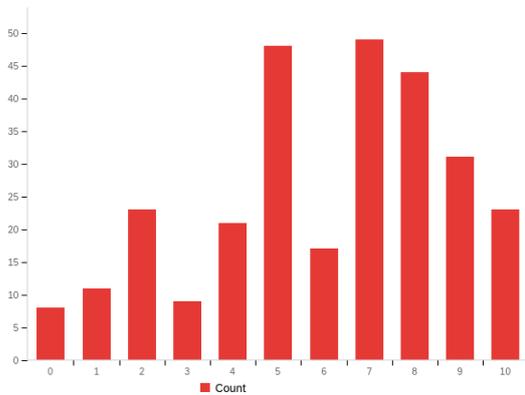
Excellence

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Exzellenz	0.00	10.00	7.18	2.49	6.19	287
2	Excellence	2.00	10.00	7.77	2.01	4.02	64
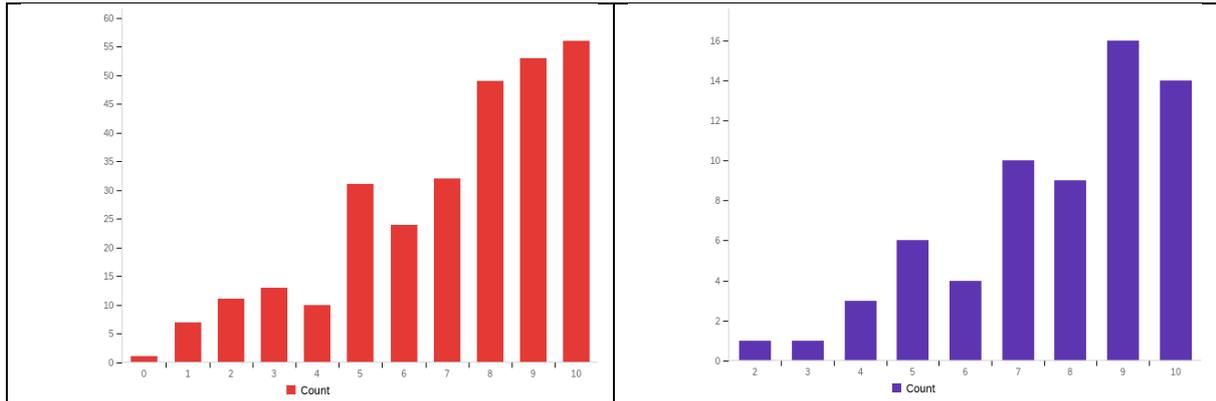
Summary of "Living the values" section

In the evaluation of the question as to how much the participants rate the way values are applied, Excellence was in first place in both the English and German responses. In terms of distribution, it is noticeable that the peaks (most mentions) for the value Excellence were 9 or 10, for Responsibility 8, for Diversity 5 and 7, and for Openness 5.

It is striking that the value Vielfalt/Diversity is given an average score of 6.04 points by German-speaking participants, i.e. this value is experienced as the most applied, while the average score is just 4.53 points among English-speaking participants (poorly applied). Otherwise, there are no noticeable differences between the two languages and their assessment of whether the value is applied.

All

Value	German	English
Exzellenz / Excellence	7.18	7.77
Verantwortung / Responsibility	6.49	6.13
Vielfalt / Diversity	6.04	4.53
Offenheit / Openness	5.65	5.23
Teamgeist / Team Spirit	5.63	5.91

Comparison of the importance and the application of the values

	How important do you think the value "x" is to ETH's future success?		In your experience, how well do you think value "x" is applied around you at ETH?	
	DE	EN	DE	EN
Verantwortung / Responsibility	9.25	8.97	6.49	6.13
Offenheit / Openness	8.80	-	5.65	5.23
Teamgeist / Team Spirit	8.43		5.63	5.91
Vielfalt / Diversity	8.12	-	6.04	4.53
Exzellenz / Excellence	7.52		7.18	7.77

When comparing the two aspects "Importance" and "Living the values", it is noticeable that although Openness and Team spirit are rated as very important, they are applied the least on average from the respondents' point of view. Responsibility and Diversity are also clearly applied less than they are considered important.

