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: 1st January 2014

The EDMS 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 EDMS doctoral program (hereinafter: EDMS program) sets forth the rules relating to the study plan of the EDMS program as well as the candidacy examination 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 ECTS credits of these 12 credits must be obtained during the first year of doctoral studies. These credits must be acquired by successfully passing the three mandatory courses named Practicals in the course book (Research Rotation Modules, 1 ECTS credit per course) available in the list of courses offered by the EDMS, plus another 1-credit course also available in the EDMS course book.

¹ RS 414.133.2
² EPFL LEX 2.4.1
2.3 The remainder of the credit requirement may be obtained by successfully passing other doctoral courses at the EPFL, at a Swiss or foreign university with the approval of the EDMS program director and in accordance with the terms established by the EDMS program. As a general rule, a credit equivalence of up to a maximum of 4 ECTS credits is granted for doctoral courses passed at a Swiss university (including ETHZ). For doctoral courses passed at a foreign university, the credit equivalence is determined on a case-by-case basis. Any courses other than doctoral courses (e.g., Master's courses or Summer school) must also be approved by the EDMS program director. The maximum 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 candidate must successfully pass the candidacy examination at the end of her/his 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 approximately thirty minutes by the candidate about her/his research proposal. It is followed by questions from the jury. The candidate must demonstrate the originality of her/his 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 thesis director, as well as of two experts, 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) and one external of the EPFL. 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 thesis director 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 her/his doctoral thesis work, the doctoral candidate has the obligation to submit an annual report, first time one year after her/his candidacy exam, on the progress of her/his work first to the thesis director, who in turn provides written input and reports to the EDMS program director within a deadline of one month (art. 10 al. 3 and al. 4 of the Ordinance on the Doctorate) and then to her/his mentor.

5. Teaching Assistants

In accordance with the job description of her/his work contract (in principle defined according to the application rules of October 1, 2006 concerning the directives governing the employment and working relationships of assistants at the EPFL of October 1, 2005)
the doctoral candidate hired as an assistant, is under the obligation to participate in EPFL teaching activities to the equivalent of 20% of her/his 100% working hours.

6. Mentoring

An EDMS mentor is appointed for each doctoral student by the thesis director and the doctoral student, as soon as registered, with the approval of the EDMS program director. The student should see her/his mentor at least once per year, for example when the annual report is handed in. The role of the mentor is to mediate between the doctoral student and her/his thesis director, other faculty or the administration. A doctoral student may directly contact her/his mentor, who will make suggestions to resolve possible issues.

7. Final Provisions

The present regulation shall take effect on 1st January 2014 and replaces any prior EDMS doctoral program regulation.

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