

# Regulations applicable to **temporary academic staff**

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1. **Introduction**

The Vice-Presidency for Human Development (VPH), in collaboration with the Associate Vice-Presidency for Education, has defined the regulations for four categories of temporary academic staff:

1. Bachelor / master students in laboratories;
2. Bachelor / master students doing a summer internships;
3. Master enhancement internship (*valorisation de masters*);
4. Visiting PhD students.

The regular academic staff with fixed-term contracts, which includes PhD students and postdoctoral researchers, are outside the scope of this document. Also excluded from the scope are:

- Temporary non-academic staff (see [Temporary non-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](#))

Legal aspects are based on current legal requirements and may evolve at any time. In the event of changes in legal requirements, the rules will automatically be adapted to comply with our legal obligations.

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<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Balance the academic freedom of individual laboratories with EPFL's overall responsibility to ensure fairness and protect students and employees.</li> <li>■ Ensure compliance with legislation regarding, among other things, type of payment, social security, taxation or immigration requirements.</li> <li>■ Ensure clarity, efficiency and consistent application throughout EPFL.</li> </ul>
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<b>Key elements</b>	Define the elements specific to each category: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Definition and criteria</li> <li>■ Unit responsible</li> <li>■ Type of payment / unit in charge for payment</li> <li>■ Type of permit</li> <li>■ Social security / taxation</li> <li>■ Information system (IS) accreditation</li> </ul>	Define the elements common to all categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Health and accident insurance</li> <li>■ Working time and holidays</li> <li>■ Intellectual property (IP)</li> <li>■ Information systems (IS)</li> </ul>
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<b>Date of implementation</b>	June 2020. Version applicable as of March 2026.
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<b>Periodic review</b>	The VPH examines these regulations regularly in order to incorporate best practices and lessons learned.
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## 2. Categories of temporary academic staff

### 2.1 Elements specific to each category

#### 2.1.1 Bachelor / master students in laboratories

##### Definition and criteria

- Students enrolled at another university for the entire duration of the internship.
- Project or academic / research internship required within the framework of the academic curriculum and recognised by their university.
- No agreement is necessary. However, if, in exceptional cases, the university of origin does require an agreement, only the [EPFL Internship Agreement](#) is accepted.
- Minimum 2 months / maximum 12 months.

→ *If the criteria are not met, the student will not join EPFL.*

##### Unit responsible: Registrar's Office (Service académique)

##### Type of payment / unit responsible for payment: Financial Service

- The awarding and amount of the grant are discretionary and are decided by the head of the laboratory up to a max. of CHF 1,800 / month in all cantons or a max. of CHF 2,500 / month for Geneva (due to immigration requirements).
- The payment itself is made by the Financial Service at the request of the laboratory, based on the acceptance letter from the Registrar's Office and the payment order.

##### Type of permit

- Student permit, issued based on the enrolment letter available on IS-Academia
- The student is required to apply for the residence permit within the 14 days following their arrival in Switzerland.

##### Social security / taxation

- Not applicable as the grant is not considered as a salary.

##### Information system (IS) accreditation

- Automatic ACCRED of students via IS-Academia. Specific accesses to laboratory granted by the unit accreditor.

## 2.1.2 Bachelor / master students doing a summer internship

### Definition and criteria

- Students enrolled at another university.
- Internship not required by the academic curriculum.
- Internship of a maximum duration of three months during the academic holidays with a 100% activity rate, and no possibility of accumulating two different consecutive stays (in compliance with the conditions of the cantonal authorities).
- Currently applicable for IC (Summer@EPFL), SV (EPFL School of Life Sciences Summer Research Programme) and STI (E3 Programme – EPFL Excellence in Engineering).

### Unit responsible: VPH Operations

- Managed centrally for all Schools (letter of invitation, CV, passport) in order to obtain a work permit.
- The programme is managed by the EPFL Schools.

