

Rules and Regulations Concerning EPFL Tenure-Track Assistant Professors

LEX 4.2.1

4th May 2004, status as at 1st January 2025

The Direction of the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne,

based on Articles 7, 9 and 10 of the *Ordonnance du Conseil des EPF sur le corps professoral des écoles polytechniques fédérales* of 18th September 2003 ([RS 172.220.113.40](#)),
based on Art. 3 § 1 letter a of the *Ordonnance du Conseil des EPF sur les écoles polytechniques fédérales de Zurich et de Lausanne* of 13th November 2003 ([RS 414.110.37](#)),

hereby adopts the following:

Section 1 Goal and scope of application

Article 1 Scope of application

¹ “Tenure-track” assistant professor (hereafter “PATT”) positions aim to promote academic recruitments and are reserved for top-ranking young scientists at international level who have the potential to successfully pursue a professor career.

² These Rules and Regulations set the framework conditions governing the status of PATTs at EPFL with a view to appointment as associate professor, or even full professor.

Article 2 Definition

¹ “Tenure track” is the right for assistant professors to have their performance evaluated for possible promotion to associate professor or, in exceptional cases, to full professor. There is no legal entitlement to such appointments.

² PATTs enjoy the same academic freedom as associate and full professors, in particular as far as research and the management of their groups are concerned.

³ They assume teaching responsibilities at EPFL.

Section 2 Evaluation: parties involved and their roles

Article 3 “Tenure track” assistant professors

¹ Decide whether to seek advice from a mentor.

² Prepare their candidature file (including teaching file).

³ Produce an annual report (updated CV, activities from the past year and objectives), and request their annual interview with the Dean¹.

⁴ Decide whether to request early tenure.

⁵ May decide not to submit a candidature for promotion.

⁶ May withdraw their candidature at any time.

¹ The term ‘Dean’ also refers to ‘College Directors’.

Article 4 School² Deans

¹ The Dean is the primary contact person for the PATT and the person that receives the PATT's candidature. In due course, they submit the full candidature, the findings of the evaluation of the PATT's performance by the School's Committee of Academic Evaluation (hereafter CEA) and their recommendation as Dean of the School to the EPFL CEA.

² Guarantee correct implementation of the academic evaluation process.

³ Regularly (approximately once a year) conduct interviews with the PATT based on the annual activity report submitted. They will then transmit written feedback to the PATT which will be kept in the School's internal documents.

⁴ During the fourth year, the Dean organises a formal mid-term review with the Director of the Institute concerned (or delegates the organisation thereof to the aforementioned Director). See Article 8 for terms.

⁵ Guarantee that PATTs are assigned teaching duties, specifically at the foundation year or Bachelor level, quantitatively sufficient to allow the evaluation of their research and teaching capabilities.

Article 5 School CEAs³

The School Committee of Academic Evaluation (CEA) :

1. interviews the candidate, makes an in-depth evaluation of the candidature and submits its opinion to the School Dean;
2. develops a performance comparison at international level, including bibliometrics, with respect to other professors working in the same domain or in a similar field;
3. requests letters of recommendation (approximately 6) from well-known persons in the domain concerned. Half of these must be from persons with verified impartiality in relation to the candidate;
4. consults appropriate internal experts, particularly the Director of the Institute and/or the Section of the doctoral school to which the candidate is affiliated;
5. organises an indicative anonymous vote by the associate and full professors of the candidate's main School, Institute or Section.

Article 6 EPFL CEA

¹ The EPFL CEA guarantees the adoption of standards of excellence at international level and coherence within EPFL. The Vice President for Academic Affairs appoints this committee. It includes a maximum of 18 persons and a President, and is composed of EPFL full professors and external experts, appointed for a tacitly renewable 4-year term.

² Examines the Dean's recommendation and the School CEA's opinion, evaluates the candidature, requests and examines any information it considers relevant. If necessary, it may request the School to complement the file.

³ On an ad hoc basis and subject to the Vice President for Academic Affairs' authorisation, may enlist an external non-voting member in the candidate's field.

⁴ May interview the candidate.

⁵ Submits its confidential recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

² The term "School" also refers to EPFL "Colleges"

³ The School CEA is defined in the "*Règlement d'organisation des Facultés de l'EPFL*" (LEX 1.2.9)

Article 6^{bis} The Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Vice President for Academic Affairs examines the files submitted by the EPFL CEA and forwards them to the EPFL President with their recommendation.

Article 7 EPFL President

After consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and with the EPFL Direction, the EPFL President decides whether or not to submit a proposal for appointment as associate professor (or exceptionally as full professor) to the ETH Board.

Section 3 Evaluation process

A. Mid-term review

Article 8 Mid-term Review

¹ At the end of their third year, the PATT submits to the Dean a written mid-term report which reflects the format of the application for tenure (see appendix).

