

Directive on Teaching Arrangements in Accordance with the Coronavirus Measures (COVID-19 Directive)

7th May 2020, status as at 23rd June 2020

English is not an official language of the Swiss Confederation. This translation is provided for information purposes only and has no legal force.

The Direction of the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, based on Art. 3, para. 1, letter b of the Ordonnance sur l'EPFZ et l'EPFL¹ of 13th November 2003, based on the Ordinance on Measures to Combat the Coronavirus (COVID-19 Ordinance 2)² of 13th March 2020, hereby adopts the following:

Article 1 Purpose and scope

- 1 This directive sets out the teaching and assessment arrangements for the spring 2020 semester and the summer 2020 session for the Special Mathematics Course (CMS), MAN review course, Bachelor's, Master's and PhD programs.
- 2 It also sets out certain arrangements relating to promotion, internships, exchange programs, scholarships and teaching evaluations.

Article 2 Online classes for the CMS, MAN review course, Bachelor's and Master's programs

- 1 All CMS, MAN, Bachelor's and Master's classes that do not require students to attend the EPFL campus in person are taught exclusively online.
- 2 Where possible, practical classes are adapted so that students can attend remotely.
- 3 Practical work, lab sessions and semester projects that do not require physical contact or attendance at the EPFL campus, or that can be adapted to lift these requirements, and were forcibly suspended between 9th and 29th March, may resume. Work must be submitted by the date set by the teacher and agreed by the section. When assessing work, the teacher must take into account time lost due to the interruption.
- 4 The arrangements for in-person practical classes that cannot be adapted as per para. 3 above are set out in Art. 4 below.
- 5 Students must follow the instructions issued by their section and by their teacher, who coordinates with the section.

¹ RS 414.110.37

² RS 818.101.24. The Articles of this Ordonnance which are applicable to EPFL have been modified several times based on the health situation, until its abrogation of 22nd June 2020. It is therefore necessary to refer to the version in force at the relevant time.

Article 3 Master's projects

1 Master's projects in EPFL laboratories, which have been suspended since 16th March 2020, will be allowed to resume starting on 11th May 2020. Students will also be allowed to resume Master's projects with outside institutions, provided this is authorized by the institution in question. The ban on Master's projects outside Switzerland will also be lifted on the same date.

2 Students whose Master's project has been temporarily suspended are granted additional time to submit their dissertation.

3 Master's project defenses that cannot take place in-person at the EPFL campus are held via video conference.

Article 4 Alternative projects for in-person practicals and lab sessions

1 If a student opted to replace a practical or lab session mentioned in Art. 2, para. 4 with participation in the *Hackathon* (<https://covid19.lauzhack.com>), he/she must choose an individual or group project and submit it to the teacher in charge of the project, as designated by the section, for approval.

2 If the teacher and section approve the project, the student must complete it and submit the work to the teacher by the agreed deadline.

3 The number of ECTS credits awarded for Hackathon projects must correspond to the number of credits the student needs, taking into account the limited time available.

4 Project defenses cannot take place in-person on the EPFL campus and are held via video conference.

5 The work is assessed by the teacher in charge of the project, assisted by other teachers if required.

6 If a student does not replace a practical or lab session with an alternative project, or if the proposal or project is not approved as per para. 1 above, he/she will be considered to have withdrawn from the subject in question for the 2020 spring semester.

Article 5 Notice of changes to assessment arrangements

1 If a teacher changes the assessment arrangements for a given class, he/she must notify:

- all students registered for the class
- the section responsible for the class.

The section forwards the information to the Registrar's Office.

2 The teacher must notify the students and the section of any changes by 8th May 2020 at the latest, and retain proof that notice was given.

3 The new arrangements supersede and replace the arrangements set out in the course description.

4 The teacher may give notice of changes to the material that will be assessed, or to the weighting of the assessments in the final grade.

5 Where the format of an exam-session assessment is set in the study plan and course description, it can only be changed with the approval of the Vice President for Education. The teacher must submit the corresponding request to the section by 8th May 2020 at the latest.

