

Regulations for the EPFL Doc.Mobility program

1. General provisions

1.1 Purpose

¹ These regulations specify the conditions, the call and selection process as well as the rules for the use of Doc.Mobility grants from the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (hereafter: EPFL).

1.2 Description of the program

¹ The Doc.Mobility program is financed by EPFL and provides mobility grants to doctoral candidates who are not funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).ⁱ

² The grants are aimed at doctoral candidates enrolled at EPFL who wish to improve their scientific and professional profile through a stay at a research entity abroad.

³ The aim of a Doc.Mobility stay is in particular:

- a) to complete a research experience, to work on a publication, to access to experimental equipment or other resources not available at EPFL, or to complete fieldwork;
- b) to broaden the professional network by immersion in a highly reputable research team and research institution;
- c) to benefit from a culturally diversifying experience in a research and development environment;
- d) to acquire additional professional experience, with a particular focus on the acquisition of transversal or interpersonal skills.

⁴ The Doc.Mobility grant provides financial support to contribute to personal living expenses, travel costs, conference participation, tuition fees, and expenses for accompanying family members associated with the mobility stay.

ⁱ Doctoral candidates funded on an SNSF project can apply for mobility grants to the SNSF as described in SNSF “[General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations](#)” (Annex V).

- ⁵ The PhD candidate remains employed by EPFL during the mobility stay. The thesis director must either guarantee the salary (paid leave of absence) or proof of sufficient income paid by the host institution must be submitted (unpaid leave of absence).

1.3 Start and duration of the mobility stay

- ¹ The EPFL Doc.Mobility grant is awarded for a minimum of three months and a maximum of six monthsⁱⁱ.
- ² The mobility grant cannot be awarded retroactively.
- ³ The research stay may start at any time within the period specified in the call for applications.
- ⁴ The mobility stay may begin only after successful completion of the candidacy exam and must end at least six months before the oral exam (private thesis defense).
- ⁵ In the event of a medical reason or force majeure, the doctoral candidate may contact the Doctoral School in writing to request a change in the start date and/or duration of the stay by attaching supporting documents (see sections [5.3](#) and [5.4](#)).

1.4 Research location abroad

- ¹ The Doc.Mobility grant contributes financially to the research stay at a host institution abroad, i.e. outside Switzerland.
- ² Project proposals whose research location abroad is different from the applicant's country of origin and place(s) of study prior to the doctorate (Bachelor, Master) will be preferred.
- ³ The research visit must not be part of a joint doctoral program.
- ⁴ The host institution must be a non-profit organisation.

2. Formal requirements

2.1 Personal requirements

- ¹ Doctoral candidates from all disciplines may apply for a Doc.Mobility grant if they meet the following conditions:
- a) They have been registered as a doctoral candidate at EPFL for at least twelve months at the time of the application.
 - b) They have passed the candidacy exam at the time of the start of the mobility stay.
 - c) The mobility stay must be completed at least six months before the oral exam (private thesis defense). If the stay concludes within the first six months of the final year of

ⁱⁱ PhD candidates from abroad must contact the competent cantonal authority for foreigners to ensure that their residence permit can be maintained during their stay outside Switzerland and must inform the same authority of their temporary departure from Switzerland.

PhD studies, candidates must provide proof that the number of ECTS required for the end of their PhD cursus will be met.

d) They are not funded by a project of the Swiss National Research Foundation (SNSF).

² When intellectual property issues are to be considered, the thesis director, the host and the doctoral candidate put in place an agreement in coordination with the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) of EPFL and the unit responsible at the host institution.

2.2 Objective requirements

¹ Applications must comply with these regulations and contain all the required information and documents.

² The required documents (see section [3.2](#) of these Regulations) and letters of reference are an integral part of the application. They must be submitted at the latest by the submission deadline.

³ Applications received after the deadline cannot be considered.

⁴ Applications should be submitted in English.

