FAQ: EPFL HR CONTRACT MANAGEMENT PROCESS FOR PHD STUDENTS

Q1: For Group 3. What happens if a change occurs between the different years and the external financing is no longer as high as the salary of the 2nd or 3rd year EPFL PhD student. Can they move the PhD student to Group 2? How is the follow-up conducted?

A: Yes, it is possible to change groups. In the event of changes concerning financing, the Thesis Director determines the new group and submits a new Hiring proposal Doctoral Assistant document to HR at least one month in advance. Please see step (VIII) ‘Changes in situation’ for further information on how to proceed.

Q2: For Group 3. Does a new Hiring proposal Doctoral Assistant have to be submitted every year when renewing a contract?

A: PhD students in Group 3 have contracts with an external employer. Documentation confirming that external financing $\geq$ EPFL salary for the entire duration of the PhD should be collected and sent to HR. There is no need to renew the Hiring proposal Doctoral Assistant each year.

Q3: For Group 3. We have not collected documentation concerning PhD students in Group 3 in the past. Do we need to collect it retroactively?

A: No. This group is only applicable as of November 1, 2019 with no retroactive effect. Information regarding Group 3 students has not been visible until now. We will collect documentation for PhD students in this group as from November 1, 2019.

Q4: For Group 3. What do we do regarding laboratory accident insurance?

A: There is a compulsory insurance with the employer, so people in Group 3 must be insured through their employer. In addition, EPFL has accident insurance for all persons visiting the campus.

Q5: In the new Hiring proposal Doctoral Assistant, the Professor’s signature commits them to financing the candidate until the oral examination. Does this affect the standard 3-month trial period that usually applies to all employees? If there were a problem of compatibility within the first 3 months, would it be possible to terminate the contract at this stage?

A: Yes, the contractual trial period of 3 months is still valid. If there were a problem of compatibility within the first 3 months, it would still be possible to terminate the contract at this stage.

Q6: What should be the salary for EPFL PhD students who live abroad?

A: EPFL PhD students have a workplace in Switzerland. This process and the EPFL PhD student’s salary apply only to people living in Switzerland or abroad with a G permit. In exceptional cases of collaboration with universities/employers based abroad, please inform HR.

Q7: Do PhD students who are paid by the Fonds National Suisse (FNS), belong to Group 1 or Group 2?

A: If the payment is made directly to the PhD student, they will belong to Group 2. If the payment is made to the laboratory and the PhD student receives their EPFL standard salary, they will belong to Group 1.

Q8: If the PhD student’s oral examination takes place before the end of the contract, can we terminate the contract early?

A: No. The payment to the PhD student is made until the end of the contract.

Q9: Do the terms ‘doctorant’ and ‘assistant doctorant’ have the same meaning?

A: Yes. Within the framework of this process we use them interchangeably.