² During the fourth year, the Dean organises a formal mid-term review with the Director of the Institute concerned (or delegates the organisation thereof to this Director) and if necessary (in the case where there are no internal experts in the relevant field), with one or more external experts (who will be figures of reference in the candidate's field), and produces a written report for the attention of the PATT and the Dean.

³ The expert is invited to visit the candidate's laboratory, to meet their doctoral students and to listen to the candidate during a presentation of their activities within the context of a private conference including the Dean, the Director of the Institute and any professors who are experts in the field. An interview will then be held in the form of an open discussion with the PATT in order to allow them to establish themselves.

⁴ Finally, the Dean (or the Director of the Institute) will write an evaluation of the PATT's performance which should enable the PATT to identify possible weaknesses and give their advice for improvement. This mid-term review is in no way intended as a manner of predicting the chances of final success for tenure and will not form part of the application file for appointment as an associate or full professor.

⁵ The mid-term review process is concluded with a discussion between the Dean (and / or Director of the Institute) and the PATT.

B. Final review

Article 9 The candidate

¹ Candidates submit a candidature file to the School Dean to be considered for tenure following the rules established by the EPFL CEA. They submit their file at the end of the sixth year of their appointment as PATT at the latest. Non-compliance with this deadline is equivalent to a negative result of the candidature.

² The teaching file is part of the overall candidature file. The candidate decides when the in-depth evaluation will take place and contacts the Teaching Support Center (hereafter CAPE) sufficiently in advance to obtain the detailed teaching evaluation.

³ It falls to the PATT to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the necessary criteria of the evaluation in terms of research, teaching and training.

Article 10 The School

¹ When the Dean receives a candidature file, they check that it is complete and forward it to the School CEA, requesting its opinion.

² The members of the School CEA meet to discuss and evaluate the file. They will create a list of internationally recognised experts in the PATT's field of study from whom they will request reference letters. The School CEA will transmit its opinion to the Dean.

³ The Dean draws up their recommendation for the Vice President for Academic Affairs. They submit this and the School CEA's opinion to the EPFL CEA, with copies to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In parallel, the Dean presents orally to the candidate a summary of the recommendation made to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

⁴ As a general rule, the School should transmit the results of its evaluation to the EPFL CEA within four to five months following submission of the candidature.

Article 11 EPFL CEA

¹ The EPFL CEA may interview the candidate, with any persons it deems appropriate and seek additional reference letters. It may request that the School complement the file.

² The EPFL CEA presents, normally within three months of receiving the complete file, a written and motivated recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs to accept or reject the application for promotion and tenure. The Vice President for Academic Affairs may, in exceptional cases, request additional recommendation letters and ask the School for additional information. In such cases, they may also interview the candidate.

³ The candidate and the Dean of the School are informed when the file is sent to the EPFL President.

Article 12 EPFL President

¹ After consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and consultation with the EPFL Direction, the EPFL President decides whether or not to submit a nomination proposal to the ETH Board, generally within three months of receipt of the EPFL CEA's recommendation. The candidate and the School Dean are informed.

² The EPFL President is empowered, in exceptional cases, to request additional recommendation letters. They may also, in such cases, interview the candidate.

³ If the EPFL President's decision is positive, an offer confirming future terms of employment is made to the candidate. Upon acceptance of the offer by the candidate, the corresponding nomination proposal is submitted to the ETH Board. If the EPFL President decides not to propose the candidate's nomination as associate or full professor, they inform the candidate and the School Dean in writing, including the motivations.

Article 13 Duration

The total duration of the evaluation process should not exceed one year.

Section 4 *Evaluation criteria*

Article 14 Teaching & education

The following criteria apply:

1. quality and importance of teaching activities, evaluation by the students and in-depth evaluation by CAPE;
2. quality of teaching content, quality of teaching material;
3. creativity as far as pedagogical skills and methods are concerned;
4. supervision of practicals or semester projects, Master projects and doctoral theses;
5. participation in activities of general interest specific to the curriculum.

Article 15 Research

The following criteria apply:

1. scientific (or artistic) qualities and creativity, originality;
2. technological innovations and patents;
3. interdisciplinarity;
4. reputation and impact on research activities at international level. Impact of publications (bibliometrics), invited lectures;
5. prizes received;
6. funding received (Swiss National Science Foundation, industrial support, EU, Innosuisse, etc.);
7. collaboration skills (internal & external).

Article 16 Potential

The following criteria apply:

1. candidate's scientific development;
2. development in education;
3. technological development;
4. candidate's vision.

Article 17 Miscellaneous activities

The following criteria apply:

1. participation in activities of general interest to the School and to EPFL;
2. quality of the unit's human and financial resource management;
3. participation in activities serving the scientific community;
4. The impact on society, including in the economic sector (for example, "spin-offs").

Article 18 Criteria weighting

The weighting of evaluation criteria may change between domains. Aspects of creativity, originality and artistic expression are particularly important for certain domains (architecture, humanities, etc.).