3. Application process

3.1 Deadlines and submission of applications

¹ The Doctoral School will make one call for applications per year. The deadline and instructions for submission will be published on the [Doctoral School's website](#).

3.2 Composition of the application file

¹ Applications must contain the following documents:

a) a CV of two pages maximum;

b) a project plan using the template provided;

c) a letter of support (using template provided)

i. by thesis director

ii. by the host abroad

iii. by the host institution abroad

d) the partnership and/or family certificate, if applicable.

² Applicants are responsible for the accuracy and veracity of the information contained in the documents they submit. In the event of a breach, the Doctoral School is entitled to refuse, suspend and/or revoke the award of the mobility grant.

- ³ The Doctoral School may ask the applicants for any additional information and documents considered useful and pertinent to its decision on the application.

3.3 Non-consideration and re-submission

- ¹ The Doctoral School will not consider applications that are incomplete, do not meet the admission requirements or are submitted after the deadline.
- ² If an application has been rejected, doctoral candidates may apply for a second time for a Doc.Mobility grant.

3.4 Evaluation procedure

- ¹ Applications for the EPFL Doc.Mobility grant will be formally checked by the Doctoral School. If the applications meet the formal requirements, they will be examined scientifically by the selection committee on three aspects: the scientific project, the applicant and the host institution.
- ² The selection committee is composed of:
- a) one professor familiar with the discipline of the project: appointed according to the research area of the proposal;
 - b) one representative of the Doctoral School.

3.5 Evaluation criteria

- ¹ The evaluation criteria are as follows:
- a) The quality, originality, relevance and feasibility of the research project;
 - b) The scientific achievements of the applicant at the time of the request;
 - c) The added value to the career of the applicant;
 - d) The international standing of the proposed research location.

3.6 Selection and notification of the decision

- ¹ The committee evaluates each application in comparison with the other applications. It selects the best applications for the grant and determines the amount on the basis of the criteria set by EPFL for the grant.
- ² The Doctoral School communicates the decision of the selection committee to the applicants in writing, indicating the reasons.

3.7 Legal effects of the award

- ¹ Applicants who are awarded a mobility fellowship become grantees.
- ² The grantees use the grant for their scientific education.

4. Eligible costs

The eligible cost categories are as follows:

- a) Travel expenses
- b) Costs of participation in scientific conferences
- c) Personal living expenses
- d) Tuition fees
- e) Family allowances

4.1 Travel expenses

- ¹ EPFL provides grantees with a contribution of up to CHF 2'000 for a round trip for the entire duration of the mobility stay, covering travel between their place of residence linked to their doctoral studies and the location of the research stay. Only plane or train tickets are covered by this contribution; costs related to visa applications, taxis, etc. are not included.
- ² In principle, the most cost-effective economy class options should be selected.
- ³ When organizing travel, [EPFL Travel Directives](#) must be respected.

4.2 Costs of participation in scientific conferences

- ¹ A maximum amount of CHF 2'000 per mobility stay can be provided to support participation in scientific congresses, conferences, or workshops that are directly relevant to the doctoral candidate's research and linked to their project. Preference is given to events held within the country of the mobility stay, avoiding the need for long-distance travel.

4.3 Personal living expenses

- ¹ Applicants may apply for a contribution to cover personal living expenses, such as rent or similar unavoidable costs in the host country, up to a maximum of CHF 800 per month of the mobility stay (i.e. CHF 4'800 maximum in total).
- ² Request for contribution to personal living expenses by applicants employed by EPFL must take account of the fact that they will continue to receive their usual salary (see section [1.2 paragraph 5](#)).

4.4 Tuition fees

- ¹ Applicants may apply for a subsidy covering up to 75% of the tuition fees for the host institution, up to a maximum of CHF 15'000 per mobility stay.
- ² This subsidy is available only if the applicant can provide proof that the host institution has not waived the fees.
- ³ A written confirmation, titled "Confirmation of Registration Fees", must be included with the other application documents as proof.

