

“Training the world’s foremost experts and leaders in  
Management of Technology”

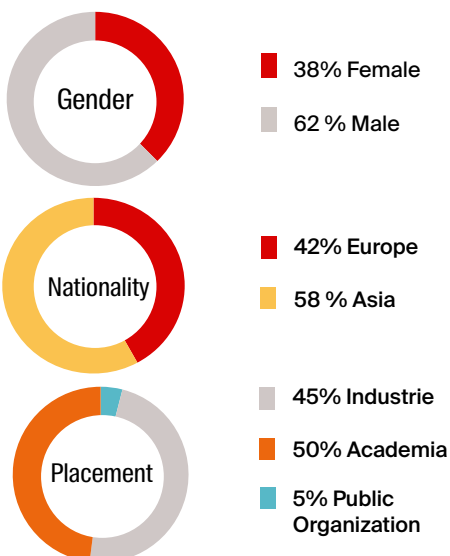
### Welcome!

This is the fifth annual newsletter of the EPFL Doctoral Program in Management of Technology (EDMT). It aims at informing alumni, current students, prospective applicants and program faculty by highlighting recent events, achievements, and other newsworthy activities.

### In this Issue

- Message from our Director
- Our New Students
- Theses Defended in 2024
- Testimonials
- List of Awards
- EDMT Doctoral Committee
- EDMT Life in Pictures
- Important Dates

### EDMT in Brief (2024)



Applications **121**      Number of PhD students **24**  
Admissions **6**

### Message from our Director



Dear Doctoral Students, Faculty, and Alumni,

As Benjamin Franklin wisely said, *“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”*

Unlike a house or car, knowledge cannot be stolen or repossessed, making it a low-risk, high-reward asset. Not bad.

Even better, knowledge—or for simplicity: information—offers increasing returns to scale, at least for a while. Let us illustrate this with a lively example: Imagine your mute friend Ben gives stock advice using just his one thumb, pointing either up or down. If the stock price is about to rise, Ben’s thumb points up with probability  $p$ , and vice versa, if the stock price goes down, you get his thumb-down signal with probability  $p$  as well. If  $p = 1$ , Ben is always right—your returns soar! If  $p = 0.5$ , Ben’s advice is as good as flipping a coin and has no benefit. But surprisingly, if  $p = 0$ , Ben is perfectly reliable again—just always do the opposite of what he signals! Plotting the value of Ben’s advice against  $p$ , you obtain a curve that has to be convex near  $p = 0.5$ , meaning that early learning must yield compounding benefits.

*Hence, the more you learn, the better it gets (at least for a while).* So keep learning, stay curious, and embrace those increasing returns!

This year, we warmly welcome six new EDMT students and celebrate four new alumni. A special highlight is the addition of Gordana Favre-Kokorus as our new program coordinator.

Happy Learning & Happy Holidays,

Thomas Weber  
Director, EDMT

## Our New Students



This fall, the EDMT Program admitted 6 new students:

- Franziska Zollner, joining the team of Prof. Michaël Aklin (PASU chair)
- Angelina Frolova, joining the team of Prof. Marc Gruber (ENTC chair)
- Jiechen Zhang, joining the team of Prof. Andrés Cristi (GO chair)
- Andrea Ruglioni, joining the team of Prof. Damir Filipovic (CSF-SFI chair)
- Jeanne Fernandez, joining the team of Prof. Michaël Aklin (PASU chair)
- Maxime Bataillard, joining the team of Prof. Michaël Aklin (PASU chair)

## Theses Defended in 2024

Reliable Data-Driven Decision-Making through Optimal Transport.

[B. Taskesen](#) / [D. Kuhn](#) (Dir.)  
Lausanne, EPFL, 2024.

---

Machine Learning for Modeling Stock Return.

[T. A. Xu](#) / [S. Malamud](#) (Dir.)  
Lausanne, EPFL, 2024.

---

### Unpacking the Sharing Economy: From Participation to Impact.

[T. T. Huynh](#) / [C. Binder](#) (Dir.)

Lausanne, EPFL, 2024.

---

### Robust Optimization for Product Line Design.

[J. Han](#) / [T. Weber](#) (Dir.)

Lausanne, EPFL, 2024.

---

## Testimonials



Franziska Zollner, Incoming EDMT PhD Student

"My PhD journey has just started, but I am convinced that it will be an exciting one. I appreciate that the EDMT program allows me to explore diverse courses that will help me develop my personal research, while at the same time starting my own projects. I am excited to start this new chapter in such an inspiring work environment with people from many different backgrounds and interests who are eager to support and learn from each other."



