The ABC of your Master’s project (PDM) at the SCGC

Glossary

- **PDM:** Master’s project
- **SCGC / Section:** Section of Chemistry and chemical engineering
- **EPFL supervisor:** = thesis director
  ISIC professor who will be the EPFL supervisor for your PDM outside of EPFL
  EPFL Professor who will host you in his/her lab at EPFL
- **Local supervisor:** your supervisor in the company / university outside of EPFL

The basics

You are allowed to start your PDM with max 8 missing credits, which will have to be caught up during your PDM. Arrangements are to be discussed with your PDM direct supervisor (lab or company) and then communicated to the Section.

I am a Chemistry student

- Project II in a company → PDM in academia
- Project II in academia → PDM either in industry or in academia

I am a Chemical engineering student

- Minor → PDM in industry
- Internship → PDM in academia

The Master’s project must be successfully completed within two semesters of the successful completion of the Master’s cycle (after you have succeeded MA1, MA2 and validated your grades for MA3).
Your PDM from A to Z

Abroad

Nothing to be validated by the Section. All arrangements have to be made by you.

Please be aware that some universities will also ask you to pay the tuition fees locally. This will not be coordinated nor covered by EPFL. You should also have your own insurances.

EPFL does not offer grants for PDM outside of Europe. However, PDM at ETHZ or in one of the 4 research Institutes of the ETH Board (EAWAG, EMPA, PSI, WSL) are supported with an allowance of CHF 500 for the whole project. Exchange through an agreement with one of EPFL’s partner universities in Europe may be supported by an amount of CHF 380 per month (flat rate of 5 months).

For more information on organising your exchange abroad, please contact the Mobility Office at EPFL.

⚠️ Please make sure to start the procedures for VISA obtention ASAP!

Confidentiality

NDA are forbidden in the frame of master projects. Therefore, we encourage you to be extra cautious with some companies, which do demand for NDAs to be signed off. PDMs at those companies are consequently impossible to confirm. In case of doubts, please contact the Section.

Academic assignments like PDM should not generate results classified as confidential. By nature, assignments conducted in academia must always be able to publish their findings. Hence why, confidentiality should be treated as an exception.

Whatever the conditions, the thesis report should not contain any confidential information and should be downloadable in IS-Academia as is. Confidential parts can be removed before uploading the project in IS-Academia. Your PDM will anyway never be published without your consent and are not in open-source once downloaded in IS-Academia. This means that, should your local supervisor not want your PDM / part of your PDM (for a given time-period or indefinitely) to be published, there is no worries to be had as it will anyway not be the case.

Please note that, as students, you are not allowed to make any formal commitment to the company before having found a professor willing to supervise your master project in industry. The professor who will be supervising you will make a first contact with the company prior to any commitment by the parties. Please do not interfer in this process.

Confidentiality issues will be discussed between the EPFL advisor and the company directly at the time of the confirmation of the PDM. FYI, in case of confidentially request by the company, your supervisor will use the “EPFL agreement for master project”.

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Delivery

Non-confidential

Electronic version (pdf) of the PDM to be uploaded on IS-Academia. Paper or electronic version to be submitted by you/your supervisor (to be agreed with your supervisor) to your expert(s).

Confidential

The report has to be delivered in person on a USB stick at the section (BCH 3312) by 12:00, unless the project is taking place abroad. No poster! Paper or electronic version to be submitted by you/your supervisor (to be agreed with your supervisor) to your expert(s).

Should you wish a paper version to be officially stamped, please contact the Section.

Expert

Must be external and will be chosen by your EPFL supervisor.

Language of the report

Your choice: the report can be written both in French or in English.

Length

At EPFL: 17 weeks*
Outside EPFL (industry or academia): 25 weeks*

*+ 1 week in all cases if the PDM duration covers the Easter or Christmas holidays. Holidays arrangements are not fixed and have to be discussed with your host!