Article 6 Mid-term and end-of-semester assessments

1 In-person mid-term assessments are canceled. Teachers may, if they wish, make alternative assessment arrangements.

2 Teachers may, if they wish, replace in-person end-of-semester assessments with alternative assessment arrangements. Failing that, these assessments will take place during the summer exam session.

Article 7 Summer exam session

1 The summer exam session for the 2019-2020 academic year has been rescheduled. Bachelor's, Master's and Special Mathematics Course (CMS) students will take their exams between 3rd and 28th August 2020.

2 Wherever possible, teachers will arrange exam-preparation and study sessions and make additional resources available to students during this period.

3 Students cannot be examined on any material that was added after the semester. Other than project defenses, no assessments may take place before the summer exam session.

4 Students must take the exams in-person. Exceptions to this rule may be approved by the Vice President for Education, provided that the proposed exam arrangements meet the strict integrity criteria.

Article 8 Withdrawal

1 Unless they are taking the MAN review course, students have until 24th July 2020 to withdraw from end-of-semester or exam-session exams.

2 Students will not be allowed to withdraw if they have already taken the end-of-semester assessments.

3 Withdrawing from an exam does not count as an attempt.

4 Students who withdraw from an exam will have the length of their degree program extended by up to one year so they can take the exam the following year.

Article 9 MAN review course assessments

1 Students have until 26th June 2020 to permanently withdraw from the MAN review course without it counting as a fail. Students who exercise this option will be expelled from EPFL and will not be able to re-enroll in a Bachelor's degree program at EPFL.

2 The MAN review course assessments will take place between 29th June and 3rd July 2020.

3 Students will be allowed a second attempt at their first year in the 2020-2021 academic year provided that they take all the MAN review course assessments and do not receive an NA (not acquired) grade on any of them, regardless of the actual grades they receive in the MAN review course assessments.

4 Students receiving one or more NA (not acquired) grades will be permanently excluded from registering for any Bachelor's program at EPFL, in accordance with Art. 22, para. 5 of the *Ordonnance sur le contrôle des études à l'EPFL*.³

Article 10 Arrangements for withdrawals and failing grades for the 2020 summer exam session

General rules:

1 If a student fails one or more spring 2020 semester or summer 2020 session exams, he/she will be granted an additional attempt, subject to paras 2 and 3. The provisions of Art. 8, para. 4 apply *mutatis mutandis* to these exams.

2 An NA (not acquired) grade does not grant an additional attempt.

3 A failing grade is considered to be definitive if the student passes the overall block or group to which the exam belongs.

Additional rules for students attempting the first year for the first time:

4 Students who are not promoted to the second year of their Bachelor's program on their first attempt will not fail out of EPFL. Such students will be allowed to repeat the first year of their program in the 2020-2021 academic year. If a student is not promoted after attempting the first year for the second time, he/she will also not fail the EPFL course. Instead, the student will be allowed to retake the exams mentioned in para. 1 above, and any exams from which he/she has withdrawn as per Art. 8, para. 1, in the 2022 spring semester and summer exam session. Students who fail the exams in the 2022 exam session will fail out of EPFL.

Article 11 Conditional promotion to the subsequent year

1 The Exam Conference will decide whether students should be conditionally promoted to the subsequent year in their Bachelor's program on a case-by-case basis, depending on how many credits the exams they withdraw from are worth and how they perform on their other first-year exams.

2 The Exam Conference will similarly decide on conditional promotion to subsequent years for other degree programs in accordance with the arrangements set out in Art. 29 of the *Ordonnance sur le contrôle des études à l'EPFL*.⁴

Article 12 Compulsory internships

1 Students who have arranged a compulsory internship but have to cancel it because of the rescheduled summer 2020 exam session or because of public-health measures will have the length of their degree program extended if required.

2 For students who begin their compulsory internship later than planned for the reasons mentioned in para. 1 above, the minimum internship length will be reduced in the relevant section's course assessment rules.

