The EPFL PhD Program in Finance targets academic excellence. It provides rigorous PhD studies in finance within an inspiring intellectual environment. The curriculum of the program is demanding and covers all aspects of modern finance. This program is taught by top international researchers. EPFL PhD graduates obtain placements in some of the world’s most renowned universities and financial institutions.

The EPFL PhD program is part of the Swiss Finance Institute PhD Program which is a centrally coordinated program operating on multiple campuses in Switzerland. This coordination allows PhD students to share their research and ideas and offers a real international visibility.

“When choosing a PhD program, I knew that I wanted to do empirical research. Because I also wanted to build a solid theoretical background, I chose the SFI Léman, known for its strength in this area. With a background in business administration, I enjoyed exploring the various areas of finance (that I had not been exposed to previously) during the first-year courses.”

“I decided to work in empirical corporate finance. My first research project led me to a month-long effort to build the most extensive database of insider ownership in the US that is currently available. During the project, I had the opportunity to learn the Python programming language and work with high-performance computing clusters. I also took advantage of several courses such as Classroom Presentations and Explanations, as well as the interactive use of class response systems. Overall, I was impressed by the resources available at EPFL.”

“I am getting excellent support from my supervisor, but also from the rest of the faculty. The research seminars present an opportunity to interact with internationally renowned academics and I have greatly benefited from discussing my research with them.”

Kornelia Fabisik
PhD student
1. Simon Fraser University
2. UCLA
3. HEC Montreal
4. McGill University
5. University of Toronto
6. Boston University
7. Rochester University
8. Johns Hopkins University
10. University of Maryland
11. Duke University
12. Rice University
13. Boston College
14. Emory University
15. New York University

16. NHH Norwegian School of Economics
17. BI Norwegian School of Management
18. Copenhagen Business School
19. University of Magdeburg
20. University of Amsterdam
21. Utrecht University School of Economics
22. London School of Economics
23. Queen Mary University of London
24. Goethe University Frankfurt
25. HEC Paris
26. Università Paris-Dauphine
27. University of St.Gallen
28. University of Bern
29. University of Lausanne
30. University of Geneva
31. Bocconi University
32. Kellogg School of Management
33. ESADE Business School
34. IESEG Business School
35. Akdeniz University
36. African School of Economics
37. Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

Julien Cujean Alumnus 2013
PhD in Finance SFI@EPFL
Currently Assistant Professor of Finance, University of Maryland, R.H. Smith School of Business, USA

“When I first decided doing a PhD in Financial Economics, the Swiss Finance Institute had just been launched and although SFI did not have a placement record yet, it soon turned out that I had picked what would become one of the best PhD programs in Europe. Within just a few years, SFI established a wide reputation as an outstanding place to conduct academic research; I was fortunate enough to be part of it. During my time at SFI, I learnt from the very best theorists in the field. Doing research is a capricious, but fascinating activity. In my opinion, this is precisely what makes the institute unique: SFI offers constant support and exceptional supervision. The program also offers many opportunities to interact with internationally renowned researchers through workshops and seminars. I have greatly benefited from that as well. I regard my studies with SFI as an excellent bridge to an academic career.”

Sebastian Vogel
PhD student

I am very happy that I decided to pursue my PhD in Finance at EPFL. My first three years in the program have been quite an intense yet very rewarding journey. In the first year, coursework in all major fields of Financial Economics ensures that PhD students have the technical knowledge to do research in whatever they are interested in. More importantly, however, one also learns how to use these technical skills to work on something really novel, i.e. a question that has not been answered (or has not even been asked) before. Besides giving the intellectual satisfaction of finding a solution to a new problem, working on the right questions may potentially shape the way we think about the world. The way we think about the world, in turn, influences how we shape it. For instance, the way policy makers regulate financial markets is often based on insights from current research. Being part of this whole process is one of the things I like most about academia.

I am extremely thankful for all the advice I get from my supervisor and other professors here at EPFL. I also benefit a lot from the discussions with other PhD students. Besides providing the ideal environment for becoming a good researcher, EPFL is beautifully located, which makes working here even better.

PhD Program Placements

In the footsteps of the alumni of the Swiss Finance Institute, the EPFL SFI PhD graduates have found academic positions in recognized academic institutions around the world such as the University of Maryland, Boston University, Boston College, Emory University’s Goizueta Business School, London School of Economics, University of New South Wales or HEC Paris.
PhD Curriculum and Working Conditions

The EPFL PhD Program in Finance starts with a curriculum of PhD courses. The aim of this intensive course-work is to provide all candidates with a broad and complete education covering the basic building blocks and conceptual tools of finance. The first year of the program requires a full-time commitment to studies.

Upon admission to the second phase of the program, candidates select a thesis topic and choose their supervisor. The emphasis then turns to research: EPFL PhD Program candidates are guaranteed financial support and office space during the whole duration of the program. They also benefit from a wide range of first-class university facilities - library, computers, sports facilities - and are given the possibility to have a research stay in another prestigious University, the choice of which is determined by the candidate together with his/her advisor. The working language of the EPFL PhD Program in Finance is English.

Applicants Profile and Admission Guidelines

Applicants should have a strong interest in research and the desire to pursue an academic career or to continue their career pursuing research in finance within the public or private sector. Ideally applicants should have a solid academic background in economics and mathematics, although additional prerequisite courses at the beginning of the PhD program should compensate for weaknesses in any of these areas.

The EPFL PhD Program in Finance is internationally oriented and aims at attracting the best students from Switzerland and abroad. Applicants need to have a Master of Science in Finance, Economics, Mathematics or a degree deemed to be equivalent by the Admission Committee.

Please apply directly online to both the EPFL go.epfl.ch/phd-edfi and the Swiss Finance Institute sfi.ch/en/phd/apply-now

Applications are reviewed by the Admission Committee composed of professors from the EPFL PhD Program in Finance. Admissions will be decided on a competitive basis.

Deadlines

There are two rounds of candidate selections with application deadlines on January 15th and March 31st each year. Applicants are informed of the outcome of their application within four weeks of the closure of the application deadline. Courses start in September.

Contact Information

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