

EPFL Directive 2 on Teaching Arrangements in Accordance with the COVID-19 Measures

of 17th November 2020, status as at 25th January 2021

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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'EPFL*¹ of 13th November 2003,

based on Art. 6d of the Ordinance on Measures to Combat the Coronavirus (COVID-19) (COVID-19 Ordinance 2)² of 19th June 2020,

based on the Directive setting out the conditions underpinning EPFL's COVID-19 Protection Plan³ of 26th October 2020,

hereby adopts the following:

Article 1 Purpose and scope

1 This directive sets out the conditions and special measures for teaching and assessment arrangements for the autumn semester and the winter session for the 2020-2021 academic year.

2 It is not applicable to continued learning, for which the program branches' Directions set out their own measures.

3 This directive also sets out certain arrangements and special measures for exchange programs and for teaching evaluations.

Article 2 Teaching

1 Students attend lectures remotely, in accordance with the EPFL COVID-19 Protection Plan³.

2 Students participate in practical classes and exercises in accordance with the rules set out in the EPFL COVID-19 Protection Plan³.

3 Students shall follow the instructions issued by their section and by their teachers.

¹ [RS 414.110.37](#)

² [RS 818.101.24](#). Status as at 2nd November 2020, Article 6d.

³ Article 8, [Directive setting out the conditions underpinning EPFL's COVID-19 protection plan](#).

Article 3 Assessments: Modification of the form of examinations held during examination sessions

1 In order to limit the number of examinations held on the EPFL campus, during the examination session, the Associate Vice President for Education can validate the modification of examination form as suggested by the teacher and the section responsible.

2 These modifications may concern the possible replacement of a written examination by:

- An oral examination held via video conference
- A free writing exercise.

3 The Associate Vice President for Education sets out additional measures⁴ to be observed throughout the examinations.

4 These modifications prevail over the information contained in the course description and study plans.

5 For examinations which remain in written format during the examination session, the physical attendance of the student is required.

6 Sections shall notify the Registrar's Office of the final form of the examination. The Registrar's Office shall notify students by 4th December 2020 at the latest.

Article 3bis Assessments: Monitoring and grading of written assessments

1 In order to ensure a sufficient number of monitors and graders for written assessments, student assistants appointed for teaching in accordance with the Directive on Terms of Employment of Student Assistants, Construction Assistants and Temporary Assistants at EPFL⁵ may support teaching staff in the monitoring and grading of written assessments held during the examination sessions and free writing exercises in the Bachelor cycle.

2 Only individuals who hold a Bachelor's degree may provide support for teaching staff in terms of monitoring and grading of written assessments held during the examination sessions and free writing exercises in the Bachelor cycle.

3 During the monitoring of examinations, student assistants shall be continuously supervised by the member of teaching staff or the doctoral assistant who is present in the room with them.

Article 4 Assessments: Modification of the form of ongoing assessment and bonus tests

1 In order to limit the number of examinations held on the EPFL campus, the teacher shall modify ongoing assessment in the form of written examinations, in agreement with the section responsible.

2 If, however, the form of the final written examination cannot be modified, it shall be moved to the examination session.

3 Article 3, paragraphs 2 to 6 apply mutatis mutandis to ongoing assessment.

⁴ In addition to the measures set out by the Internal directive concerning examinations at EPFL (LEX 2.6.1).

⁵ LEX 4.7.1

4 The teacher shall notify the sections concerned of any modifications concerning ongoing assessment until 23rd November 2020 and shall notify the students in writing. The teacher shall retain proof of this notification.

5 The first year of study for mathematics and science courses can include up to 3 bonus tests, representing in total a maximum of one grade point for the final grade for that branch.

Article 5 Arrangements for failing grades

Rules concerning first year, Bachelor and Master studies:

1 If a student fails to achieve the required final grade for the branches at the end of the semester and the examination session, the following points apply, subject to paragraphs 2, 3 and 4:

- a. he/she will be granted an additional attempt for the examinations, and
- b. if necessary, he/she will be granted a prolongation of the maximum duration of studies in order to re-sit the examination(s) for these branches during the following session.

