



# *EPFLinnovators co-funded by Marie Skłodowska-Curie* Doctoral Fellowships at the EPFL **Rules and Regulations**

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*The Doctoral School of the École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, hereby adopts the following:*

## **Section 1 General provisions**

### **Art. 1 Sphere of application**

1. The EPFL Doctoral School (herein after “EDOC”) of the *École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne* (herein after “EPFL”) co-funds (with a fellowship) EPFL doctoral candidates.
2. The fellowships are for doctoral candidates only.
3. The fellowships may be requested in any scientific discipline in the areas of research covered by EPFL.

### **Art. 2 Start and duration of the fellowship**

4. The fellowship consists of a monthly contribution to the salary of the doctoral candidate of EUR 1’855 and is granted for a period of forty-eight (48) months maximum.
5. Prolongation of the fellowship is not possible.
6. Fellowships cannot be granted retroactively.
7. Fellowships should start at the latest on 1 December 2019.

### **Art. 3 Supervision**

8. The doctoral candidate must conduct the research under the supervision of an EPFL Professor or a Senior Scientist (“*Maître d’enseignement et de recherche*”). A co-supervision with an entitled person (holding a PhD) from the non-academic sector where the doctoral candidate will conduct part of her/his research is strongly encouraged.

### **Art. 4 Management of the programme**

9. The programme is managed by an office (herein after “Office of the programme”) composed of members of EDOC and the Research Office. This office is responsible for the communication, management and coordination of the EPFLinnovators programme. The Office of the programme also serves as an interface with the European Commission.
10. The Office of the programme is not responsible for the management of the fellows’ individual project.

### **Art. 5 Selection committees**

11. The twenty-one (21) EPFL doctoral programme committees are each composed of the doctoral programme director, a doctoral student representative, and up to ten (10) EPFL scientists (see in “[Directive concerning doctoral studies at the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne](#)”). The doctoral programme committee verifies the eligibility criteria and evaluates the applicant’s level of excellence and admissibility to the doctoral programme (phase 1).

12. Fellowships are then awarded through an independent, international, peer-review process designed to ensure excellence. The Intersectoral Excellence Committee (IEC) is responsible for this final ranking and granting of the fellowships according to the present regulations.
13. The IEC is made up of thirteen (13) members: it is presided by EPFL's Vice President for Education or the deputy for the Doctoral School (1), and is composed of five (5) representatives from the non-academic sector, three (3) from the academic sector outside Switzerland, the chair of EPFL's Research Commission (1), two (2) PhD student representatives, and one (1) representative from the Technology Transfer Office (TTO). The IEC members provide written assessments of the applications (phase 2) and make recommendations about which applications to fund (scoring).
14. The IEC is composed of experts representing a diversified palette of expertise in the areas of research covered by EPFL. The selection/nomination of the members of the IEC is performed by the Office of the programme on the basis of criteria such as track record in the field, peer-reviewed publications and research funding awards in areas of research, and taking into account the "Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers" described in the European Charter for Researchers, which has been signed by the EPFL on 16 September 2005.
15. The Office of the programme allocates proposals to individual reviewers (members of the IEC, three (3) for each application) taking into consideration the field of expertise of the reviewer, and avoiding conflicts of interest. Reviewers will be asked to confirm that they have no conflict of interest – according to the [directives at EPFL](#) – for each application that they are asked to evaluate.
16. The Office of the programme prepares a ranked list of the most meritorious applicants based on the recommendations of the experts following the scoring system.
17. The IEC attributes the fellowships based on the ranked list and taking into account the weight of the different evaluation criteria.
18. The granted applications are checked by the Ethics Affairs of the EPFL Research Office for all ethical issues, e.g. are the necessary authorizations/notifications joined to the application.
19. The candidates are informed of the decision at the latest four (4) months after the submission deadline.

## Section 2 Formal Requirements

### Art. 6 Eligibility

20. In agreement with the Horizon 2020: 2016-2017 Work Programme for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, applicants to EPFLinnovators must be **Early Stage Researchers (ESR)**: *“ESR shall, at the date of the deadline of the co-funded programme's call, be in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience) of their research careers and have not been awarded a doctoral degree “.*<sup>1</sup>
21. The following eligibility criteria must be fulfilled:
  - a) Citizens of any nationality may apply. There are no restrictions concerning age, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political views, language or nationality of the candidates.
  - b) Applicants must hold a Master's degree (or equivalent).
  - c) Applicants must fulfil the transnational mobility rule: the applicant must not have resided or carried out her/his main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Switzerland for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the deadline for the submission of proposals. Exceptions to these rules are possible, for women (e.g. in case of maternity leave) or refugees, to ensure equal opportunities are provided to students whose scientific careers have been interrupted.

