

Regulation concerning the Doctoral Program in Mechanics (EDME)

Please note that only the French version is legally binding.

Date of entry into force: October 20, 2025

The EDME Doctoral Program Committee,

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, 2005²,

decrees:

1. Field of Application

The regulation concerning the doctoral program in Mechanics (hereinafter: EDME program) sets forth the rules relating to the study plan of the EDME program as well as the candidacy exam for the formal admission to start the doctoral thesis in the EDME 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 EDME program requires **12 ECTS credits** (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).
- 2.2 At least **4 ECTS credits** must be obtained during the first year of doctoral studies and prior to the candidacy exam.
- 2.3 At least **4 ECTS credits** must be obtained from courses listed in the EDME program course book.
The remaining 8 ECTS credits may be chosen freely among EPFL Master and Doctoral courses. External courses may instead be accepted under conditions specified in 2.5.
- 2.4 Credits from transversal skill courses are limited to a maximum of **4 ECTS credits**. Transversal skill courses do **not** count towards the first-year requirement (2.2).
- 2.5 Credit for external courses can be accepted as equivalent to EPFL courses on a case-by-case basis. The request requires the approval of the thesis Director and the doctoral program and must fulfill the conditions set by the EDME program (homepage).

¹ RS 414.133.2

² EPFL LEX 2.4.1

3. Candidacy Exam

- 3.1 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). The candidacy exam consists in an oral presentation of approximately thirty minutes by the candidate about his/her research proposal. It is 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 doctoral candidate's work within the research area, plan and methodology for the research project, as well as the timeframe for its completion.
- 3.2 The jury of the candidacy exam is composed of a President (who is a member of the EDME program), the thesis Director and the thesis co-Director (if applicable), one expert (from EPFL, external to the laboratory of the candidate and the thesis Director), and optionally a second expert.
- 3.3 After jury deliberations, the jury President verbally informs the candidate of the result of the candidacy exam. Possible jury recommendations are communicated in writing thereafter. The candidate 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

During their thesis work, doctoral candidates are required to submit an annual report on the progress of their work, with a self-evaluation, to their thesis Director(s), each year. In parallel, the thesis Director(s) completes an assessment of the progress of the work. After a joint discussion recorded in the report, the thesis Director(s) gives an appraisal, and the report is shared with the doctoral programme (art. 10 al. 3 of the Ordinance on the doctorate conferred by EPFL). The candidate and the thesis Director(s) shall ensure that the above process is completed within the deadlines specified by the doctoral programme.

5. Mentoring

- 5.1 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. 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).
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The candidates can contact their mentor whenever they deem it necessary. The candidate and the mentor confer at least once a year, for example 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.
- 5.4 It is recommended that the candidate's mentor does not participate in nor preside over the jury for either the candidacy or the oral exam.

6. Final Provisions

The present regulation shall take effect on the October 20, 2025 and replace any prior EDME doctoral program regulation.

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