



ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE
FÉDÉRALE DE LAUSANNE

Regulations of the Doctoral Program in Physics (EDPY)

1 September 2008 (status as of 1 April 2017)

Please note that only the French version is legally binding

The Committee of the Doctoral Program in Physics (EDPY),
taking into account art. 3 par. 3 and 6 par. 2 of the Ordinance on the doctorate conferred
by the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (hereinafter: EPFL) of January 26, 1998¹
and 2 par. 4 point 3 of the Directives concerning doctoral studies at the EPFL of November
21, 2005,²

decrees:

1. Field of application

The present regulations concerning the EPFL Doctoral Program in Physics (hereinafter: the program) sets forth the rules relating to the study plan as well as the candidacy examination. Furthermore, it details the application of rules concerning the annual progress reports and the mentoring. The masculine gender used herein shall also apply to the female gender.

2. Study plan

- 2.1 The candidate enrolled in the program must acquire a minimum of 12 ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) during the doctoral studies, of which at least 4 credits during the first year.
- 2.2 The candidate chooses courses he will attend with the approval of his thesis director, who ensures the coherence of the study plan.
- 2.3 Credits may be obtained through the courses of the EPFL Doctoral School. Master level courses of the EPFL Physics section may also be taken for a total not exceeding 4 credits. In all other cases, a motivated request must be sent to the program before the beginning of the course. The program committee authorizes the validation of the credits and fixes the conditions on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.4 As part of admission to the program and in application of art. 5 par. 2 and par. 5 of the Ordinance on the doctorate, the program director may, upon advice of the program committee, require the candidate to take additional courses, chosen in agreement with the thesis director. As a condition to his final admission, the candidate must successfully pass the corresponding exams during the first year of doctoral studies.

¹ RS 414.133.2

² EPFL LEX 2.4.1

3. Research plan and candidacy exam

3.1 To be admitted for the preparation of a thesis, the candidate must write a research plan and successfully pass the candidacy examination at the latest 12 months after his enrolment (art. 6, 7 and 8 par. 1 of the Ordinance on the doctorate). He must also have fulfilled any additional conditions fixed at the time of the admission to the doctoral studies (art. 2.4).

3.2 **Composition of the jury:** The jury is composed of a president, an expert, the thesis director and the co-director (if applicable). The president is chosen by the program director from among the members of the program committee. The expert is proposed by the thesis director and approved by the program director.

The president and the expert will not be members of the same research unit (chair, laboratory) as the thesis director and the co-director (if applicable).

All jury members must hold the title of PhD.

3.3 **Organization of the exam:** The thesis director organizes the exam. At least 3 weeks before the exam, he transmits the following information to the program and to the members of the jury:

- ❖ the composition of the jury
- ❖ the date, location and time of the exam
- ❖ the research plan written and signed by the candidate

3.4 **Exam format:** The exam is chaired by the jury president. It includes an oral presentation, of approximately 30 minutes, and is followed by questions from the jury members. The presentation will consist primarily of:

- ❖ the general context of the thesis subject
- ❖ the state of his research work
- ❖ the plan and research methodology of the thesis project

The candidate will emphasize the originality of his thesis subject, the objectives and methods envisaged, as well as the related scientific arguments.

Members of the laboratory and people invited by the thesis director may attend the examination.

3.5 **Evaluation criteria:** The jury deliberates in the absence of the candidate. They formulate an evaluation on the basis of the following principal criteria:

- ❖ pertinence and originality of the thesis subject
- ❖ quality of scientific argument
- ❖ candidate's ability to conduct research
- ❖ clarity and rigour of the research plan
- ❖ candidate's response to the questions of the jury

The jury decides by majority if the exam is passed or failed. In absence of majority, the exam is failed. In absence of majority at the second attempt, the thesis director will be decisive.

3.6 **Record of the exam:** The jury president completes the record of the exam (prepared by the program's office), including the following points:

- ❖ the assessment of the exam according to the criteria set out above and, if applicable, the rationale for failure
- ❖ the result ("passed" or "failed") of the exam
- ❖ the signatures of the jury members

The record is confidential.

3.7 **Communication of the result:** The record of the exam and the final version of the research plan must be submitted to the program's office within 10 days after the exam. If the research plan is approved, it should be signed by the thesis director and the thesis co-director (if applicable).

The candidate may, on request, consult the record.

- 3.8 **Possibility to retake the exam:** In case of failure, the candidate may ask to be examined a second and last time. The jury decides whether the candidate must submit a new version of his research plan. This second exam must take place within 15 months after the date of the enrolment.

The composition of the jury stays the same as for the first attempt and the procedure described in articles 3.3 to 3.7 applies again.

4. Annual report

After his definitive admission, the candidate submits each year an annual report on the progress of his work to the thesis director, who in turn provides written input and reports to the program director within a deadline of one month (art. 10 par. 3 and par. 4 of the Ordinance on the doctorate).

- 4.1 The thesis director reads the report. He writes his comments about the current state and progress of work at the end of the report. He signs the report and his comments. The co-director (if applicable) does the same.
- 4.2 The candidate confirms, by his signature, that he took note of the comments and submits the report to the program's office.

5. Mentoring

A mentoring system offers guidance to the candidate in the resolution of any possible difficulties, particularly regarding the progress of his thesis or a conflict (art. 2 par. 4 ch. 5 of the Directives concerning doctoral studies).

- 5.1 The program director appoints, among the members of the program committee, a mentor for each candidate soon after his enrolment.
- 5.2 The mentor reads the annual reports. He has an individual interview with the candidate after the submission of each annual report. He gives a feedback during a meeting of the program committee.
- 5.3 In agreement with the candidate, the mentor informs in writing the program director of any important problem.

6. Final provisions

The present regulations, which came into force on 1 September 2008, were revised on 20 April 2010, on 1 November 2014 and on 1 April 2017.

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On behalf of the Doctoral School
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