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 Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich  
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Section: Campus Life

Award of the first SiROP Certificates

## Research is cool

([nst](#)) Since July 2003 "SiROP" ([1](#)) – an initiative by ETH students to allow students an early chance of contact to "real" research on a voluntary basis – has the status of an association. In the meantime SiROP, following a long-running practice at US universities, has won the support of the ETH Executive Board and "ETH World". Within the framework of "ETH World" a parttime (50%) position has been created for a trial period to help administer the growing program. Last Tuesday SiROP leaders presented its first dozen certificates to successful participants of SiROP Research Work Placement Projects. Thirteen further projects are currently running.

### 3,000 research hours

The program targets nimble and keen students who have the temporal and mental resources to cope with research in addition to their regular course of studies. "Students don't usually have any contact with "real" research until the later, diploma stage of their studies", says SiROP president, Pascal Kaufmann, "and we want to change this." SiROP functions as a broker between students and heads of research projects.

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Successful early researcher: student Judith Zaugg presents her successfully concluded SiROP project: "Survival of pathogenic bacteria in phagocytic host cells".

Essentially, SiROP is an online platform where ETH-institutes can advertise suitable research projects. Students who are interested in any of the announcements can apply online. And interest is high. According to SiROP's statistics, 75 applications arrived for 35 projects that were announced. Payment is possible, but not mandatory. To date SiROP has generated a total of 3,500 additional research hours. The projects currently running will generate a further 6,700 hours.



In the footsteps of a role model: The SiROP team and Nobel laureate, Richard Ernst. [large](#)

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## Support from a Nobel laureate

Another person fully convinced of the merit of the initiative is Richard Ernst, ETH Professor for Physical Chemistry, who was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1991. "I dreamt about such a possibility for years," he said at the SiROP event and held up a picture carrying the slogan "Research is cool." He goes on to say, "This is what we need: students who are motivated by and have a passion for research – everything else follows of its own accord." Learning exclusively in the lecture room does not automatically lead to the acquirement of life skills. Learning by doing and trial and error are simple, but nevertheless efficient and true recipes, to get on. Not only in science but for life in general.

### References:

- Cf. ETH Life report: "Studierende früher in die Forschung" of 20.11.2002: [www.ethlife.ethz.ch/articles/siropdeutsch.html](http://www.ethlife.ethz.ch/articles/siropdeutsch.html)

### Footnotes:

- (1) The acronym stands for Student Research Opportunities Program: [www.sirop.ethz.ch](http://www.sirop.ethz.ch)

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