

# Regulations applicable to **temporary non-academic staff / internships**

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## 1. Introduction

EPFL employs many interns subject to conditions that vary according to the schools and units or vice-presidencies. Numerous questions arise and very different practices are prevalent within the institution. Furthermore, certain employees are considered interns whereas they occupy positions at EPFL on a relatively long-term basis, which should be described as temporary positions with fixed-term contracts and not internships.

The Vice Presidency for Human Development (VPH) has defined the regulations applicable to five categories of temporary non-academic staff, also described as professional internships:

1. Observational / orientation internships prior to obtaining the Matura;
2. Internships prior to higher education;
3. Internships during higher education;
4. Summer internships;
5. Internships after higher education.

The following are excluded from the scope of these regulations:

- Temporary academic staff (see [Temporary academic staff](#))
- Visiting professors and academic guests (see [Lex 4.2.5](#))
- Student assistants, temporary assistants and construction assistants (see [Lex 4.7.1](#))
- Lecturers (see [Lex 4.3.1](#))

Moreover, the following categories are already clarified:

- Internships within the framework of professional reintegration and remunerated by the unemployment fund (e.g. BNF) or invalidity insurance (AI). These internships are managed by the units and Human Resources managers, as necessary.
- Apprentices with an EPFL apprenticeship contract, managed by the [Apprenticeship](#) unit. These are CFC “professional” apprentices, 3+1 commercial apprentices.
- Internship apprentices (media and IT specialists) with an EPFL internship contract (ETML, École des Arches and CPNV), managed by the [Apprenticeship](#) unit.
- The discovery internships from 10th grade onwards (one to five days), with the aim of discovering technical and administrative professions, are managed by the [Apprenticeship](#) unit. An internship application form can be found on [apprentis.epfl.ch](#).
- EPFL bachelor or master students, doing practical work or research work in laboratories, with the aim of writing a practical work report or their thesis, within the framework of their study plans. These internships are not remunerated and are managed directly by the units.

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| <b>Objectives</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Balance the freedom of the units with the overall responsibility of EPFL to guarantee equity and protect students and employees.</li> <li>■ Ensure compliance with legislation and requirements concerning immigration.</li> <li>■ Guarantee clarity, effectiveness and consistent application within EPFL.</li> </ul> |
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| <b>Definition</b> | <p>The internship is a temporary placement in a professional environment during which the person undergoes a learning process and thus acquires professional skills before, during or after their studies. It therefore does not involve carrying out a regular task corresponding to a permanent position.</p> <p>The trainee provides a service and receives a salary in return.</p> <p>The non-academic internship is generally done in operational units such as Central Services, centres and platforms and can be applicable to EPFL academic programmes, if it is a professional internship.</p> |
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| <b>Key elements</b> | <p>Define the elements specific to each of the five categories.</p> <p>Define the elements common to the five categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Unit responsible</li> <li>■ Work permit</li> <li>■ Social security / taxation</li> <li>■ Health and accident insurance</li> <li>■ Working hours and holidays</li> <li>■ Intellectual property</li> <li>■ Information systems</li> </ul> |
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| <b>Implementation</b> | November 2020. Version applicable as of March 2026. |
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| <b>Review cycle</b> | The VPH examines these regulations regularly in order to take best practices into account and incorporate lessons learned. |
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## 2. Categories of temporary non-academic staff / internships

### 2.1 Elements specific to each category

#### 2.1.1 Observational / orientation internships prior to obtaining the Matura

These internships of a duration ranging from several days to a maximum of one month, allow to discover professions that are not necessarily offered by EPFL's [Apprenticeship unit](#):

- These internships require a temporary staff hiring proposal with CV, identity card or passport, and valid residence permit (if non-Swiss).
- The minimum age required is 15 (parental consent necessary for under 16 years of age).
- These internships are not remunerated and are managed directly by the units.

#### 2.1.2 Internships prior to higher education

An obligatory internship of 6 to 12 months maximum is possible, prior to entering an HES (*Haute école spécialisée*, e.g. HEIG):

- These internships require a temporary staff hiring proposal on 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of the month unless other terms and conditions are defined within the framework of the training programme (internship agreement), with CV, identity card or passport, valid residence permit (if non-Swiss), job description and admission conditions or proof of the obligation to do an internship. The documents must be sent to [adminrh\\_temporaires@epfl.ch](mailto:adminrh_temporaires@epfl.ch).
- The intern is remunerated by a flat-rate gross salary of CHF 1,800 / month (100%).
- The activity rate is 100% unless other terms and conditions are defined within the framework of the training programme (internship agreement).

