The doctoral program in Civil and Environmental Engineering (EDCE) at EPFL is a multidisciplinary program designed to tackle the most challenging problem of our time: fostering a vibrant and productive society while ensuring environmental sustainability.

This challenge is being addressed by creative interactions between science and engineering. The strength of EDCE is that it spans a remarkably broad research spectrum: from rock mechanics to microbiology, from rivers to roads and from the dams to glaciers. EDCE offers the educational model necessary to become a leader in fast-paced, high-tech industries and academia.

Spatial epidemiology of waterborne disease

The Laboratory of Ecohydrology focuses on research at the interface of hydrology, geomorphology and ecology under an integrated framework of analysis with an aim for a general theory. The main effort in the doctoral program is devoted to the development of a new research field across physical and biological sciences: spatial epidemiology of waterborne disease, with significant impacts on science and public health practice. Waterborne diseases are infections that predominantly are transmitted through contact with or consumption of contaminated water. They can strike humans, animals and even plants. Spatially explicit mathematical models of waterborne infections are fast revolutionizing epidemiology as they can provide key insights into the course of an ongoing epidemic, potentially aiding real-time emergency management in allocating resources and anticipating the impact of alternative interventions. We aim at a new generation of spatially explicit multilayer-network models of waterborne epidemics and epizootics. Specifically we study cholera, one of the most important global health hazards, and proliferative kidney disease in salmonids, which has a critical impact on fish stock with major ecological and bio-economic consequences.
Using weather radars to study mountainous and Antarctic snowfall

Snowfall in mountainous regions arises from complex interactions between the large-scale atmospheric flow, the topography and microphysical processes in clouds. This leads to a high spatio-temporal variability of snowfall intensity, which is challenging to forecast. To better represent these interactions in weather models, we need to better understand the processes involved. To do so we use precipitation and cloud radars to study the dynamics and microphysics of mountainous snowfall. During the first two years of my PhD, I had the chance to take part in three measurement campaigns. The first one was in Valais in the winter 2016-2017. The second one took place in South-Korea during the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games, as part of an international experiment. It was a great opportunity for me to discover a new culture and to compare measurements we did in the Swiss Alps with the Taebaek mountains in Korea.

Another region of interest for my PhD is Antarctica. Snowfall is the main input for the ice sheet and it is crucial to better understand precipitation processes in Antarctica to monitor and forecast changes due to global warming. The third field campaign of my PhD took place in Davis station in East Antarctica. We are interested in particular effects which take place at the coast of Antarctica, such as snowfall sublimation by the dry katabatic winds that are blowing from the interior of the continent towards the coast. This was a great opportunity to work in a scientific research station in Antarctica and collaborate in an international project. Now that I collected so many data from different parts of the world, my work focuses on the analysis of those. In particular I am investigating which meteorological conditions lead to intense snowfall and how they affect the growth of ice crystals in clouds. My PhD is very enriching because of the variety of the work: from field campaigns to data analysis and presentation at international conferences, it is definitely the project I was looking for!

Designing earthquake resistant buildings

Currently I am a PhD student in my third year in the Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics Laboratory. My research focuses on developing the seismic design guidelines for reinforced concrete core walls. What attracted me very much to this topic and to EPFL was the practical nature of the research topic as well as the opportunity to perform large-scale testing. Moreover, the project is quite comprehensive, involving numerical, analytical, as well as experimental tasks. No time to get bored. I have profited from a very high level of research and education at EPFL. Of course, such high standards require a lot of work, but it is deeply satisfying. People here are very passionate about their work, and at the same time supportive and helpful with yours. The university environment is really collaborative and international.
Career opportunities
Approximately 40% of EDCE graduates hold positions in academia or research institutions. The other 60% work in governmental agencies, NGOs, in established civil and environmental engineering firms or even found their own start-up companies.

Application deadlines
EDCE accepts complete application dossiers three times a year: January 15th, April 30th and September 15th. Changes to the application deadlines may apply. For the most recent information, please refer to the program’s webpage.