Note: if you are a teaching assistant besides completing your PDM, your submission date may be prolonged

Magistrale

Organised by EPFL. Info will be sent to you in the course of late August – September. The registration process to the event is dealt solely by EPFL Events team.

Oral examination

Recommendation: 2-4 weeks after the delivery of the PDM. However, in reality, your thesis defense can take place as soon as on the day after your submission date and until 4 weeks max but no later than 10.09 in order to be eligible for the Magistrale.

However, your oral exam can in no case take place before the submission date as confirmed in IS-Academia.

The thesis defense can take place either in person or via video-conference.
**Posters**

Presenting your PDM as a poster is mandatory. However, it is not part of the final grade and will not have to be presented during the oral exam. It has to be brought to the Section’s office 4 weeks latest after the report submission deadline, but in any case by the end of the 3rd week in September. It will be printed by the EPFL repro center and paid for by the section (inform you are a SCGC student and give your name / only 1 printing per person, format A0, in standard version). No need to fill-in the repro order form. Please count approx. 2 weeks for the printing.

*in case of absence: please leave it behind the door, in a neighbouring office or at the BCH chemical store to our attention

If you are on mobility and cannot come in person, please send a .pdf file of the poster by email to the EPFL repro center and ask another student to bring it to the section once ready on your behalf.

Basic rule: make sure to indicate the name of your supervisors (EPFL and local if any) as well as the name of your host lab / company on the poster.

If needed, [this](#) poster template can be used. There are no other rules edicted from the Section to follow regarding the presentation of your poster. This has to be discussed within your host group / company.

⚠️ PAY ATTENTION TO THE SUMMER OPENING TIMES OF THE EPFL REPRO CENTER!

**Posters exhibition**

The poster exhibition takes place in September just before the Magistrale. The 3 best posters are rewarded by the section.

**Presentation of the report**

There are no rules regarding neither the layout, nor the number of pages from the Section. Any potential requirements have to be discussed with your EPFL supervisor (will depend on the rules of the lab on how the research works should be presented).

If you encounter issues with the sizes of the images used in your report, please use a downsizing programme.

**Prizes**

Prix Firmenich: internal to SCGC.
This prize rewards the best PDM in chemistry and the best PDM in chemical engineering. Only PDMs with a grade of 6 pre-selected by the juries are taking. The selection will then be made by a jury of Prof. / MER from the SCGC. No registration from students.

There are other prizes rewarded by EPFL or companies. Full list available [here](#). You can register to up to 3 prizes (Prix Firmenich does not count). Please take note that confidential PDM will not be eligible for prizes.

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Registration

1. As soon as you have a clearer idea of your PDM (even if not all details are confirmed yet), please register to the Section’s registration form. This is very important for the Section to know in order to be able to check if everything is in order and according to the rules before going any further.
2. The Master’s project must be registered on IS-Academia between the opening of the academic registration form (FRAC) and the Friday of the second week of the semester. A late registration fee of CHF 50 is due for a registration after this deadline (the student should come in person to the Student Services Desk).

Scholarships

As such, EPFL does not offer scholarships for master’s projects abroad. A little financial contribution is offered for PDMs conducted in partner universities (including ETHZ). Please see the Mobility Office website for more information.

Start

An Autumn PDM can start as soon as the results of the exam sessions are out (end of July) – 31st December.

A Spring PDM can start as soon as the results of the exam sessions are out (mid-February) - 31st May.

A PDM must always start on a Monday and be submitted on a Friday at noon.

Supervisor (= thesis director)

For PDM in industry, you will have to find an ISIC professor, who will act as your EPFL supervisor. This must be a Prof. / MER affiliated to ISIC. He/she will be your primary supervisor, who will validate your subject and finalise all contractual aspects with the company.

Should you choose to be supervised by a professor from another section, you must also still have a supervisor linked to ISIC, who will then be your main supervisor. For clarification or advice, please contact with the Section.