³ RS 414.132.2

⁴ RS 414.132.2

3 If a student started an internship before the public-health measures were introduced, and it was subsequently suspended or otherwise disrupted, the section may still decide that he/she has satisfied the requirements.

4 The ban on internships outside Switzerland will be lifted on 11th May 2020.

Article 13 Exchange programs

1 In addition to the standard eligibility terms for students going on exchange programs, students who are scheduled to begin their exchange before the Exam Conference meets will be permitted to travel even if they have not officially obtained the necessary credits for the past academic year.

2 If the student in question is found not to have obtained the necessary credits after leaving for his/her exchange, the Exam Conference will decide whether he/she is allowed to continue the exchange and take the relevant exams on his/her return.

3 As a general rule, the Exam Conference may, in certain cases, decide to limit the length of a student's exchange program to a single semester (fall 2020 or spring 2021).

Article 14 Social commission scholarships

Students in receipt of a social commission scholarship for the spring 2020 semester will have their entitlement automatically extended until the end of the summer 2020 exam session.

Article 15 Special rules relating to PhD studies

1 Some PhD courses have been canceled, while others have resumed following temporary suspension. Where courses have resumed, classes are taking place online according to a timetable set by the teacher, who must notify registered PhD candidates.

2 Where courses have resumed, the teacher must also notify registered PhD candidates of any changes to the format of the assessment and to other assessment arrangements.

3 It may be necessary to change the number of ECTS credits awarded for a particular course. Such decisions are at the discretion of the doctoral program and the teacher.

4 PhD candidates may withdraw from a course at any time before the final assessment.

5 PhD candidates must obtain all the credits associated with their study plan before the date of their public thesis defense.

6 PhD candidates must follow the instructions issued by their doctoral program and their teacher in charge.

Article 16 Special rules relating to PhD theses

1 Candidacy exams and thesis oral exams cannot take place in-person for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic and are held via video conference.

2 PhD candidates may, however, make a request to their doctoral program to postpone their candidacy exam, thesis oral exam or research plan.

3 PhD candidates are permitted to take their candidacy exam or thesis oral exam even if they have not obtained all the credits associated with their study plan for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Candidates will not be prevented from proceeding to the thesis preparation stage if they have not satisfied the credit requirements.

4 PhD candidates may, at their discretion, opt to hold their thesis defense via public video conference or to postpone it, provided that they meet the timing requirements set out in Art. 16, para. 3 of the *Ordonnance sur le doctorat à l'EPFL*.⁵

Article 17 Teaching evaluation

1 The routine indicative and in-depth evaluations for the spring 2020 semester are canceled.

2 Students have been sent a questionnaire, modified to account for the online classes. The results of this questionnaire will only be used to identify general (non-class-specific) problems and examples of best practice, in order to improve teaching methods.

Article 18 Decision of the Vice President for Education

Exceptional circumstances requiring an exception to the requirements of this directive or other education-related EPFL legal texts will be decided by the Vice President for Education on a case-by-case basis.

Article 19 Entry into force, term, precedence and publication

1 This directive entered into force on 7th May 2020 (version 1.0) and was revised on 22nd June 2020 (version 1.1)⁶. Footnote 1 was updated on 23rd June 2020 (version 1.2)⁷.

2 It may be revised as required as the situation evolves.

3 It takes precedence over all other EPFL legal texts, which continue to apply in addition to the provisions set out herein.

4 It is published on the EPFL Polylex website (<http://polylex.epfl.ch>), and a link to this directive is placed on the landing page of the EPFL website (<http://epfl.ch>).

On behalf of the EPFL Direction:

President:
Martin Vetterli

Director of Legal Affairs:
Françoise Chardonens

Lausanne, 23rd June 2020

⁵ RS 414.133.2

⁶ In version 1.1, revisions have been made to the footnote to page 1, Article 8 (title), Article 10 (paras 1 – 4) and Article 19 (para 1).

⁷ In version 1.2, footnote 1 has been updated.