The Direction of the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, based on Art. 1, par. 3, of the Ordinance of 26 January 1998 on the doctorate conferred by the EPFL\(^1\), hereby adopts the following:

**Article 1** Sphere of application

1 The present directive stipulates the terms and conditions applicable to doctoral studies in accordance with the Ordinance on the doctorate conferred by the EPFL (hereinafter referred to as the Ordinance).

2 The administrative procedures are laid out in the *Internal Regulations of the Doctoral School*.

**Section 1** Doctoral programs (Art.3 of the Ordinance)

**Article 2** Structure

1 The Vice-President for Education appoints the members of the Doctoral Program Committee (hereinafter the Program Committee) and the Director of the Doctoral Program (hereinafter the Program Director) for a renewable term of three years, on the proposal of the laboratories or chairs participating in the program.

2 In addition to his tasks and competencies as defined by the Ordinance and the present directive, the Program Director:
   1. supervises the program for which he is responsible and is answerable for its correct functioning;
   2. ensures, in collaboration with the Vice-President for Education, the promotion of the program;
   3. represents the program vis-à-vis the Vice-President for Education, the Directors of other EPFL doctoral programs, and other teaching and research institutes.
   4. participates in meetings of the Doctoral School Committee attended by the Vice-President for Education, all the Program Directors, and between one and six delegates of the doctoral students.

3 The Program Committee is composed of between three and twelve members, at least half of whom are professors or senior scientists (*maîtres d’enseignement et de recherche*) at EPFL. With the exception of the doctoral student representatives, the remaining members hold doctoral degrees. The Program Director may request special dispensations in individual cases with regard to the latter condition from the Vice-President for Education.

4 The Program Committee:
   1. organizes and endorses the program’s courses;
   2. makes recommendations to the Program Director concerning applications for doctoral studies and, where applicable, the conditions applicable for admission in particular cases (Art. 5 par. 5 of the Ordinance);
   3. endorses the program’s study plans and candidacy examination in its study rules and regulations;

\(^1\) [http://www.admin.ch/ch/f/rs/c414_133_2.html](http://www.admin.ch/ch/f/rs/c414_133_2.html)
4. advises the Program Director regarding the acceptance of a research plan, evaluation of thesis progress reports and possible exclusion (Art. 8 par. 1 and Art. 10 par. 3 and 4 of the Ordinance);

5. establishes a mentoring (parrainage) system offering guidance to doctoral students in the resolution of any difficulties relating to their training, especially the preparation of their thesis or in cases of conflict;

6. assists the Program Director in the resolution of conflicts. In cases where the latter is involved personally, he will designate a deputy.

Section 2  Admission to doctoral studies, enrolment

Article 3  Application for admission to a program (Art. 5 of the Ordinance)

1 In order to be admitted to doctoral studies, the applicant must first apply to an EPFL doctoral program.

2 Applications are dealt with according to the deadlines established by each Doctoral Program. Nevertheless the Program Committee may decide in individual cases to consider applications that do not comply with these deadlines.

3 Letters of recommendation are treated confidentially, including with respect to the applicant, in accordance with the waiver agreed to by the latter.

4 Admission to a Doctoral Program remains valid for one year, during which time the candidate must be enrolled by the Registrar’s Office. Once this period has expired, the candidate must re-apply to the Doctoral Program.

Article 4  Study plan (Art. 3 par. 3 of the Ordinance)

1 Each Doctoral Program stipulates the number of ECTS credits required and, where applicable, the courses that are obligatory in its study rules and regulations. The study rules and regulations require a minimum of 12 credits and a maximum of 30 credits.

2 In order to attend and successfully complete a doctoral study program, candidates must acquire the number of credits required by the rules and regulations of their Doctoral Program as follows:

1. at least 4 credits during the first year of doctoral study;
2. the remaining credits before the oral thesis examination.

3 The choice of courses is made in collaboration with the Thesis Director and in accordance with the study rules and regulations. The chosen courses must entail the acquisition of new skills.

4 A candidate may request the approval of the Program Committee for courses taken outside EPFL during his doctoral studies. Where no evaluation has been undertaken to validate the credits, the Committee organizes the necessary evaluation at EPFL.

Article 5  Courses

1 The program’s courses are the subject of an evaluation. The form of evaluation (oral or written examination, report and presentation, etc.) is determined by the instructor and announced at the beginning of the course.

2 The evaluation is graded as: R for pass, E for fail, M for previously notified absence, NA for non-notified absence, or by marks (in accordance with the Ordinance on the Evaluation of Bachelor and Master Studies at EPFL2).

3 The evaluation takes place within the four weeks following the end of the course. In case of failure, the candidate is granted a second and final chance to sit the examination in accordance with the conditions stipulated in his particular case.