3 Qualitative part

Personal importance

This part presents the qualitative description of the values, in other words why they are personally important to the participant. The exact wording of the question was: **In your own words, describe what the value "x" means to you personally in your work at ETH.** Here "x" stands for the values: Responsibility, Diversity, Openness, Team spirit and Excellence.

The individual descriptions were entered as free text in each case and therefore, they often receive more than one statement. For example a statement about responsibility: "Taking responsibility for oneself and the group, admitting mistakes and improving processes. Assuming responsibility for sustainability and resources." This statement was allocated to the following four categories:
- For a group
- Admitting mistakes
- Sustainability
- Resources

The summarised descriptions of the five values of Responsibility, Diversity, Openness, Team spirit and Excellence were each divided into four categories (in the style of Ken Wilber*, (2000). A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications, Inc.).

Interior-Individual (Intentional)	Exterior-Individual (Behavioural)
Interior-Collective (Cultural)	Exterior-Collective (Social)

This is intended to provide a better overview.

The statements were also divided into three categories:
- Mentioned very frequently: mentioned more than 20 times
- Mentioned frequently: 5-10 times
- Mentioned less frequently: 1-4 times

The descriptions in the free text were summarised in the evaluation. The classification does not claim to do justice to every statement.

* Wilber Ken (2000). A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Responsibility

Interior-Individual (Intentional)	Exterior-Individual (Behavioural)
Mentioned very frequently: - Responsibility for my own actions, my decisions and their consequences / personal responsibility. - Owning up to mistakes Mentioned frequently: - Honest / sincere Mentioned less frequently: - Freedom - Self-criticism - Trust	Mentioned frequently: - Good quality - Correct, precise, clean work Mentioned less frequently: - Efficiency - Scientifically correct / no data falsification - On time, disciplined - Complete work - Improving processes - Adherence to rules - Serious / professional work
Interior-Collective (Cultural)	**Exterior-Collective (Social)**
Mentioned very frequently: - Society - Employees Mentioned frequently: - Team / group - Students - Switzerland Mentioned less frequently: - Not just doing what benefits me - Advancement of women - Promotion of young talent - Respect - Appreciation - Empathy - Consideration for the weaker - Being a role model - Thinking from the perspective of others / thinking outside the box / bigger picture / holistic view	Mentioned very frequently: - In the spirit of ETH - Environment / sustainability Mentioned frequently: - Resources / Finances Mentioned less frequently: - Research and teaching - Politics - Careful handling of data / data security - Scientific - Ethical - Adherence to standards

Openness

Interior-Individual (Intentional)	Exterior-Individual (Behavioural)
Mentioned frequently: - Honesty - Impartiality - Courage to make mistakes - Criticism / self-reflection Mentioned less frequently: - Willingness to learn - Authenticity	
Interior-Collective (Cultural)	**Exterior-Collective (Social)**
Mentioned very frequently: - Open communication - Openness towards other people and cultures - Different opinions, perspectives Mentioned frequently: - Problems, fears and disagreements are addressed and discussed. - Listening and letting people finish - Trust - Needs of others Mentioned less frequently: - Freedom of speech - Unconventional thinkers - Tolerance - Open exchange with supervisors	Mentioned very frequently: - New ways of working - Open to new things, new solutions - Mentioned frequently: - Transparency at all levels - Decisions are communicated - New topics - Interdisciplinary topics - Changes - Information is accessible Mentioned less frequently: - Freedom from censorship - Knowledge is accessible - Questioning classical doctrine