2 An NA (not acquired) grade counts as a failing grade and 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.

4 Branches which form part of a study plan leading to a double degree only follow these specific rules if the partner institution also adopts them.

Additional rules for students attempting the first year:

5 First year students who do not achieve an average of 3.50 for block 1 are not considered to have failed. These students are not promoted to the second semester of the cycle. They shall follow the *cours de mise à niveau (MAN)*, even if this is a repetition.

Rule concerning the CMS preparatory year:

6 Students who do not achieve an average of 3.50 at the end of the autumn semester are not permitted to continue to the second semester.

Article 6 Inability to attend an examination

1 Inability to attend an examination includes inability due to governmental measures.

2 Students must notify the Registrar's Office by email (sac-examen@epfl.ch), with their teacher in copy, as soon as the reason for the inability to attend should arise, and at the latest before the beginning of the examination. Failure to do so will result in an NA (not acquired) grade.

3 No supporting documents are required to prove the inability to attend, with the exception of students who were unable to submit notification of their absence within the deadlines stipulated in paragraph 2.

Article 7 Withdrawal

The deadline for withdrawal from bachelor and master courses has been moved to 30th November 2020.

Article 8 Conditional promotion to the subsequent year

1 The Exam Conference will decide whether students should be conditionally promoted to the subsequent year of study on a case-by-case basis, beyond the limitations set out in Article 29 of the *Ordonnance sur le contrôle des études à l'EPFL*⁶.

2 The Exam Conference will consider the number of ECTS credits the student is missing, as well as how they have performed in their other branches.

Article 9 Master's projects and compulsory internships

1 The Master's project or the internship can be completed remotely provided that the EPFL institute or the host institute stipulates this for its employees.

2 If the Master's project or internship must be temporarily suspended, the section will prolong its term if necessary.

3 The oral defense of the Master's project, which cannot take place in person at EPFL, will be held by video conference.

4 Master's projects and internships abroad are additionally governed by Article 10, paragraph 2 below.

Article 10 Exchange programs

1 EPFL does not authorise exchange programs in partner institutions in which all lessons are delivered remotely.

2 The student undertaking the exchange, Master's project or internship abroad assumes the consequences of an enforced prolongation of their stay on their studies.

3 Furthermore, students are directed to the EPFL COVID-19 Protection Plan³.

Article 11 Teaching evaluation

The questionnaire for providing indicative feedback can include one or two additional questions.

Article 12 Teaching for the Doctoral School

1 PhD courses take place remotely, with the exception of those which absolutely require the use of the physical infrastructure located on the EPFL campus. In this case, participants shall conform to the rules set out in the EPFL COVID-19 Protection Plan³.

2 The teacher must determine the timetable and notify registered PhD candidates of it.

3 The teacher must also inform PhD candidates of any changes to the format of the assessment and to other assessment arrangements, in keeping with the instructions from the Associate Vice President for Post-Graduate Education (Art. 4, para 3).

4 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.

⁶ [RS 414.132.2](#)

5 PhD candidates may withdraw from a course at any time before the final assessment, without a failure or attempt being counted.

6 It is required only that PhD candidates obtain all the credits associated with their study plan before the date of their public thesis defense.

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

Article 13 PhD examinations

1 Candidacy exams, thesis oral exams and the public thesis defense are held via video conference.

2 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 COVID-19. Candidates will not be prevented from proceeding to the thesis preparation stage as a result of not having satisfied the credit requirements.

Article 14 Exceptions

Exceptional circumstances requiring an exception to the requirements of this directive will be handled by the Associate Vice President for Education, or respectively the Associate Vice President for Post-Graduate Education, on a case-by-case basis.

Article 15 Final provisions

1 This directive entered into force by emergency measure on 17th November 2020 (version 2.0) and was revised on 11th January 2021 (version 2.1)⁷ and on 25th January 2021 (version 2.2).

2 It succeeds and replaces the Directive on Teaching Arrangements in Accordance with the Coronavirus Measures (LEX 2.6.7) of 7th May 2020.

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

4 It will be adapted and supplemented as required as the situation evolves.

5 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>).

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⁷ Introduction of Article 3bis.