2http://polylex.epfl.ch/files/content/sites/polylex/files/recueil_pdf/ENG/2.6.0.1_o_rs414.132.2_evaluation_bachelor_master_epfl_en.pdf
Section 3  Admission for preparation of thesis, thesis direction

Article 6  Choice of Thesis Director (Art. 10 of the Ordinance)

1. All EPFL theses are supervised by a Thesis Director, based at EPFL. At the time the Thesis Director is chosen, the likelihood must exist that the latter will continue to be based at EPFL for the duration of the thesis, i.e. for at least four years. The Program Director and the Registrar’s Office ensure that this condition is respected.

2. The candidate is accorded one year as from his enrolment to obtain the agreement of an EPFL professor or senior scientist (maître d'enseignement et de recherche) to assume the role of Thesis Director. Prior to the obtaining of this agreement, the Program Director is responsible for the supervision of the doctoral student.

3. On the advice of the Program Committee, the Vice-President for Education may authorize the doctoral student to change his Thesis Director and/or doctoral program insofar as the doctoral student has been admitted to the new doctoral program.

Article 7  Co-direction (Art 10 par. 2 of the Ordinance)

Authorization for the co-direction of a thesis must be requested from the Vice-President for Education by the Program Committee.

Article 8  Admission for preparation of thesis (Art. 8 of the Ordinance)

1. If one of the conditions for admission to the preparation of the thesis stipulated in Art 8 par.1, points b and c of the Ordinance are not fulfilled within the 12 months following enrolment, the Program Committee and Thesis Director review the doctoral student's situation.

2. Where applicable, the Program Director notifies the doctoral student of the conditions that he must fulfil in order to rectify the situation within the 15 months following his enrolment, or proposes to the Vice-President for Education that the candidate's admission should be definitively refused. As soon as this has been approved by the Vice-President for Education, the candidate is notified of the definitive refusal of admission.

Section 4  Preparation and writing of thesis

Article 9  Off-site doctorates (Art. 11 par. 2 of the Ordinance)

A doctoral thesis may be prepared partly or entirely off the EPFL site when circumstances justify it (for example, if the necessary facilities are not available on the campus). To this end, the Program Director ensures, before the thesis research begins, that the following conditions are satisfied:

1. The Thesis Director has obtained guarantees from the host institution or company that it will furnish the doctoral student with the means required to carry out his thesis research, without impeding the prerogatives of the Thesis Director in the supervision of the thesis and without impeding the doctoral training of the doctoral student;

2. The publication and distribution of the thesis in its entirety is ensured;

3. Funding is ensured for the duration of the thesis by EPFL and the host institution or company.
Article 10  Duration (Art. 9 par. 2 of the Ordinance)
Duly justified requests for an extension of the planned deadline for completion of the thesis (Art.9 par. 2 of the Ordinance) must be submitted by the Thesis Director, in writing, to the Vice-President for Education and with the Program Director’s prior recommendation.

Article 11  Obligations of doctoral student
1. The compatibility between the doctoral student’s training with any duties he may have as assistant in an institute is managed jointly between the Program Director and the Director of the institute. In case of disagreement, they refer to the Vice-President for Education;
2. The compatibility between the doctoral student’s training and his teaching responsibilities within an EPFL section is managed jointly between the Program Director and the Section Director. In case of disagreement, they refer to the Vice-President for Education;
3. Should the doctoral student decide to discontinue his thesis preparation, he informs his Thesis Director, the Program Director and the Registrar’s Office in writing and without delay;
4. The doctoral student informs the Registrar’s Office of any changes concerning his personal data. Any omission or modification resulting in corrections to the doctoral diploma will be payable by the doctoral student.

Article 12  Role of Thesis Director (Art. 10 of the Ordinance)
1 The Thesis Director guides the doctoral student in his work. He ensures the smooth progress of the thesis.
2 Should the work or the progress of the doctoral student be unsatisfactory, and in particular if the Thesis Director’s annual report indicates that the doctoral student has failed to fulfill his obligations, the Program Director and the Thesis Director discuss the candidate’s situation. The Program Director then notifies the doctoral student in writing of the problems discerned, the measures required to improve the situation, and the deadline within which these must be taken (Art. 10 par. 4, point a of the Ordinance).
3 In the case referred to in Art. 10 par. 4 point a of the Ordinance, the Thesis Director submits his proposal to exclude the doctoral student, signed by the Program Director, to the Vice-President for Education who subsequently notifies the doctoral student of this decision.

Article 13  The thesis
In preparation for the oral examination and in agreement with the Thesis Director, the doctoral student presents and submits the thesis in accordance with the Internal Regulations of the Doctoral School.

Article 14  Submission of thesis
The thesis must be submitted at least 35 days before the date of the oral examination.

Section 5  Oral thesis examination

Article 15  Registration
Before registering for the oral examination, the candidate must pay a fee of CHF 1,200 (in accordance with Annex 1 of the *Ordonnance sur les taxes perçues dans le domaine des EPF*). The oral examination cannot take place until this fee has been paid.