Section 5 *Special provisions*

Article 19 Mentoring

The purpose of mentoring is to facilitate the start of the PATTs' activities by giving them the benefit of the experience of a senior colleague. It is encouraged by the Dean and / or the Director of the Institute who participate in setting up mentoring if the PATT confirms their interest.

Article 20 Maternity

In the event of maternity, women professors are automatically granted a one-year extension of their employment and the evaluation deadlines are extended accordingly. They are also freed of their teaching obligations for two semesters.

Article 21 Negative result or withdrawal of the candidature

¹ **Negative result:** if the evaluation process does not lead to an appointment as associate or full professor, the candidature has a negative result. The EPFL President shall inform the candidate of this in writing. Non-compliance with the 6-year deadline stipulated under Art. 9 § 1 is equivalent to a negative result.

² **Renunciation:** the decision by a PATT to withdraw their candidature after the beginning of the evaluation process is equivalent to a formal renunciation. The process is considered as started when the Dean receives the candidature file. The PATT's resignation terminates the evaluation process.

³ Any person whose candidature has a negative result, or is withdrawn during an evaluation process, must terminate employment at the EPFL at the latest at the end of their contract.

⁴ The activity cannot be prolonged beyond the termination date of the contract as PATT. A second evaluation for promotion to associate or full professor is not possible.

Article 22 Protection of information and access to the evaluation file

¹ The candidate's evaluation file is accessible only to the persons involved as experts in the evaluation process. Neither the candidates nor any person acting on their behalf may access the evaluation file.

² Documents containing evaluations or information related to the evaluation of candidates and their performance, and all opinions expressed orally, are strictly confidential. All persons participating in the evaluations are required to guarantee strict confidentiality.

³ The purpose of these measures is to protect the candidate and the quality and reliability of the opinions expressed by the experts and persons evaluating the candidate.

Article 23 Transitional provisions

¹ For persons employed as PATTs for over 18 months upon introduction, on 1 January 2017, of the amendments of 1 December 2016, the Deans are in charge of deciding, in agreement with each PATT concerned, whether or not a mid-term review should be conducted if this stage has been newly introduced into their School.

Section 6 *Final provisions*

Article 24 Entry into force

These Rules and Regulations entered into force on 4th May 2004 and were revised on 15th March 2021 (version 1.7), on 1st March 2023 (version 1.8) and on 1st January 2025 (version 1.9).

On behalf of the EPFL Direction:

President:
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Appendix

PATT evaluations at EPFL: candidature file

A complete file makes it possible to finish the work more effectively and more rapidly. Electronic delivery (DOC or PDF) is required. The following elements must be taken into account while preparing the file.

I – Standard candidate's file

A - Information forwarded to the external experts (in English)

1. Curriculum Vitae.
2. Publication list: (i) Articles in peer reviewed journals, (ii) Reviews, (iii) Books and book chapters, (iv) Other publications such as reports or contributions to proceedings.
3. Invited lectures at international conferences.
4. Prizes and academic honours.
5. Master and doctoral students.
6. Summary of teaching activities.
7. Summary of research activities and main achievements.
8. Funding record.
9. Collaboration with other groups.
10. Innovation, technology transfer, patents.
11. Other professional activities (editorial boards, conference organisation, etc.).
12. Administrative activities.
13. Detailed academic career plan: teaching.
14. Detailed academic career plan: research.
15. Vision about research in the field of activity.
16. Three publications with a summary description of their importance and original character.

B - Information for internal use at EPFL (in French or English)

17. Full teaching file, including in-depth evaluations of several courses given in particular at the foundation year and Bachelor levels and supporting letters from the Section Director and the Director of the Doctoral School (c.f. definition of the teaching file in Article 10 of LEX 2.5.1: [Directive concerning the evaluation and recognition of teaching at the EPFL](#)).
18. Managerial and organisation activities and summary of laboratory management.
19. Experts used as references (normally 6 names with a short description of their status and relation to the candidate).

II – Standard School file

1. Composition of the Committee of evaluation of the School.
2. Description of the standards used by the Committee of evaluation of the School to evaluate the candidate.
3. A detailed discussion justifying the School committee's opinion and Dean's recommendation.
4. A complete candidate's file (see item I).
5. A report of the vote of the PATT's senior colleagues.
6. A complete list of the experts used as references (about 6) by the school, specifying the reasons for their selection. Half of the experts will be selected with no input from the candidate. Within the reference letters in the file, 4-5 should be provided by leaders in the domain with clear independence with respect to the candidate. If an expert is not of high level or not from a top institution, the reason for their selection should be stated.
7. A copy of the letter sent to the experts.
8. The reference letters sent by the experts. If an expert does not respond, the reason should, if possible, be explained.
9. Documents summarising the annual interviews with the School Dean.