Team spirit

Interior-Individual (Intentional)	Exterior-Individual (Behavioural)
Mentioned frequently: - Psychological security, trust Mentioned less frequently: - Feeling good - No narcissism in their own work	
Interior-Collective (Cultural)	**Exterior-Collective (Social)**
Mentioned very frequently: - Pursuing a goal together, pulling together - Supporting and helping each other - We-feeling, togetherness, sense of belonging Mentioned frequently: - Sharing knowledge with others - Interdisciplinary teams, interdisciplinary projects, no silo or blinkered thinking - Celebrating successes, having fun, laughing together - Valuing diversity - Learning from each other - Mutual appreciation - Good, transparent communication - Tolerating the mistakes of others, error tolerance culture - Not working against each other, no bullying or torpedoing each other Mentioned less frequently: - Fostering contacts - Perceiving oneself as a human being - Shared responsibility - Altruism - Willingness to cooperate	Mentioned frequently: - Flat hierarchies - ETH as an entity - Representing ETH with pride - Motivating and inspiring atmosphere Mentioned less frequently: - Sharing information openly

Diversity

Interior-Individual (Intentional)	Exterior-Individual (Behavioural)
Mentioned frequently: - Creativity - Boldness Mentioned less frequently: - Flexible thinking	
Interior-Collective (Cultural)	**Exterior-Collective (Social)**
Mentioned very frequently: - Diversity in staffing (gender, age, religion, culture and origin) - Respect Mentioned frequently: - Bringing together people with different experience and expertise - Diversity of opinions - Inclusivity - More women in leadership positions - Appreciation of all persons - Equality for all Mentioned less frequently: - More minorities in leadership positions (for example: no barriers due to handicaps, sexual orientation, autism, etc	Mentioned very frequently: - Breadth of research topics - Varied work, no boredom Mentioned frequently: - Creating an environment where everyone feels integrated - Broad expertise Mentioned less frequently: - Diversity of work positions (e.g. part-time doctorate, shared professorship) - Family-friendly work positions - Diversity of languages

Excellence

Interior-Individual (Intentional)	Exterior-Individual (Behavioural)
Mentioned less frequently: - Creativity - Contentment and happiness - Work-life balance - Critical self-reflection - Staying humble	Mentioned very frequently: - I give my best, extraordinary effort - Achieving ambitious goals, exceeding requirements, exceeding the average Mentioned frequently: - Finding the best solution
Interior-Collective (Cultural)	**Exterior-Collective (Social)**
Mentioned frequently: - Excellent interpersonal skills Mentioned less frequently: - Empathy - Communication - Excellent teams - Communal work, collective - Getting the best out of employees - Moral integrity	Mentioned very frequently: - First-class research - Top quality Mentioned frequently: - Excellent teaching - Ranking - Finding the best solutions Mentioned less frequently: - Professionalisation - Working conditions

Excellence is the only value that was also given a negative connotation by participants. The number in brackets (x) shows how often these statements were mentioned in the following sense:
- Empty words, negative connotation, buzzword, meaningless (5)
- Elitism, vanity, arrogance (5)
- Unclear what is meant by it, no value (5)
- Overrated (4)
- Be better than others - focus on individual instead of cooperation (3)
- Excellence as bondage to superiors (2)
- Triggers stress and rivalry (2)
- Strong focus on performance, quantity instead of quality (2)
- High expectations, strong pressure, little room for error (2)
- Excellence stands for "more and more, faster and faster", at the expense of relevance (1)
- Sets bar too high, rather: "Best practices" (1)
- Power, greed, shortcomings – average not good enough (1)

Positive examples

This part of the survey asked for participants' specific experience of positive examples of ETH values. The wording of the question was: **What positive examples of ETH's values have you witnessed around you at ETH?**

Interior-Individual (Intentional)	Exterior-Individual (Behavioural)
Mentioned frequently: - Open attitude - Personal responsibility - Freedom Mentioned less frequently: - Self-realisation - Openness to criticism - Strong willingness to learn - Development opportunities	
Interior-Collective (Cultural)	**Exterior-Collective (Social)**
Mentioned very frequently: - Team spirit - Mutual support Mentioned frequently: - Warm welcome on starting job - Respectful treatment - Working together - International diversity - Open exchange - Great supervisors, lead well, allow freedom - Childcare during lockdown offered as working time - Solidarity and support during the exceptional coronavirus situation - Trust in others - Appreciation Mentioned less frequently: - Humanity - Admitting to errors - Communicating results to the population - Diversity in the Executive Board - You culture - More female appointments	Mentioned frequently: - Quality of research - Quality of teaching - Mentioned less frequently: - Transparent dismissal of a professor - Future-oriented - Open work results - Diversity of content at work - Climate protection - Rapid changeover and support for working from home - Support instruments for junior staff - Good infrastructure

