

Regulation concerning the Doctoral Program in Computational and Quantitative Biology (EDCB)

Please note that only the French version is legally binding.

Dated April 7, 2022 (*date of entry into force*)

The EDCB Doctoral Program Committee,

taking into account art. 3 al. 3 and 6 al. 2 of the Ordinance on the Doctorate conferred by the EPFL of January 26, 1998¹ and art. 2 al. 4 ch. 3 of the Directives concerning doctoral studies at the EPFL of November 21, 2005²,

decrees:

1. Field of Application

The studies regulation concerning the doctoral program in Computational and Quantitative Biology (hereinafter: EDCB program) sets forth the rules relating to the study plan of the EDCB program as well as the candidacy exam for the formal admission to prepare for the doctoral thesis in the EDCB program of the EPFL. Furthermore, it reiterates and details the application of certain essential rules concerning the doctorate at the EPFL.

2. Study Plan

- 2.1 The study plan of the EDCB program requires **12 ECTS credits** (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).
- 2.2 At least **4 of these 12 ECTS credits** must be obtained during the first year of doctoral studies (art. 8 al. 1 let. c of the Ordinance on the Doctorate and art. 4 al. 3 pt. 1 of the Directives concerning doctoral studies at the EPFL).
- 2.3 The **required ECTS credits** may be obtained by successfully passing either EDCB doctoral courses, other doctoral courses at the EPFL, EPFL Bachelor or Master courses, or courses at a Swiss or foreign university. Enrolling in EDCB doctoral courses do not require any prior approval. To enroll in an EPFL course offered by another doctoral program, as well as Master and Bachelor level courses, as well as courses offered outside EPFL, the doctoral candidate must obtain the prior approval of the thesis Director, in accordance with the terms established by the EDCB program. Furthermore, credits obtained at a Swiss or foreign university (outside EPFL) require the prior approval also of the EDCB program Director, in accordance with the

¹ RS 414.133.2

² EPFL LEX 2.4.1

terms established by the EDCB program. For doctoral courses passed at other Swiss or foreign universities, the credit equivalence is determined on a case-by-case basis by the program Director. The doctoral candidate needs to submit an outside credit request form to the thesis Director and to the program Director for pre-approval, in order to ensure the validation of the pre-determined credits after successful completion of the course.

- 2.4 Up to **4 ECTS credits** – but not those required for the first year – can be chosen by the doctoral candidate among all the EPFL doctoral course books (including the transferable skills courses) without the approval of neither the program Committee nor the thesis Director (Doctoral Commission decision, Cdoct 107, May 2015).

3. Mentoring

- 3.1 Within 3 months after enrolment, the doctoral program assigns a mentor from its pool to each doctoral candidate. The doctoral candidates may change mentor with the agreement of the program Director.
- 3.2 The mentor remains anonymous with respect to the thesis Director to ensure confidentiality (it is up to the candidate to keep this anonymity or not). The mentor offers guidance to doctoral candidates regarding academic or career choices, as well as the resolution of any difficulties met within the context of their training, in particular regarding the preparation of their thesis or cases of conflict.
- 3.3 The candidates can contact their mentor whenever they deem it necessary. The candidate and the mentor confer at least once a year as part of the annual report. Exchanges between candidates and their mentor should remain confidential unless both parties agree to disclose to the program Director.
- 3.4 It is recommended that the candidate's mentor does not participate in nor presides over the jury for either the candidacy or the oral exam.

4. Candidacy Exam

- 4.1 To be formally admitted to start a doctoral thesis at the EPFL, the doctoral candidate must successfully pass the candidacy exam at the end of the 1st year of doctoral studies (art. 6 and 8 al. 1 let. a of the Ordinance on the Doctorate and art. 8 al. 1 and 2 of the Directives concerning doctoral studies at the EPFL).
- One week before the candidacy exam the candidate should send to the jury a written research plan of no more than 20 pages discussing the research proposal. The examination consists in an oral presentation of approximately thirty minutes by the candidate about the research proposal, followed by questions from the jury. The candidate must demonstrate the originality of the thesis subject, the objectives and methods envisaged, as well as the hypothesis and related scientific arguments, including the general context of the thesis subject, state of the art of research in the area, position of the candidate's work within the research area, plan and methodology for the research project, and the timeframe for its completion.
- 4.2 The jury of the candidacy exam is composed of the jury President (who must be an EDCB thesis Director with PO, PA, PT, or MER status, or part of the EDCB Committee, see yearly list of potential jury presidents), the thesis Director and thesis co-Director (when applicable), as well as two experts in the field (one of whom may be external to the EPFL). Internal experts may be professors or senior research scientists (MERs) or other EPFL collaborators authorized to fulfil the function of thesis Director at the EPFL. External experts are required to hold a PhD.
- 4.3 After jury deliberations, the jury President verbally informs the candidate of the result of the candidacy exam. Possible jury recommendations are communicated in writing to the

candidate. Thereafter, the candidate receives from the EPFL, a decision formally admitting or refusing the start of a doctoral thesis at the EPFL (art. 8 al. 2 of the Ordinance on the Doctorate at the EPFL).

5. Annual Report

During the thesis work, the doctoral candidate has the obligation to submit an annual progress report each year, starting one year after the candidacy exam. The candidate submits a summary of the work progress, as well as a point-by-point self-evaluation. In parallel, the thesis Director (and co-Director when applicable) complete an analogous assessment of the work progress. After a joint discussion the report is cosigned by the candidate and the thesis Director (and co-Director when applicable). The candidate then also discusses the progress and wider context with the mentor and they confirm to have met in the annual report, without reporting the content of the discussion which is confidential. Finally, the program Director will add his/her signature to the report. The candidate ensures that the above process is finalized within one month (art. 10 al. 3 and al. 4 of the Ordinance on the Doctorate at the EPFL).

6. Thesis Oral Exam

The thesis Oral Exam (OE) should take place within 4 years after the enrolment date (see Ordinance on the doctorate, art. 9 al. 2).

Under exceptional circumstances, the thesis Oral Exam may be delayed. An extension, typically no longer than 6 months, must be well justified. The request should be submitted more than two months prior to the fourth year of enrolment (for more information, please refer to the section "[End of thesis](#)" on the EDCB webpage).

7. Final Provisions

The present regulation shall take effect on April 7, 2022, and replaces any prior EDCB doctoral program regulation.

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