Civil Engineering
Prof. Thomas KELLER Composite Construction Laboratory – CCLAB
Dr. Tassos VASSILOPOULOS Composite Construction Laboratory – CCLAB
Prof. Jean-François MOLINARI Computational Solid Mechanics Laboratory – LSMS
Prof. Katrin BEYER Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics Laboratory – EESD
Dr. Pierino LESTUZZI Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics Laboratory – EESD
Prof. Christophe ANCEY Environmental Hydraulics Laboratory – LHE
Prof. Brice LECAMPION Geo-energy Laboratory – Gaznat Chair on Geo-energy – GEL
Prof. Dusan LICINA Human-Oriented Built Environment Lab – HOBEL
Prof. Yves WEINAND Laboratory for Timber Constructions – IBOIS
Prof. Marie VIOLAY Laboratory of Experimental Rock Mechanics – LEMR
Prof. Dimitrios LIGNOS Resilient Steel Structures Laboratory – RESSLab
Prof. Alain NUSSBAUMER Resilient Steel Structures Laboratory – RESSLab
Prof. Lyesse LAIOUTI Soil Mechanics Laboratory – Chair "gaz naturel" Petrosvibri – LMS
Prof. Jean-Louis SCARTEZZINI Solar Energy and Building Physics Laboratory – LSEO
Prof. Aurelio MUTTONI Structural Concrete Laboratory – IBETON
Dr. Miguel FERNÁNDEZ RUIZ Structural Concrete Laboratory – IBETON
Prof. Eugen BRÜHWILER Structural Maintenance and Safety Laboratory – MCS
Dr. Emmanuel DENARIÉ Structural Maintenance and Safety Laboratory – MCS
Prof. Dolaana KOHALYG Thermal Engineering for the Built Environment Laboratory – TEBEL
Prof. Michel BIERLAIRE Transportation and Mobility Laboratory – TRANSP-OR
Prof. Nikolaos GEROLIMINIS Urban Transport Systems Laboratory – LUTS
Prof. Alexandre ALAHI Visual Intelligence for Transportation – VITA

Environmental Engineering
Prof. Alcherio MARTINOLI Distributed Intelligent Systems and Algorithms Laboratory – DISAL
Prof. David Andrew BARRY Ecological Engineering Laboratory – ECOL
Prof. Tamar Kohn Environmental Chemistry Laboratory – LCE
Prof. Devis TUIA Environmental Computational Science and Earth Observation Laboratory – ECEO
Prof. Rizlan BERNIER-LATMANI Environmental Microbiology Laboratory – EML
Prof. Alexis BERNE Environmental Remote Sensing Laboratory – LTE
Prof. Julia SCHMALE Extreme Environments Research Laboratory – Ingvar Kamprad Chair – EERL
Prof. Bertrand MERMINOD Geodetic Engineering Laboratory – TOPO
Dr. Jan SKALOUD Geodetic Engineering Laboratory – TOPO
Prof. François GOLAY Geographic Information Systems Laboratory – LASIG
Dr. Stéphane JOOST Geographic Information Systems Laboratory – LASIG
Prof. Anders MEIBOM Laboratory for Biological Geochemistry – LGB
Dr. Urs VON GUNTEN Laboratory for Water Quality and Treatment – LTQOE
Prof. Athanasios NENES Laboratory of Atmospheric Processes and their Impacts – LAPI
Dr. Satoshi TAKAHAMA Laboratory of Atmospheric Processes and their Impacts – LAPI
Prof. Michael LEHNING Laboratory of Cryospheric Sciences – CRYOS
Prof. Andrea RINALDO Laboratory of Hydrology and Water Resources – HWR
Prof. Kristin SCHIRMER Laboratory of Environmental Toxicology – TOX
Prof. Claudia BINDER Laboratory on Human-Environment Relations in Urban Systems – HERUS
Prof. Johny WÜEST Physics of Aquatic Systems Laboratory – Margaretha Kamprad Chair – APHYS
Prof. Charlotte GROSSIORD Plant Ecology Research Laboratory – PERL
Prof. Johan GAUME Snow Avalanche Simulation Laboratory – SLAB
Prof. Christian LUDWIG Solid Waste Treatment – GR-LUD
Prof. Tom BATTIN Stream Ecosystem and Ecosystem Research Laboratory – SBER
Prof. Fernando PORTÉ-AGEL Wind Engineering and Renewable Energy Laboratory – WIRE

Architectural and Urban Engineering
Prof. Philippe THALMANN Laboratory of Environmental and Urban Economics – LEURE
Prof. Marilyne ANDERSEN Laboratory of Integrated Performance in Design – LIPID
Prof. Corentin FIVET Structural Exploration Laboratory – SXL
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