Negative examples

This part of the survey asked for participants' specific experience of negative examples of ETH values. The wording of the question was: **What negative examples of ETH's values have you witnessed around you at ETH?**

Interior-Individual (Intentional)	Exterior-Individual (Behavioural)
Mentioned very frequently: - Egotism, narcissism, celebrity status, know-it-all, elbow mentality, me first, ensuring one's own security and success. Mentioned less frequently: - Poor critical faculties	
Interior-Collective (Cultural)	**Exterior-Collective (Social)**
Mentioned very frequently: - Lack of team spirit and cooperation Mentioned frequently: - Discrimination and lack of respect for women - "Dog-eat-dog" thinking - Bullying - Many positions filled by white males - Students are mainly white, male, European, upper middle class - Psychological stress at work - Lack of leadership responsibility - Toleration of mistakes by leaders - Abuse of power, lack of appreciation, work refusal on the part of professors - Hierarchical thinking - Noticeable discrediting of less educated people (technical and non-academic staff) Mentioned less frequently: - Too little cultural diversity/acceptance - Not enough promotion of minorities (except women) - Gossiping/spreading personal information - Sexual harassment - Losing too much time on discussion when making decisions	Mentioned frequently: - Bureaucratic inertia, cumbersome processes - Lack of transparency regarding salaries and job appointments Mentioned less frequently: - Overdependency on donors - Lack of sustainability (e.g. too much meat)

Suggestions for values

In this question participants were asked to suggest additional values they think are essential for ETH's future success.

The following values attracted the highest scores:
- Respect (27)
- Trust (23)
- Sustainability (23)
- Integrity (21)
- Equality (18)
- Transparency (16)
- Appreciation (13)
- Fairness (12)
- Honesty (11)
- Culture of error tolerance (10)
- Humanity (9)

The following chart shows an overview of the results for the multiple and single mentions.

Suggestions for more ETH values in future

Value	Count
Respect	27
Trust	23
Sustainability	23
Integrity	21
Gender equality	18
Transparency	16
Appreciation	13
Fairness	12
Honesty	11
Culture of error tolerance	10
Humanity	9
Creativity	7
Communication	7
Tolerance	6
Responsibility	5
Independence	5
Interdisciplinarity	5
Innovation	5
Collaboration	4
Solidarity	4
Curiosity	4
Fairness	4
Freedom	4
Ethics	4
Democracy	4
Modesty	4
Reliability	3
Quality	3
Professionalism	3
Commitment	3
Empathy	3
Diversity	3
Equal opportunities	3
Pioneer	2
Diversity	2
Unbureaucratic	2
Thoughtfulness	2
Proactivity	2
Compassion	2
Ability to learn	2
Critical faculties	2
Impact	2
Equal opportunities for all	2
Flexibility	2
Feedback culture	2
Emotional intelligence	2
Humility	2
Awareness	2
Adaptability	2
Agility	2

Suggested values: mentioned once:

- Ability to deal with conflict
- Acceptance
- Advancement of women
- Alignment with the needs of Switzerland
- Altruism
- Authenticity
- Autonomy
- Bold policies
- Collegiality
- Common sense
- Community
- Confidence
- Consistency
- Corporate identity
- Creative freedom
- Cultural sensitivity
- Dedication
- Dialogue
- Diligence
- Diversity (more than just gender)
- Down-to-earth attitude
- Enjoyment
- Excellent education
- Federal/Swiss
- Foresight
- Free, discussion-oriented science
- Freedom of speech
- Friendliness
- Fun
- Gender equality
- Global "we" feeling slightly lacking
- Goal-driven
- Good management of faculty institutes
- Human Rights
- Humour
- Identity
- Impartiality
- Inclusion of students in the development of teaching
- Inspiration
- Interdisciplinary cooperation
- Kindness
- Leadership qualities
- Local roots - image
- Loyalty
- Mental health
- Mentorship
- Meritocracy especially in the tech/admin area
- Moderation
- Modernity
- Motivation
- Mutual support
- Neutrality
- No arrogance
- No hierarchical thinking
- Objectivity
- Openness
- Participation
- Pedagogy
- People and their needs
- Performance
- Personal competence
- Personality
- Pride
- Professional/social skills
- Put the scientific method first!
- Reason
- Recognition
- Relevance
- Reproducibility of data
- Respect for life
- Self-criticism
- Selflessness
- Self-reflection
- Sense of loyalty to ETH
- Sense of tradition
- Sharing
- Solidity
- Solution-oriented
- Speed
- Staying up to date
- Strength
- Support for new areas
- Support for private lecturers
- Team spirit
- Togetherness
- Truthfulness
- Well-being
- Work-life balance

Annex 1: ETH Charter

ETH Charter: values

Responsibility
Our behaviour is dictated by integrity, mutual respect and consideration of people and the environment. We handle the major challenges of our time with a culture of critical thinking and a constant search for sustainable solutions.

Openness
We are open to new ideas, talent and partnerships, with an emphasis on transparency both internally and externally. Active participation is an essential feature of the decision-making process, and helps to establish a sense of identity. Students, researchers and employees have equal rights in this regard.

Diversity
Our success is based on a broad spectrum of talented individuals who develop and implement courageous, creative ideas. We see diversity in all aspects as an opportunity. Our global orientation and intensive exchange with society and across subject areas contribute significantly to the development of new research questions and teaching.

Team spirit
We resolve complex issues in complementary teams with a multidisciplinary and cross-functional approach. We are committed to ETH and maintain a culture of cooperation, mutual appreciation and learning from one another.

Excellence
We strive to achieve excellence in all our activities. Our members – students, researchers and employees – shape our university and society through the quality of their contributions.

ETH-Charta: Werte

Verantwortung

Integrität, gegenseitiger Respekt sowie die Achtung von Mensch und Umwelt sind die Grundlagen unseres Handelns und die Entsprechung unserer Freiheit in Lehre und Forschung. Aufbauend auf einer Kultur des kritischen Denkens und dem stetigen Streben nach nachhaltigen Lösungen setzen wir uns mit den grossen Herausforderungen unserer Zeit auseinander.

Offenheit

Wir sind offen für neue Ideen, Talente und Partnerschaften. Dabei legen wir Wert auf Transparenz nach innen und aussen. Mitwirkung ist ein wesentliches Merkmal der Entscheidungsfindung und wirkt identitätsstiftend. Studierende, Forschende und Mitarbeitende sind dabei gleichberechtigt. Wir sind bekannt als Ort der freien Meinungsäusserung und offenen Debatte.

Vielfalt

Unser Erfolg beruht auf dem grossen Spektrum an Talenten, die kreativ mutige Ideen entwickeln und Lösungen umsetzen. Wir begreifen Diversität in allen Aspekten als Chance. Unsere globale Ausrichtung sowie der intensive Austausch mit der Gesellschaft und über Fachgrenzen hinweg tragen wesentlich zur Entwicklung neuer Forschungsfragen und der Lehre bei.

Teamgeist

Komplexe Fragestellungen lösen wir disziplinen- und funktionsübergreifend in komplementären Teams. Wir engagieren uns für die ETH und pflegen unsere Kultur des Miteinanders, der gegenseitigen Wertschätzung und des Voneinander-Lernens.

Exzellenz

Wir streben in all unseren Tätigkeiten nach Exzellenz. Unsere Studierenden, Forschenden und Mitarbeitenden prägen durch die Qualität ihrer Beiträge unsere Hochschule sowie die Gesellschaft.