**Article 16  Role of Vice-President for Education**

On the proposal of the Thesis Director and the Program Director, the Vice-President for Education:

1. appoints the jury (Art. 14 of the Ordinance);
2. notifies the jury and the candidate of the date, place and time of the oral examination;
3. invites the Thesis Director and the examiners to send their reports at least ten days before the oral examination to the president of the jury.

**Article 17  Role of the jury (Art. 15 of the Ordinance)**

1. The Thesis Director and the examiners evaluate the scientific value of the work according to the:
   1. originality and quality of the thesis;
   2. presentation;
   3. value of the results.
2. They send their signed reports to the president of the jury at least ten days before the oral examination, specifying whether the thesis can be accepted unconditionally, accepted conditionally, or if it should be rejected. If necessary, they stipulate the conditions for unconditional acceptance, and the presentation of the final version.
3. These reports are confidential and are sent only to the president of the jury. They may be given to the other members of the jury only at the time of the examination; they must however be returned to the president of the jury at the conclusion of the examination, in order to guarantee their confidentiality.

**Article 18  Procedure for oral thesis examination**

1. The jury examines the candidate in accordance with Art. 15 par. 2 of the Ordinance.
2. The examination is not public. It takes place at EPFL. Faculty members may attend and may consult the thesis at the Registrar's Office. They are nevertheless required to respect the confidential nature of the examination and do not question the candidate.
3. The duration of the examination is not defined, but is on average two hours.
4. An oral examination via videoconference is admissible for one of the examiners. Should another examiner be prevented from attending the examination as a result of unforeseen circumstances of a serious nature, the Dean may on this particular occasion authorize the videoconference for two examiners. Oral examination via teleconference is not accepted.

**Article 19  Payment of jury members’ expenses**

1. Transport, accommodation and meal costs are reimbursed to jury members who are not members of the EPF Domain.
2. The reimbursement is carried out in accordance with the Directive concerning professional travel and the reimbursement of expenses.

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3 http://www.admin.ch/ch/f/rs/c414_131_7.html
4 Amendment of 25 June 2012 that came into force on 1 July 2012 (version 1.3)
5 Amendment of 19 December 2011 that came into force on 1 January 2012 (version 1.2).
6 http://polylex.epfl.ch/files/content/sites/polylex/files/recueil_pdf/ENG/5.6.1_dir_voyage_professionnel_remboursement_frais_en.pdf
Section 6 Public defense

Article 20 Invitation and notification
1 The Program Director invites the jury members to the public defense.
2 The Registrar’s Office publishes the announcement of the public defense through whichever channels it considers appropriate.

Article 21 Procedure (Art. 16 par. 2 and 3 of the Ordinance)
1 The doctoral candidate defends his thesis at EPFL in a public defense presided over by the Thesis Director. The candidate’s presentation, lasting approximately 45 minutes, is followed by a discussion. The presence of the other jury members is not obligatory.
2 The public defense is held in one of the official Swiss languages or in English.
3 The public defense must take place at least four weeks and no more than six months after the oral thesis examination.

Section 7 Printing and distribution of thesis

Article 22 Final version
1 The Thesis Director, taking into account any conditions imposed by the jury and appearing in the official record, ensures that the final version of the thesis is correctly completed. He gives the authorization for the distribution of the thesis.
2 The original of the final version must be deposited at the Registrar’s Office prior to the public defense of the thesis and one month at the latest after the unconditional acceptance (“without reserve”) of the thesis. Failing this, it is considered as having been conditionally accepted (“with reserve”). Justified requests for an extension of the deadline must be addressed to the Vice-President for Education.

Article 23 Printing and distribution
The thesis is printed and distributed in accordance with the Internal Regulations of the Doctoral School.

Article 24 The diploma (Art. 16 par. 4 and Art. 18 of the Ordinance)
1 The diploma is presented to the candidate at the conclusion of the public defense of the thesis, providing that all the conditions concerning the printing and distribution of the thesis in the correct manner (according to Art. 23) have been fulfilled.
2 In the case of co-direction of a thesis, the diploma bears the signature of both Thesis Directors.

Article 25 Publication of thesis (Art. 19 of the Ordinance)
1 Neither the author nor his Thesis Director has the right to delay the printing of the doctoral thesis.
2 The public release of the thesis may only be postponed for the time necessary for the prompt filing of a patent. As soon as the application for the patent has been filed (as referred to in Art. 49 of the Loi sur le brevet d’invention), the thesis must be released.
3 Before embarking on a thesis, the candidate and his Thesis Director must ensure that nothing will prevent the public release of the thesis.

Section 8 Final provisions

Article 26 Coming into force

The present directive, which came into force on 21 November 2005, was revised on 1 September 2008 (version 1.1) and on 1 January 2012 (version 1.2), status as at 1 July 2012 (version 1.3), status as at 1 January 2017 (version 1.4).

On behalf of the EPFL Direction:

President:  Patrick Aebischer
General Counsel:  Susan Killias