An optional internship of 6 months maximum prior to enrolment on a bachelor-level programme is possible:

- These internships require a temporary staff hiring proposal, with CV, identity card or passport, valid residence permit (if non-Swiss) and job description. The documents must be sent to [adminrh\\_temporaires@epfl.ch](mailto:adminrh_temporaires@epfl.ch).
- The intern is remunerated by a gross flat-rate salary of CHF 1,800 / month (100%).
- The activity rate is 100% with no possibility of part-time occupation.

#### 2.1.3 Internships during higher education

An obligatory internship for a duration of 6 to 12 months maximum is possible (e.g. library):

- These internships require a temporary staff hiring proposal on 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, with CV, identity card or passport, valid work permit (if non Swiss), job description and proof of the obligation to do the internship. The documents must be sent to [adminrh\\_temporaires@epfl.ch](mailto:adminrh_temporaires@epfl.ch).
- The intern is remunerated by a gross flat-rate salary of CHF 1,800 / month (100%).
- The activity rate is 100% unless other terms and conditions are defined within the framework of the training programme (internship agreement).

An optional internship of 6 months maximum, within the framework of studies or between the bachelor and master is possible, provided they can prove continuity in their studies:

- These internships require a temporary staff hiring proposal on 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, with

- CV, identity card or passport, valid work permit (if non Swiss), and job description.
- The intern is remunerated by a gross flat-rate salary of CHF 1,800 / month (100%).

#### 2.1.4 **Stages after higher education**

The objective of such an internship is to acquire some initial professional experience in preparation for entering the job market.

- An internship is possible providing that it began within the 12 months following the obtaining of an academic degree (bachelor or master) and for a duration of 6 to 12 months maximum at EPFL.
- These internships require a temporary staff hiring proposal on 1st or 15th of the month, with CV, identity card or passport, valid work permit (if non Swiss), and job description. The documents must be sent to [adminrh\\_temporaires@epfl.ch](mailto:adminrh_temporaires@epfl.ch).
- The intern is remunerated by a gross flat-rate salary of CHF 2,500 / month (100%).
- The activity rate is 100% with no possibility of part-time occupation.
- Upon completion of the internship, either the intern leaves EPFL, or they are hired for a position with a fixed-term contract or permanent contract (e.g. CAT).

## 2.2 **Elements common to the categories**

### 2.2.1 **Unit responsible: VPH Operations**

- VPH Operations does not draw up employment contracts for temporary non-academic staff, but deals with the files and salary payments of the latter.
- For internships before, during and after graduate studies, the complete application, as detailed in each section, should be sent by email to [adminrh\\_temporaires@epfl.ch](mailto:adminrh_temporaires@epfl.ch).

### 2.2.2 **Work permit**

- These professional internships are considered as employment and thus require a residence permit with gainful employment, in accordance with the Federal Act on Foreign Nationals and Integration (FNIA).
- Taking legislative constraints into account (art. 20 Limitation measures, art. 21 Precedence), these internships are open to all Swiss citizens, persons residing in Switzerland with a work permit, and nationals of a state with which an agreement on the free movement of persons has been concluded. Third-country nationals who have no valid residence permit including gainful employment are thus excluded from non-academic internships.

### 2.2.3 **Social security / taxation**

- Remunerated internships are subjected to social security contributions, Publica and taxes, as appropriate.

### 2.2.4 **Health and accident insurance**

- The intern is required to have health and accident insurance coverage in accordance with

legislation, even if the internship is not remunerated. Occupational accidents are covered by EPFL during the internship. Furthermore, any person working more than 8 hours /week is also covered throughout the internship for non-occupational accidents.

### 2.2.5 Working hours, holidays and notice periods

- As is the case of EPFL employees, a full-time position corresponds to 41 working hours per week.
- The intern must be able to take regular holidays. As is the case of EPFL employees, an intern must be entitled to five weeks holiday per year, in proportion to the duration of the internship.
- Should trainees wish to terminate their contract before, during or after their studies, termination is possible by mutual agreement, in accordance with the particularities of fixed-term contracts.

### 2.2.6 Intellectual property

- Intellectual property generally does not belong to EPFL, unless an intellectual property transfer agreement has been signed by the intern.

### 2.2.7 Information system

- EPFL Directives concerning software licences (Lex 6.1.5) are applicable. Each user must verify the rights deriving from the licence held by EPFL. The Head of Unit will ensure that the intern complies with them. Any additional questions can be addressed directly to the VPSI.
- All users must comply with the EPFL directive concerning the use of EPFL electronic infrastructure (Lex 6.1.4). The intern is required to sign an undertaking to comply with the provisions of the Lex 6.1.4 and the appropriate additional provisions in view of their status as third-party user. The text of this undertaking is made available by the VPSI.
- ACCRED of the intern as “guest” is generally dealt with by the unit’s accreditor.