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<sup>1</sup>See : [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2016\\_2017/main/h2020-wp1617-msca\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2016_2017/main/h2020-wp1617-msca_en.pdf) (p. 58)

The mobility rules mentioned above are adapted as follows for refugees: the applicant must not have resided or carried out his/her main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Switzerland for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the deadline for the submission of proposals, unless as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention (regardless of whether s/he was active in research at that time).

## Art. 7 Application

22. The application to the EPFLinnovators programme is divided in two distinctive phases:
- Phase 1:* An application submitted by the doctoral candidate on the EPFL Doctoral School (EDOC) [online application form](#). Candidates to the EPFLinnovators must provide some specific information in addition to the usual information requested by EDOC (see below).
- Phase 2:* An application submitted by the EPFLinnovators' thesis director following the candidate-project matching phase to be submitted by email to the Office of the programme ([research@epfl.ch](mailto:research@epfl.ch)).
23. The requirements for each phase are as follows:

<p><b>Phase 1 – Application by doctoral candidate</b></p> <p>On or before the call deadlines:</p> <p><b>Call 1: 15 January 2018, until 17.00 hr. CET</b></p> <p><b>Call 2: 16 April 2018, until 17.00 hr. CET</b></p> <p><b>Call 3: 15 January 2019, until 17.00 hr. CET</b></p>	<p>Applicants submit their proposal to the EPFL Doctoral school <a href="#">online application form</a>.</p> <p>The following information should be submitted <b>by the doctoral candidate</b>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indication of application to EPFLinnovators programme</li> <li>Personal details and academic background (Curriculum Vitae)</li> <li>Selection of the doctoral programme(s) the candidates wants to apply to</li> <li>Three (3) reference letters (submitted online by the referees)</li> <li>A pdf version of the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Official transcripts of diplomas and grades from all academic institutions of higher education listed in the application (after and not including high-school)</li> <li>- Certified translations of diplomas and grades into English if not originally in French, German, Italian or English.</li> <li>- Statement of objectives of maximum 2 pages <u>which clearly explains the candidate's motivation for the EPFLinnovators programme</u></li> <li>- A copy of passport or official identity document showing full name</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Phase 2 – Application by thesis director</b></p> <p>At the latest on:</p> <p><b>Call 1: 3 April 2018, until 17.00 hr. CET</b></p> <p><b>Call 2: 2 July 2018, until 17.00 hr. CET</b></p> <p><b>Call 3: 1 May 2019, until 17.00 hr. CET</b></p>	<p>Following the selection by the doctoral programmes committees, EPFL professors interested in supervising an EPFLinnovators thesis conduct interviews with candidates selected during phase 1.</p> <p>At the end of the candidate-project matching phase, the following documents should be submitted <b>by email</b> (<a href="mailto:research@epfl.ch">research@epfl.ch</a>) <b>by the EPFLinnovators' thesis director</b> to the Office of the programme:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EPFLinnovators' <a href="#">project proposal</a> prepared by the thesis director (maximum 3 pages), structured as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Detailed description of the research work</li> <li>- Introduction of the partner in the non-academic sector and duration of the secondment phase</li> <li>- Added-value of the stay in the non-academic sector</li> </ul> </li> <li>EPFLinnovators' <a href="#">interview report</a> prepared by the thesis director</li> </ol>

24. All application documents and queries should be formulated in English.

## Section 3 Evaluation and selection process

### Art. 8 Evaluation criteria

25. Both the doctoral programme committees and individual reviewers, members of the IEC, are asked to peer review the applications - within the guidelines of integrity of peer review, described in "[Directive concerning research integrity and good scientific practice at EPFL](#)" (Lex 3.3.2.) and to score the candidates measured by the following **selection criteria**:

EXCELLENCE	
<i>Phase 1 – weight 0.7 / Phase 2 – weight 0.3</i>	
Academic results	Grades, GPAs, awards, Master project, publications
Reference letters	Degree, duration, and nature of the collaboration between referees and candidate Elements (positive/negative) brought forward Level of enthusiasm/appreciation
Statement of objectives	Independence/originality in research ideas, quality, enthusiasm/motivation for the EPFLinnovators programme
Additional achievements	Presidencies of committees, relevant work experience, etc.
ENTREPRENEURSHIP MOTIVATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE	
<i>Phase 1 – weight 0.3 / Phase 2 – weight 0.4</i> <i>Based on statement of objectives, Curriculum Vitae, reference letters</i>	
Strong motivation for entrepreneurship	
Relevant experience	
Any other proof that candidate is skilful as an entrepreneur	
Any other proof of independence and initiative taking	
CANDIDATE-PROJECT MATCH	
<i>Phase 2 – weight 0.3</i> <i>Based on EPFLinnovators' project proposal, EPFLinnovators' interview report, Curriculum Vitae</i>	
Degree of matching of the project with the candidate's background	
Educational potential of the project for the candidate	
Duration/relevance of stay of the candidate in the non-academic sector	
Scientific and societal relevance of the project	

26. Evaluation scores are given for each one of the criteria. Each criterion will be scored out of 5. Scores are given with a resolution of one decimal place.
27. To ensure fair treatment of the applications and to keep grades as coherent as possible, evaluators will be requested to interpret the following scale of marks rigorously and avoid grade inflation.
28. Rating Scale: 0.0 – 5.0 (including decimal points)
- 5.0 outstanding:** All relevant aspects of the criteria under evaluation are successfully addressed.
- 4.0 excellent:** All relevant aspects of the criteria are successfully addressed, and shortcomings are minor.
- 3.0 very good:** The criteria are very well addressed, although some improvements are possible.
- 2.0 good:** The criteria under evaluation are well addressed, although some improvements are necessary.
- 1.0 fair:** The criteria under evaluation are broadly addressed, significant weaknesses are detected.
- 0.0 poor:** The criteria are not addressed, or parts of the application are so poorly described that it is impossible to evaluate, or the proposal is incomplete.

## Art. 9 Selection process

29. The full selection process is as follows:

### **PHASE 1**

**Step 1** - On or before the deadlines (15 January 2018, until 17.00 hr. CET, 16 April 2018, until 17.00 hr. CET and 15 January 2019, until 17.00hr. CET), applicants submit their application to the EPFL Doctoral school online application form.

**Step 2** - Within forty-five (45) days after the submission deadline, the doctoral programme committees submit the complete files, with scoring, of all admissible EPFLInnovators candidates to the EDOC, who transfers at the beginning of March 2018 (call 1), beginning of June 2018 (call 2) and beginning of March 2019 (call 3), the 40 highest ranked applicants to all EPFL laboratories for the candidate-project matching.

### **PHASE 2**

**Step 3** - In the two (2) months following, EPFL professors interested in supervising the thesis of an EPFLInnovators' fellow conduct interviews with the candidates selected in phase 1. Interview reports and project proposals are then sent back to the Office of the programme at the end of March 2018 (call 1), July 5, 2018 (call 2) and May 1, 2019 (call 3). At that time, all candidate-project matches are submitted to the members of the IEC for evaluation.

**Step 4** - Within one (1) month after receiving the candidacies, the IEC scores the candidates, based on the following documents:

- a) Personal details and academic background (submitted for phase 1)
- b) Candidate's statement of objectives (submitted for phase 1)
- c) Three reference letters (submitted for phase 1)
- d) EPFLInnovators' project proposal (submitted for phase 2)
- e) EPFLInnovators' interview report (submitted for phase 2)

The IEC makes a final ranking and, with the approval of the President of the IEC, prepares the final selection of the best candidates for each call. By the end of April 2018 (call 1), end of July 2018 (call 2) and mid-June 2019 (call 3) the President of the IEC submits the results to the Office of the programme for the attribution of the fellowships.

**Step 5** - in May 2018 (call 1), August 2018 (call 2) and July 2019 (call 3), the Office of the programme informs the candidates on the outcome of their application.

## Art. 10 Rebuttal period

30. All candidates have the right to a rebuttal procedure if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their candidacy was evaluated and that this shortcoming affected the results of eligibility checks or the final decision. This procedure is not intended to call into question the scientific judgement of the external reviewers or the assessment by the IEC, but to address failings in the evaluation process.
31. A written request for rebuttal must be submitted within 30 days from the decision date to the Office of the programme. The rebuttal request will be reviewed by the Office of the programme to ensure that it concerns a procedural shortcoming rather than a judgement on the scientific evaluation conducted by the experts. If the rebuttal request is valid, it will be transferred to the IEC for further review and decision.