### Type of payment / unit responsible for payment: Financial Service

- Grant of CHF 1,800/month in all cantons or CHF 2,500/month for Geneva and Neuchâtel (due to canton requirements).
- The payment itself is made by the Financial Service at the request of the laboratory or School, based on the letter of invitation and payment order.

### Type of permit

- Work permit, or for third countries valid visa covering the entire duration of the stay.

### Social security / taxation

- Not applicable as the grant is not considered as a salary.

### Information System (IS) accreditation

- ACCRED made by the unit accreditor.

### 2.1.3 Master enhancement internship (*valorisation de masters*)

#### Definition and criteria

(defined in the [VPH contract management process for PhD students](#))

- An internship to enhance the value of the master is possible, in exceptional cases only for individuals who have just completed their studies, for a maximum duration of six consecutive months, full time, with no extension possible even within the maximum 6-month period. It must begin within the six months following the obtaining of an academic qualification (MA or BA 4–5 years, equivalent to master). This 6-month period includes the time required to obtain a valid visa and complete administrative formalities (allow approx. 4 months for a person from a third country).
- The cantonal authorities' conditions apply to the following situations:
  - For foreign nationals: a master's enhancement internship is possible, provided they are not currently in gainful employment (contract, internship) that will give them professional experience as soon as they finish their master's degree.
  - For foreign nationals already in Switzerland: if their permit is no longer valid, the internship must begin within a maximum of one month following the completion of their master; if their permit is still valid, the internship must begin within two months.
- Upon completion of the internship, either the student leaves EPFL, or they are hired as scientific assistant (permit very difficult to obtain for third countries due to quotas), or in exceptional cases, they are hired as doctoral assistant.

#### Unit responsible: VPH Operations

- Managed by each School. Laboratories send files by email to [adminrh\\_temporaires@epfl.ch](mailto:adminrh_temporaires@epfl.ch).

#### Type of payment / unit responsible for payment: VPH Operations

- These internships are subject to a proposal for temporary employment on the 1st or 15th of the month with letter of invitation, CV, identity card or passport, residence permit (if non-Swiss), copy of diploma or certificate of achievement and the IP agreement form.
- Flat-rate salary of CHF 2,500 / month and CHF 4,350 / month for Geneva (due to the minimum wage set by current legislation). Flexibility granted only in Geneva concerning the rate (min. 50–60%) except for people from third countries (permit constraints). Payment made by the salary department. No employment contract.
- In the event that trainees wish to terminate their internship, termination is possible by mutual agreement, in accordance with the [particularities of CDD contracts](#).

#### Type of permit

- Simplified work permit as grant-holder, including for third countries.

#### Social security / taxation / non-professional accident insurance

- Applicable to all (CH, EU and third countries).
- All individuals working more than 8 hrs / week are covered throughout the duration of the internship for non-occupational accidents.

#### Information system (IS) accreditation

- ACCRED granted by the unit accreditor.

## 2.1.4 Visiting PhD students

### Definition and criteria

- Students enrolled at another university, doing a thesis at that university.
- Students attend EPFL from a period of several weeks and up to a maximum of one year.
- Students must be enrolled at EPFL as of the first day, through the Registrar's office. Any change in the length of stay must be notified to the Registrar's office.

### Unit responsible: Registrar's Office

- Unless the stay exceeds one year, in which case the VPH becomes the unit responsible (see section "Stay exceeds one year" below).

### Type of payment / unit responsible for payment: Financial Service

- The grant amounts to a fixed sum of CHF 2,500 / month and includes any other grant paid by the university of origin.
- The payment itself is dealt with by the Financial Service at the request of the laboratory, based on the letter of acceptance from the Registrar's Office and payment order.

### Type of permit

- Student permit issued, based on the enrolment letter available on IS-Academia.
- The student is required to apply for the residence permit within the 14 days following their arrival in Switzerland.

### Social security / taxation

- Not applicable as the grant is not considered as a salary.

### Information system (IS) accreditation

- Automatic ACCRED of students via IS-Academia. Specific accesses to the laboratory are granted by the unit accreditor.

