

Regulation concerning the Doctoral Program in Molecular Life Sciences (EDMS)

Please note that only the French version is legally binding.

Date of entry into force: June 21, 2022

The EDMS 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, 2005,²

decrees:

1. Field of Application

The regulation concerning the doctoral program in Molecular Life Sciences (hereinafter: EDMS program) sets forth the rules relating to the study plan of the EDMS program as well as the candidacy exam for the formal admission to start the doctoral thesis in the EDMS 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 EDMS 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. These credits must be acquired by passing three of the Research Rotation Modules offered by EDMS (1 ECTS credit per course), plus any other course listed in the EDMS course book.

¹ RS 414.133.2

² EPFL LEX 2.4.1

- 2.3 Up to **4 ECTS credits, chosen freely** by the student, can be obtained by successfully passing other doctoral courses or transferable skills courses from the EPFL doctoral course book (Doctoral Commission decision, Cdoct 107, May 2015).
- 2.4 The remaining **4 ECTS credits** can be obtained by successfully passing other doctoral courses at EPFL, or at another university **with the approval of the EDMS program Director** and in accordance with the terms established by the EDMS program. Courses other than doctoral courses (e.g., Master's courses or Summer school) must also be approved by the EDMS program Director. For doctoral courses at a foreign university, the credit equivalence is determined case-by-case. The maximal number of credits which may be obtained by successfully passing such a course is 4 ECTS credits.

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 of a written report and an oral presentation. The written report will be submitted to the jury of the candidacy exam 10 days before the exam. The oral presentation is of approximately thirty minutes by the candidate about his/her research during the first year and future directions. It is followed by questions from the jury. The candidate must demonstrate the originality of his/her 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 time frame for its completion.
- 3.2 The jury of the candidacy exam is composed of the thesis Director (and co-Director, if applicable), plus at least two experts, one external of the EPF/ETH domain and one internal (MER or other EPFL collaborator authorized to fulfil the function of thesis Director at the EPFL and approved by the EDMS program Director). A member of the EDMS program who is or has been a member of the Program Committee chairs the jury with the approval of the program Director.
- 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. One second attempt to pass the candidacy exam is permitted (art. 8 al. 2 of the Ordinance on the Doctorate).

4. 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).

5. Mentoring

- 5.1 Within 3 months of immatriculation, each doctoral candidate chooses a mentor. If this is not done within this period, the program assigns the candidate a mentor from the pools of thesis directors affiliated to the program. The doctoral candidates may change mentor with the agreement of the program Director.
- 5.2 The mentor remains anonymous to the thesis Director, except if the candidate asks to choose him-her together with the thesis Director. 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 candidate should meet with the mentor, at least annually, primarily to discuss anything pertaining to the progress of the thesis, including the annual report. Like the program Director, the mentor is bound by confidentiality. If requested by the candidate, the mentor can be asked to make suggestions to resolve possible issues between the candidate and the thesis Director or any other EPFL staff, at least in matters related to science that require the expertise of another professor. In other cases, candidates may consult other sources of advice or help at EPFL listed at <https://www.epfl.ch/about/respect/>.
- 5.4 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.

6. Final Provisions

The present regulation shall take effect on June 21, 2022 and replaces any prior EDMS doctoral program regulation.

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