



The Leading House VPET-ECON, a research center on the Economics of Education, Firm Behavior and Training Policies, located at the Universities of Zurich and Bern, offers a training program for beginning doctoral students in Economics of Education. The program is similar to the first part of a PhD-program of a top university in the US.

The Leading House is funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). It is directed by Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Uschi Backes-Göllner (University of Zurich) and Prof. Dr. Stefan C. Wolter (University of Bern).

The course program for doctoral students consists of four core courses and a variety of electives. The courses are usually taught as one-week intensive courses to make it possible for doctoral students from other universities to participate in the program. The courses are taught by distinguished faculty

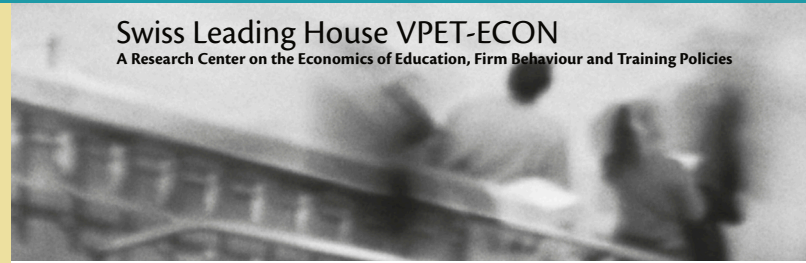
members of leading research universities. The core program should be completed within one year, electives within two years. Participants who pass all core courses receive a document certifying participation in the core Economics of Education Program. Participation in only one or a selected sample of core or elective courses is possible upon request. For single courses students earn 3 ECTS per course but no Economics of Education Program certificate will be issued. All courses include mandatory exams and/or presentations.

Target Group We aim at beginning doctoral students in Economics of Education who hold a university degree in economics, business economics or related fields. Students must be enrolled in a doctoral program of a Swiss university or of a European research university (acceptance depending on vacant positions). The program is intended to bring together an international group of students with a joint interest in Economics of Education.

Participants of the previous 8 course programs came from more than 50 European research institutions. For more information see: <https://t.uzh.ch/1SB>

Program Details The program starts in spring 2026 with two core courses: “Econometric Methods in Economics of Education” (March 23 – 27, 2026, Prof. Ruhose, Kiel University) and “Personnel and Labor Economics for Education Economists” (April 27 – 30, 2026, Prof. Eriksson and Prof. Frederiksen, Aarhus University). In summer and fall 2026, two more core courses follow, one on “Foundations of the Economics of Education: Educational Production” (June 22 – 25, 2026, Prof. Woessmann, University of Munich and ifo Institute) and “Apprenticeship Training Institutions and Markets” (September 28 – October 2, 2026, Prof. Muehleemann, LMU Munich; and others). Courses include formal lectures of six hours per day. The remaining time should be reserved for reading and exercises.

Usually, classes are taught in English and held on site at the premises of the University of Zurich. Electives are offered every semester. Examples of previous and upcoming Electives are: “Randomized Experiments in Economics of Education” (Prof. Bettinger, Stanford University), “Handling Administrative Data in Education Economics: State of the Art Applications, Topics and Research Innovations” (Prof. Bütikofer, Norwegian School of Economics), “Personality, Economic Preferences, Skills and Education” (Prof. Dohmen, University of Bonn) and “Natural Experiments for Causality Analysis in Economics of Education” (Prof. Webbink, Erasmus University). For more information see: <https://t.uzh.ch/1SC>



9th Course Program for Doctoral Students in Economics of Education

Application Applicants with an excellent academic record and a Master or a very good Bachelor Degree (in a Fast-Track Doctoral Program) are welcome. A good command of quantitative methods is helpful. The language of the program is English. A good command of English is a prerequisite.

Applications should be sent as pdf to backes-gellner@business.uzh.ch (upon admission, applicants will have to provide original documents by regular mail). They should include a CV, a short statement of purpose (ca. two pages, in English) and recent grade transcripts. Also, the application requires a letter of recommendation to be sent to the email address above directly by the professor providing the reference (typically the PhD supervisor).

Fees No fee is charged for the courses. However, participants have to cover travel costs and living expenses by themselves. For candidates undergoing financial hardship a small number of modest travel grants is available (detailed explanations and documents have to be provided with an application).

Application deadline is
December 16, 2025

Candidates will be notified by
January 16, 2025

For more information contact

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For more information see: www.economics-of-education.ch

Leading House VPET-ECON
A Research Program of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
Program Directors: Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Uschi Backes-Gellner, Prof. Dr. Stefan C. Wolter



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