

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) EPFL PhD Excellence Programme

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## Before the application

### Who can apply?

Doctoral candidates from any doctoral programme at EPFL may apply provided they are not already following a customised curriculum (such as fellows of EPFLinnovators and EPFLglobalLeaders, or candidates under an inter-institutional agreement).

Doctoral candidates must have passed their candidacy exam and been admitted to the preparation of the thesis by the time they commence the mandatory training. Furthermore, they must have the written approval of their thesis director to participate in the programme.

### What documents do I need for my application?

To apply, you must fill in the EPFL PhD Excellence Programme application form, available [here](#).

To submit your application form, you must include the following documents:

- a) a CV of two pages maximum;
- b) the transcript of Doctoral School credits to date;
- c) a motivation letter indicating relevant extracurricular activities, if any;
- d) research publications or patents, if any;
- e) a letter of support from the thesis director (using [template](#) provided);
- f) reference letter from outside academia (e.g. from an internship, or extracurricular activity), if applicable.

The Doctoral School may ask the applicants for any additional information and documents considered useful and pertinent to the decision on the application.

## **Until when can I submit my application?**

There will be one deadline per year for the submission of applications. The deadline will be published on the [website](#) of the programme.

## **Submitting your application**

### **How do I apply?**

Applications must be submitted to The Doctoral School in electronic form via the dedicated submission form ([Google Form](#)) by the [submission deadline](#). They must comply with the [regulations](#) and contain all required indications and documents. Applications should be submitted in English.

Applications that are not complete, do not meet the eligibility requirements, or are received after the deadline will not be considered.

### **Can I still make changes or updates (e.g. if a paper has been accepted) after I have submitted the application?**

No, modifications cannot be made once the application has been submitted.

### **Can I apply more than once?**

No, doctoral candidates may apply for the programme only once.

## **Evaluation of your application**

### **What is the selection process?**

The Doctoral School checks the eligibility of candidates and coordinates the selection process.

Applications that meet the formal requirements will be considered by an ad-hoc admissions committee.

The admissions committee will rank the written applications based on the evaluation criteria and will invite the top-ranked applicants for an interview. The admissions committee will take the decision which the Doctoral School communicates to the applicants in writing.

## **What criteria are used to assess applications?**

The evaluation criteria are as follows:

- a) the level of excellence of the academic achievements of the applicant at the time of the application: academic results and progress in the thesis;
- b) motivation and evidence of the personal commitment of the applicant to pursue a career in the non-academic sector and to contribute to wider society.

## **Who are the members of the admissions committee?**

The admissions committee is composed of:

- a) a representative of the Doctoral School;
- b) an EPFL professor or senior scientist (maître d'enseignement et de recherche);
- c) an invited professor or expert from a non-academic sector;
- d) a representative of Mediacom;
- e) a representative of the Technology Transfer Office.

## **Will there be evaluation interviews of the applicants?**

Yes, there might be. The admissions committee will rank the written applications based on the evaluation criteria and will invite the top-ranked applicants for a short interview.

## **When will I receive the decision?**

Decisions will be communicated in writing by the end of March, by the Doctoral School.

## After the decision

### **When is the starting date of the EPFL PhD Excellence Programme?**

The programme is expected to begin in April 2022. The exact starting date will be communicated in writing.

### **What are the duties of a participant of the EPFL PhD Excellence Programme?**

By accepting a place in the programme, doctoral candidates oblige themselves to complete the mandatory training specified in art. 3.2 of the [regulations](#) as well as to respond to surveys for 5 years after completion of the programme.

### **What elements of mandatory training do I need to consider?**

The elements of the mandatory training are:

- a) leadership training of approximately 120 hours;
- b) training in effective communication of approximately 12 hours;
- c) transferable skills courses of at least 6 ECTS;
- d) attendance at networking events of approximately 40 hours.

Mandatory training elements a, and b, listed above, must be completed during the first year of the programme, while elements c, and d, will take place throughout the programme.

### **What if I cannot complete the mandatory training elements listed above in the first year of the programme because of maternity, accident, illness etc.?**

For justified reasons, the mandatory training may be postponed. In this case, you must inform the Doctoral School in writing.

### **How many working hours do I need to consider globally?**

To complete the entire programme, you should count approximately 322 – 352 hours divided as follow:

- a) leadership training of approximately 120 hours;
- b) training in effective communication of approximately 12 hours;

- c) transferrable skills courses of at least 6 ECTS, i.e. approximately 150 – 180 hours;
- d) attendance at networking events of approximately 40 hours.

## **Will I receive a certificate at the end of programme?**

Yes. Participants of the programme will be awarded a certificate upon completion of the following requirements:

- a) proof of having attended and completed the mandatory training elements as specified in art. 3.2 of the [regulations](#);
- b) a presentation in front of the participants of the programme.

## **What has to be done if I want to renounce to complete the programme?**

Doctoral candidates who would like to terminate their participation in the programme prematurely must inform the [Doctoral School](#) immediately in writing stating the reasons.