

Regulation concerning the Doctoral Program in Civil and Environmental Engineering (EDCE)

Please note that only the French version is legally binding.

Date of entry into force February 1st 2024

The EDCE Doctoral Program Committee,

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

decrees:

1. Field of application

The regulation concerning the Doctoral Program in Civil and Environmental Engineering (hereinafter: "EDCE program") sets forth the rules relating to the study plan of the EDCE program as well as the candidacy exam for the formal admission to start the doctoral thesis in the EDCE program of the EPFL. Furthermore, it reiterates and details the application of certain essential rules concerning the doctorate at EPFL.

2. Study Plan

- 2.1 The study plan of the EDCE Program requires **12 ECTS credits** (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).
- 2.2 At least **4 ECTS of these 12 ECTS credits** must be obtained during the first year of doctoral studies.
 - At least one of the courses in the "EDCE first year mandatory courses" list must be successfully completed during the first year.
 - Credits from Transversal Skills courses do not count in the 4 first year ECTS credits. You can follow the courses, but the Transversal Skills ECTS credits will only be validated after passing the candidacy exam.
- 2.3 The **8 remaining ECTS credits** can be chosen by the doctoral candidate from all EPFL doctoral program's course lists or – upon approval from the program Director – from Master courses or courses from Swiss or Foreign universities, where credit equivalency is determined by EDCE.
- 2.4 Up to 4 of the 12 credits can be from Transversal Skills courses.

¹ RS 414.133.2

² EPFL LEX 2.4.1

3. Mentoring

- 3.1 Within 3 months after enrolment, the doctoral program assigns a mentor from its pool to each doctoral candidate. The 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 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 not allowed that the candidate's mentor does participate or 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 not later than 12 months after enrolment (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). Ten days prior to the exam, the candidate submits a research proposal of a maximum of 20 pages length. The candidate holds an oral presentation of maximum 20 minutes 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 related scientific hypotheses and arguments, including the general context of the thesis subject, state of the art of research in the area, position of the doctoral candidate's work within the research area, plan and methodology for the research project, and the timeframe for its completion.
- 4.2 The jury includes:
 - the thesis Director
 - the thesis co-Director where applicable
 - a President – a Professor or Senior Scientist (MER) affiliated to EDCE
 - an expert in the research field, not necessarily from EPFL, but holder of a PhD.
- 4.3 The jury President may not be a member of the same research unit (chair or laboratory) as the thesis Director.
- 4.4 The jury composition is confirmed by the program Director.
- 4.5 After jury deliberations, the President verbally informs the candidate of the result of the candidacy exam. Possible jury recommendations are communicated in writing thereafter. The candidate subsequently receives from EPFL a decision to formally admit or refuse the start of a doctoral thesis at EPFL (art. 8 al. 2 of the Ordinance on the Doctorate at EPFL).

5. Annual Report

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 After a collaborative meeting to discuss the report, it is cosigned by the candidate and the thesis Director (and co-Director when applicable).
- 5.4 The candidate 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.
- 5.5 Finally, the report is sent to the program Director, the candidate, the thesis Director (and co-Director when applicable) and the mentor.
- 5.6 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. Final Provisions

The present regulation shall take effect on February 1st 2024 and replaces any prior EDCE doctoral program regulation.

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