4.5 Family allowances

- ¹ EPFL provides grantees with children an allowance of CHF 1'000 per month per child, up to a maximum of CHF 6,000 per mobility stay. Allowances for children received from EPFL will be deducted from this amount.
- ² Expenses for family members (spouse, partner) are eligible in cases where they accompany the doctoral candidate to support the childcare during the entire mobility stay.

4.6 Restrictive financial conditions / Third party contributions

- ¹ Applicants must indicate in their application any financial contribution they receive from other organisations or institutions in the context of their thesis or mobility stay.

5. Rights and obligations of grantees

5.1 Payment of the grant

- ¹ Payments will be made upon receipt of the PhD candidate's banking details, submitted via the form available on the official website, and no earlier than three months before the start of the mobility stay.
- ² The grant is paid in two instalments:
 - First instalment (50%): Paid before the start of the mobility stay, but not earlier than three months prior, upon receipt of the PhD candidate's complete banking information.
 - Second instalment (50%): Paid after the completion of the mobility stay, upon submission and approval of a financial report via the form available on the official website of the Doc.Mobility program. This report must include all original receipts and proof of expenses.
- ³ Only actual, documented costs will be reimbursed. No flat-rate or estimated expenses will be accepted. The only exception concerns the personal living expenses, for which no proof of payment is required, as the allocated amount is a lump sum intended to contribute to general living expenses (e.g.rent).

5.2 Insurance

- ¹ The grant does not include insurance for the grantees and their dependents. Grantees are responsible for all insurances themselves.

5.3 Maternity, Paternity, Illness and Accident

- ¹ In the event of maternity or paternity before commencing or during the mobility stay, the contribution, start and duration of the mobility stay may be modified appropriately upon request, provided that the scientific objectives pursued with the research stay could not otherwise be achieved.

- ² In the event of illness or accident before commencing or during the mobility stay, the contribution, start and duration of the mobility stay may be modified appropriately upon request, provided that the scientific objectives pursued with the research stay could not otherwise be achieved.

5.4 Changes to the Project Proposal

- ¹ In exceptional cases, modifications to the research plan, schedule, or location are permitted only with the written approval from the EPFL Doctoral School and the thesis director, following a well-justified written request from the doctoral candidates. No other changes will be accepted, in particular any changes related to the grant amount.

5.5 Renouncement or early termination

- ¹ Grantees who give up their mobility grant or terminate their mobility stay prematurely must inform the EPFL Doctoral School immediately in writing, stating the reasons. They must reimburse pro rata temporis all grants that have been transferred.

5.6 Regular contact with the EPFL thesis director and final report

- ¹ During the mobility stay, the grantees maintain regular meetings with their thesis director at EPFL as part of the supervision.
- ² Within six weeks after the end of the funding period, the grantees must submit a project report and a financial report. The project report covers the general, scientific and organizational aspects of the mobility stay. The financial report consists of a balance sheet of the granted amounts, with all relevant receipts in annex.
- ³ The report templates are available on the [EPFL Doc.Mobility website](#).

6. Other provisions

6.1 Misconduct and penalties

- ¹ In the event of misuse of the Doc.Mobility grant or violation of these regulations the EPFL may open a disciplinary procedure ([LEX 2.4.0.2](#)).
- ² In the case of a breach of integrity in their research work, PhD candidates are subject to the EPFL ordinance concerning the procedure to follow in cases of suspected scientific misconduct ([LEX 3.3.3](#)).

6.2 Appeals

- ¹ All decisions on mobility grants taken by the selection committee, except for the amounts awarded, may be contested within 30 days of the notification of the decision concerned.

6.3 Adoption entry into force

- ¹ The present regulations are approved by the Associate Vice President for Doctoral and Lifelong Education (AVP-DLE) on January 30, 2025.
- ² They shall enter into force on January 30, 2025.