### Stay exceeding one year

The VPH becomes the unit in charge with the following implications:

- Hiring request submitted by the laboratory to VPH Operations at least three months in advance in order to complete work permit formalities.
- The scholarship / grant must be supplemented to the same level as the flat-rate salary of EPFL PhD students for stays exceeding one year (see the VPH contract management process for PhD students – group 2).
- Permit: Work permit.
- Social security / taxation: Applicable to all.
- All individuals working more than 8 hrs / week are covered throughout the duration of the internship for non-occupational accidents.
- For further information, please refer to the FAQ.

## 2.2 Elements common to all categories

### 2.2.1 Health and accident insurance

- The student is required to have health and accident insurance in accordance with Swiss legislation, even if the student does not receive a grant.

### 2.2.2 Working time and holidays

- As is the case for EPFL employees, a 100% activity rate corresponds to 41 working hours per week.
- The internship student must be able to take regular holidays. As is the case for EPFL employees, an internship student is entitled to five weeks of annual holiday, in proportion to the duration of the internship.

### 2.2.3 Travel expenses

- As determined by the laboratory.

### 2.2.4 Intellectual property (IP)

- IP does generally not belong to EPFL, except if an IP agreement is signed between the student and EPFL (TTO).

### 2.2.5 Information systems (IP) (see [section 3](#) for additional information)

- The Ordinance for the use of software subject to a licence agreement ([Lex 6.1.5](#)) is applicable. Each user must verify the rights stipulated by the licence held by EPFL. The head of unit will ensure that the student is aware of this obligation.
- The EPFL Directive on the use of private computer equipment for professional purposes ([Lex 6.1.3](#)) applies when the student uses their private computer.
- All users must comply with the EPFL Directive on the use of EPFL electronic infrastructures ([Lex 6.1.4](#)).

### 3. Information systems (IS) regulations

From the IS point of view, it is important to emphasize that this category of temporary academic staff must be compliant with IT security guidelines and SW license agreements. The main points take into consideration are:

- Temporary academic staff must comply with the EPFL Ordinance for the use of software subject to a licence agreement ([Lex 6.1.5](#)). Each user must verify the rights stipulated by the licence held by EPFL. The head of unit will ensure that the student is aware of this obligation.
- The EPFL Directive on the use of private computer equipment for professional purposes ([Lex 6.1.3](#)) applies when the student uses their private computer. The user must take all the necessary measures to ensure the protection of professional data and their user identification information. The user is required to create regular and complete copies of the professional data that they use on their private computer equipment. These copies must be stored in EPFL's electronic infrastructure and made available to the head of unit. The head of unit determines and communicates to the user the necessary frequency of making copies, their location, the data format and any encryption methods. Before leaving EPFL, the user transfers all their professional data to the head of unit on the day of their departure at the latest. The head of unit may authorise the user leaving EPFL to keep professional data relating to their research on their private computer equipment, provided that no legal, regulatory or contractual provision should preclude such an action and provided that no personal data\* is included (other than the user's own personal data).

\* any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person in the sense of art. 3 let. a of the Federal act on data protection (FADP)

- All users must comply with the EPFL Directive on the use of EPFL electronic infrastructure ([Lex 6.1.4](#)). The head of unit will ensure that the student is aware of this, particularly in cases of misuse (the downloading, consultation, conservation or transmission of pornographic images; committing or incitement to commit criminal offences; use of EPFL infrastructure in breach of third-party rights, including copyright; downloading, consultation, conservation or transmission of films without the prior consent of the copyright owner, unless done for strictly academic or personal purposes, pursuant to art. 19 of the Federal Act on Copyright and Related Rights (CopA); harassment or diffusion of false, misleading or unnecessarily offensive information, etc.). The student is required to sign an undertaking to comply with the provisions of [Lex 6.1.4](#) and the appropriate additional provisions taking into account their status as third-party user; the [text of the undertaking](#) is made available by the VPO-SI.

### 4. FAQ

For further information please refer to the [FAQ](#).