Mohammad Shahverdikondori, EDMT PhD Student since 2021

"Joining the EDMT PhD program last year has been a wonderful experience, giving me the chance to focus on topics and problems that I find truly fascinating. Tackling open-ended challenges, where the answers aren't yet clear, has been both engaging and sometimes demanding, making it a test of motivation and perseverance. I've also enjoyed building meaningful connections with the friendly and talented EDMT community, making my time here both productive and enjoyable."

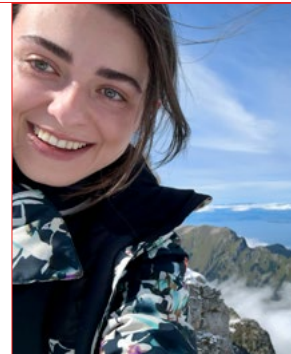


Tianshu Yang, EDMT PhD Student since 2021

"As a PhD student in EDMT, I am privileged to be a part of this dynamic and cutting-edge academic community. The EDMT program has not only equipped me with a strong theoretical foundation but has also exposed me to practical applications and real-world challenges in industry and manufacturing. The interdisciplinary nature of the program has allowed me to explore various facets of my field, broadening my perspective and enhancing my problem-solving skills."

Atin Aboutorabi, EDMT PhD Student since 2021

"AI models are advancing at a fast pace, impacting society both directly and indirectly. As these technologies are increasingly integrated into different fields, I have found that interdisciplinary work is essential to navigate their implications. As a PhD student at EDMT, my research interests revolve around the intersection of machine learning and economics, enabling me to study economic questions through a broader lens. During my studies, the opportunities to collaborate across disciplines and the learning that comes from them have been incredibly meaningful to me."



Dr. Bahar Taskesen, Assistant Professor of Operations Management, The University of Chicago Booth School of Business, EDMT 2024 Alumnus



"The beginning of my PhD was filled with anxiety about the many things I didn't know. It was an uncomfortable and uncertain space—one that might be challenging for many to navigate. During my PhD studies, I gradually developed the skill to embrace the discomfort of the unknown and learned how to move fluidly between it and the areas where I felt more confident, often lingering at the boundaries where growth happens. Over time, I came to find this journey incredibly rewarding. The EDMT program provided a fantastic environment to support this growth, and by the end of it, what started as an intimidating challenge became a very fun and fulfilling journey."

## List of Awards

- Kilian Schindler Excellence Award: Bahar Taskesen
- EDMT Thesis Distinction Award: Jun Han
- MTE Program Best Teaching Assistant Award 2024: Roy Sarkis

## EDMT Doctoral Committee

- Prof. Thomas Weber, Director
- Prof. Negar Kiyavash
- Mengmeng Li, PhD Student Representative
- Prof. Michaël Aklin
- Prof. Gaétan de Rassenfosse

## EDMT Life in Pictures



1 Summer Party



2 Autumn Hike



3 Joint Gathering EDMT-EDFI



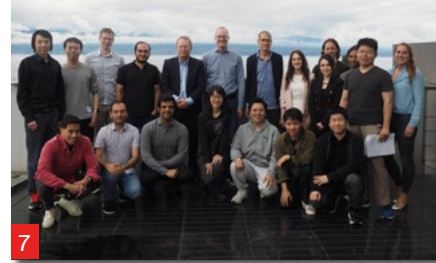
4



5



6



7

4 Bouldering

6 Summer BBQ

5 Halloween Party

7 Research Day

## Important Dates

Application deadlines: **January 15, 2025**, and **April 15, 2025**

Start of the program: **September 15, 2025**

Next Research Day: **Spring 2025**

Program Core Courses (please refer to our official website for recent updates and additional information):

- MGT-418 Convex Optimization
- MGT-484 Applied Probability & Stochastic Processes
- MGT-581 Introduction to Econometrics
- MGT-602 Mathematical Models in Supply Chain Management
- MGT-621 Microeconomics

## Stay in Touch

Thank you for keeping up with the EDMT Program!

Please share this newsletter on social media or by forwarding it via email.

If you have recently been promoted, received honors or awards, or have other news, please email Gordana at [gordana.kokorus@epfl.ch](mailto:gordana.kokorus@epfl.ch). We would love to hear from you!

**EPFL EDMT PROGRAM**  
**ODY 1.16 - 1015 Lausanne - Switzerland**

**+41 21 693 1822**

[edmt@epfl.ch](mailto:edmt@epfl.ch)

Visit us at [our official website](#).

**Contributed to this issue:** Gordana Favre-Kokorus, Alexandra von Schack, Mengmeng Li & Thomas Weber

# EDMT Newsletter

Issue # 5 / December 2024