1. Prerequisites

The candidate must have already acquired fourteen credits in his/her study plan.

The thesis director will agree on a date for the candidacy exam with the candidate, jury members and the director of the doctoral program.

The candidate submits a first version of his/her research plan to his/her thesis director no less than 15 working days prior to the date of the exam.

2. Exam Format

The candidacy exam includes an oral presentation by the candidate of his/her research proposal and is followed by questions from the jury members.

The presentation will last approximately 30 minutes and will be conducted in front of a specially convened jury. Members of the EPFL teaching body may attend the exam. They are required to respect the confidential nature of the exam and will not be permitted to ask questions of the candidate.

The jury is composed of one member of the Doctoral Program Committee (with the exception of the doctoral student representative) who will serve as the president, one expert (according to the Internal Regulations of EPFL), the thesis director, and the co-supervisor (if applicable).

The jury president ensures the fair and good conduct of the candidacy exam.

The composition of the jury is subject to the approval of the director of the doctoral program.

The presentation will consist primarily of an exposé of the candidate’s thesis project, including:

- the general context of the thesis subject
- the state of the art of research in the area
- the position of the candidate’s work within the research area
- the plan and research methodology of the thesis project
- the timeframe for the research work

During his/her presentation the candidate will demonstrate the originality of his/her thesis subject, the objectives and methods envisaged, as well as the hypothesis and the related scientific arguments.

3. Evaluation criteria

The jury evaluates the candidate’s presentation on the base of the following principal criteria:
- the pertinence and originality of the thesis subject
- the quality of scientific argument
- the scientific value of the candidate
- the candidate’s ability to conduct research
- the clarity and rigour of the research plan
- the candidate’s responses to the jury’s questions

After the presentation, the jury deliberates in the absence of the candidate.

The jury will decide whether the candidate has passed or failed the address, and may provide recommendations to the candidate.

The final decision is taken by a majority of the jury after its deliberation. If the jury cannot come to a majority decision, the thesis director will decide the success or failure of the candidacy exam. The jury will define, where applicable, the conditions to be fulfilled by the candidate in re-taking the exam and will fix the time schedule.

4. Enrollment for the exam

Requests for enrolment for the candidacy exam may be made up to two months before the end of the 12 months after enrolment in the doctoral program. They should be addressed to the director of the doctoral program.

The request contains the following elements:

- the name of the candidate
- the subject of the thesis
- the list of doctoral courses taken by the candidate
- the composition of the exam jury
- the date, location and time of the candidacy exam

The director of the doctoral program will give his/her decision on this request within one month.

The director of the doctoral program will fix the definitive conditions for the exam. He may, if necessary, delegate this task to a member of the doctoral program committee.

5. Possibility to re-take the exam

In case of failure of the candidacy exam, the program secretariat will provide a date to the candidate for a second and final attempt. This date will be within three months of the first candidacy exam.

In principle, the format and the jury members of the second candidacy exam will be the same as those for the first.

6. Record of the exam

The jury president will write an official record of the candidacy exam. He will forward this record to the secretariat of the doctoral program, for the attention of the director of the doctoral program, within one week of the exam.

The official record may contain, where applicable, an appendix for the candidate’s attention which includes the jury’s recommendations.
7. Communication of the result

The thesis director verbally informs the candidate of the result of the candidacy exam immediately thereafter. The director of the doctoral program or his/her secretariat will inform the candidate of the result in writing with a copy of the official record.
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The candidate must have already acquired fourteen credits in his/her study plan.

The thesis director will agree on a date for the candidacy exam with the candidate, jury members and the director of the doctoral program.

The candidate submits a first version of his/her research plan to his/her thesis director no less than 15 working days prior to the date of the exam.

2. Exam Format

The candidacy exam includes an oral presentation by the candidate of his/her research proposal and is followed by questions from the jury members.

The presentation will last approximately 30 minutes and will be conducted in front of a specially convened jury. Members of the EPFL teaching body may attend the exam. They are required to respect the confidential nature of the exam and will not be permitted to ask questions of the candidate.

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The jury president ensures the fair and good conduct of the candidacy exam.

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- the timeframe for the research work

During his/her presentation the candidate will demonstrate the originality of his/her thesis subject, the objectives and methods envisaged, as well as the hypothesis and the related scientific arguments.

3. Evaluation criteria

The jury evaluates the candidate’s presentation on the base of the following principal criteria:
In the absence of the candidate, the jury deliberates. The final decision is taken by a majority of the jury after its deliberation. If the jury cannot come to a majority decision, the thesis director decides the success or failure of the candidacy exam. The jury defines, where applicable, the conditions to be fulfilled by the candidate in re-taking the exam and fixes the schedule.

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