

Regulation concerning the Doctoral Program in Chemistry and Chemical Engineering (EDCH)

01.05.2022

The EDCH Doctoral Program Commission,

taking into account art. 3 al. 3 and 6 al. 2 of the Ordinance on the Doctorate conferred by the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne of January 26, 1998¹ and 2 al. 4 ch. 3 of the Directives concerning doctoral studies at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne of November 21, 2005,² decrees:

1. Field of Application

The regulation concerning the EDCH doctoral program (hereinafter: EDCH program) sets forth the rules relating to the study plan of the EDCH program as well as the candidacy examination for the formal admission to start the doctoral thesis in the EDCH 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 EDCH program requires **12 ECTS credits** (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).
- 2.2 At least **4 ECTS credits of these 12 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. 2 pt. 1 of the Directives concerning doctoral studies at the EPFL).
- 2.3 The **remaining ECTS** may be obtained by successfully passing other doctoral courses at the EPFL, Master courses at the EPFL (provided the courses were not taken during the studies), ex-cathedra courses, summer schools organized by scientific associations in Switzerland or abroad. The ECTS validation process needs approval from the EDCH program director. A maximum number of 2 ECTS credits may be awarded by successfully passing conferences/workshops. The study plan of the EDCH requires seminars from the program. At least 6 ECTS needs to be Science or Engineering related.

¹ RS 414.133.2

² EPFL LEX 2.4.1

- 2.4 For courses that focus on transferrable skills, the ECTS can count towards the required ECTS credits for the first year of doctoral studies.

3. Candidacy Exam

- 3.1 To be formally admitted to starting a doctoral thesis at the EPFL, the doctoral student must successfully pass the candidacy examination 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). The candidacy examination is an oral presentation of 20 minutes by the doctoral student about the doctoral student's research proposal. It is followed by questions from the jury regulated by Jury President. The doctoral student 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 doctoral students work within the research area, plan, and methodology for the research project as well as the timeframe for its completion.
- 3.2 Jury composition: The jury of the candidacy exam is composed of the PhD advisor and the PhD co-advisor (if any), the chair, and one expert. **The expert** must be external of the laboratory affiliated with one of the Doctoral programs at EPFL. **The chair** must be chosen from the list of the program's possible chair members. This list is validated every year and posted on the EDCH website. The jury composition is proposed by the PhD advisor(s) and approved by the EDCH program director. The role of the chair is to ensure a fair and regular examination procedure in accordance with the regulations of the EPFL and the EDCH program. A member of the EDCH committee may join the exam as an observer if requested by the doctoral student or PhD advisor(s). The observer cannot ask questions or participate in the discussion and may not participate in the final decision.
The doctoral student's mentor cannot be a jury member.
- 3.3 Jury proposal: The jury proposal should be filled a minimum 2 weeks prior to the exam date. The research plan (recommended limitation of 20 pages - pdf), included the signed cover page (PhD advisor(s) and doctoral student), should be sent to the EDCH program administration min. 7 days ahead of the exam date before noon. Failure to meet this deadline could result in cancelling of the exam.
- 3.4 Instructions for the exam: The presentation has a firm limit of 20minutes followed by questions and discussion session. The doctoral student steps out and the deliberation is taking place.
- 3.5 After jury deliberations, the PhD advisor(s) verbally informs the doctoral student of the result of the candidacy exam. Possible jury recommendations are communicated in writing thereafter. The doctoral student then receives from the EPFL, a decision to formally admit or refuse the start of a doctoral thesis at the EPFL (art. 8 al. 2 of the Ordinance on the Doctorate).

4. Annual Report

- 4.1 Six months after registration into the EDCH program, the so-called 6 month report is required. This report serves to inform the doctoral student of the

progress and identify any areas needing improvement or advice. It involves a discussion and a self-assessment meeting between the doctoral student, the PhD advisor(s), and the mentor.

- 4.2 During the thesis work, the doctoral student has the obligation to submit an annual progress report each year, starting one year after the candidacy exam. The doctoral student submits a summary of the work progress, as well as a point-by-point self-evaluation. In parallel, the PhD advisor (and co-PhD advisor when applicable) completes an analogous assessment of the work progress. After a joint discussion, the report is co-signed by the doctoral student and the PhD advisor (and co-PhD advisor when applicable). The doctoral student then also discusses the progress and wider context with the mentor. Finally, the program director approves. The PhD student 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).

5. Mentoring

Within 3 months after enrolment, each doctoral student chooses a mentor. If not, the program assigns a mentor from its pool. The doctoral student may change mentor with the agreement of the program director.

The mentor remains anonymous with respect to the PhD advisor(s) to ensure confidentiality (it is up to the doctoral student to keep this anonymity or not). The mentor offers guidance to doctoral students 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.

The doctoral students can contact their mentor whenever they deem it necessary. The doctoral student and the mentor confer at least once a year as part of the annual report. Exchanges between doctoral students and their mentor should remain confidential unless both parties agree to disclose to the program director.

6. Prolongations

EPFL has a four years PhD program. If a PhD takes much longer than expected the EDCH committee has decided to structure this process:

- If the PhD student and PhD advisor(s) ask for an extension of up to 6 months, this will be automatically accepted if in the request it is confirmed that the oral exam will take place within the 6 months and the necessary funding is available.
- If an extension is needed that is longer than 6 months, the request needs to include detailed planning of the completion of the thesis. An ad-hoc committee of two EDCH committee members will discuss this planning talk with both the supervisor and the PhD student. If the committee concludes that the planning will realistically lead to the completion of the thesis, positive advice will be given to the EDCH program director. The committee then holds bi-monthly meetings with the student and advisor to monitor the progress. In case of negative advice, the EDCH program director will join the ad-hoc committee, and together with the PhD student and PhD advisor(s) a decision on how to proceed will be made.

The above procedure does not apply for those PhD students for which the clock has stopped because of medical reasons, maternity leave, etc.

The present regulation shall take effect on 01.05.2022 and replaces any prior EDCH doctoral program regulation.

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