32. The candidate will be informed of the outcome of her/his rebuttal request within six weeks after the reception of his request by the Office of the programme. Only one request for rebuttal per proposal will be considered. All requests for rebuttal will be treated confidentially.

## Section 4 Administrative Regulations

### Art. 11 Terms of the fellowship

33. Successful applicants will be granted a fixed term employment contract at the EPFL, for four (4) years (renewable annually) of doctoral studies.
34. All granted candidates must:
  - Follow the regulations governing doctoral candidates at EPFL, described in "[Ordinance on the doctorate conferred by the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne](#)", in "[Directive concerning doctoral studies at the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne](#)", in the [doctoral programme regulations](#), and in the programme description (see section 5 "Academic requirements").
  - Comply with the policies outlined in the "[Directive concerning research integrity and good scientific practice at EPFL](#)".

## Section 5 Academic requirements

### Art. 12 Training programme

35. The dedicated EPFLinnovators' mandatory training programme consists of:
  - a) The study plan of the doctoral programme to which the PhD candidate is affiliated (at least 8 ECTS of scientific/technical courses)
  - b) Transferable skills training (9 ECTS):
    - Technology transfer (2 ECTS) or Business concept (4 ECTS)
    - Science and engineering teaching and learning (2 ECTS) or Presentation skills (2 ECTS)
    - Technology and public policy (2 ECTS)
    - My thesis in 180 seconds (1 ECTS)
    - Market Opportunity Identification & Evaluation for Technologies (2 ECTS)Note that in some doctoral programmes (see regulations, <http://phd.epfl.ch/Regulations>) several of these courses can be chosen to also fulfil the doctoral programme's study plan requirements. The Technology and public policy course is not mandatory if the candidate chose the 4 ECTS Business concept course.
  - c) An integrated 6-month to 2-year secondment at a partner from the non-academic sector
  - d) At least 1 (one) industry round table discussion per year
  - e) Workshop on Ethics, Social issues and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)
  - f) Information session on career development, by the EPFL Career center (<http://carriere.epfl.ch/>).
  - g) Organization of a summer school together with doctoral candidates in Switzerland and abroad (optional).
36. The courses are listed in more details in the document "[EPFLinnovators Transferable skills training](#)".
37. Failing to complete this training programme could result in the expulsion of the EPFLinnovators programme and a reimbursement request of the fellowship.

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## Section 6 Duties of the Fellowship holder and the Thesis director

### Art. 13 Intellectual property rights issues

38. Intellectual Property (IP) of research performed by the PhD students during their employment at EPFL is subject to EPFL's regulations.
39. The Technology Transfer Office of EPFL (EPFL-TTO) manages the intellectual property resulting from the research performed by EPFL PhD students, evaluates new inventions, negotiates and approves research contracts with industrial partners, licenses technology and supports early developments of new technologies and inventions.
40. In case a PhD student estimates that s/he has contributed to new, inventive and attractive results, publications and dissemination activities shall be slightly delayed to allow the evaluation and possible filing of a patent application.
41. Foreground IP will be protected by EPFL-TTO as appropriate and according to EPFL regulations and policies. In close collaboration with the PhD student and the hosting EPFL laboratory, the EPFL-TTO will be responsible for the licensing of foreground IP to either a start-up company, possibly (co)founded by the PhD student, or to an existing company willing to further develop the project after the PhD was finalized.
42. As needed, in collaboration with the hosting EPFL laboratory, EPFL-TTO will also negotiate and conclude appropriate Intellectual Property Agreements with hosting companies where the PhD students may also have R&D activities.

### Art. 14 Reporting and Acknowledgment

43. Fellowship holders should submit an annual report to their EPFL thesis director, according to the [regulations of their doctoral programme](#) to which they are affiliated, as well as to the Office of the programme ([research@epfl.ch](mailto:research@epfl.ch)).

### Art. 15 Research Integrity and Good Laboratory Practice

44. The Principal Investigator of the host laboratory shall fully inform the candidate of the "[Directive concerning research integrity and good scientific practice at EPFL](#)" and will ascertain the candidate's acknowledgement to accept those guidelines.