

Comments on the Double statut, académique et RH, des doctorantes et des doctorants

Written jointly by:

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Below are our remarks/comments/questions :

LEX 2.4.1 Article 9

“Dans tous les cas, cette autorisation n’est pas octroyée si la doctorante ou le doctorant reçoit des prestations de l’assurance-chômage.”

What is the rationale behind this rule? As we understand it, a doctoral candidate is generally not permitted to defend their thesis after the end of their contract. However, there appear to be two clear exceptions:

1. The candidate has found employment and therefore does not wish to extend their contract.
2. The candidate was dismissed by EPFL.

In the first case, eligibility for unemployment benefits (chômage) is not relevant. In the second case (dismissal for misconduct) there are chômage penalties (typically up to two months), which would make it unlikely for the candidate to be receiving benefits at the time of their defense. However, if the penalty period is shorter or waived, and the president authorizes the candidate to defend, it is unclear why receiving chômage should be an obstacle to defending the thesis. If this understanding is correct, the rule as currently stated should be revised for clarity and consistency. Moreover, conditioning the right to defend on chômage status could disproportionately affect European candidates. Most non-European doctoral candidates are unlikely to qualify for chômage, meaning this rule would de facto apply unevenly based on nationality.

Prof. Anne-Marie Kermarrec’s letter

“En pratique, il est laissé à la doctorante ou doctorant quelques mois pour pouvoir se réorganiser. Cette pratique ne sera pas abolie mais sera harmonisée au sein des différents programmes doctoraux.”

There is no LEX article detailing this point.