

Directive setting out the conditions underpinning EPFL's COVID-19 **protection plan**

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1. Introduction

The aim of this directive is to set forth the guidelines for the “new normal” on campus from the start of the 2020–2021 academic year. The measures we adopted previously enabled us to gradually bring staff back on campus and then to hold the exam session in person. The public-health situation remains a major concern. These new measures are designed to allow students and employees back on site – so that the campus can once again bring people together and foster interaction – and to prevent the virus from spreading, as that could lead to new, more restrictive measures.

All the directives we’ve issued and measures we’ve taken, and all the efforts we’ve asked of people, are guided by these objectives, and we appreciate your cooperation.

2. Main objectives of EPFL’s protection plan

- Define the health and safety requirements that must be implemented and complied with in order to safeguard EPFL students and staff members.
- Enable EPFL’s protection plan to be implemented in a decentralized manner by unit and laboratory heads.
- Maintain and restore ties among all members of the EPFL community.
- Achieve the best possible balance between in-person activities and compliance with health and safety measures.

3. Main measures

The following measures must serve as a guide to implementing the protection plan:

- Everyone must wear a mask in EPFL buildings at all times and at all EPFL sites, including in their workplace and in the lecture halls (see Appendix 1).
- Room occupancy must be organized so that a distance of at least 1.5 meters can be kept between people at all times.
- Meetings must be held by video conference whenever possible in order to limit gatherings and travel.
- In order to prevent the virus from spreading on campus, anyone with COVID-19 symptoms (see [Appendix 1](#)) is not permitted on campus.
- Measures will be put in place so that we can carry out a contact tracing survey if so requested by the public health authorities.

4. Health and safety guidelines

Detailed information on the health and safety guidelines can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

5. Units' operational management

Each unit is responsible for setting up a work schedule that complies with the measures contained in this document. The main points to keep in mind are as follows:

- Staff members should work in person on campus some of the time and remotely some of the time. EPFL's goal is for half of staff members to be working on the Lausanne campus and other sites at a time.
- Staff members must work at least one full day per week on campus.
- Unit heads can determine how much time their staff members work on campus, taking into account the type of activities and individual needs, as long as the arrangement complies with this directive.
- Full-day shifts are preferable in order to minimize the risk of the virus spreading and to limit the number of daily commutes.
- Unit heads must keep an accurate record of everyone who was physically present on their unit's premises over the previous 14 days (see point 6).
- Starting on 1 October 2020, staff members who work remotely must do so from Switzerland or a border zone (in the latter case, until 31 December 2020).
- Medical certificate: until further notice, a medical certificate is required if an employee is absent for six days or more.
- People at especially high risk: please refer to [Appendix 1](#).

6. Attendance lists

The cantonal public-health authorities require EPFL to be prepared to help trace people who, over the previous 14 days, came into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. For this reason, unit heads must keep attendance lists. These lists represent a form of personal data processing and must be handled as follows:

- Attendance must be kept using this template, which contains the following information only:
 - last name
 - first name
 - the unit to which the person belongs
 - the date the person was on campus
- You must only use this information for its intended purpose, which is to help the cantonal public-health authorities trace people who, over the previous 14 days, came into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- You must retain this information for 14 days, after which it must be destroyed.
- Unit heads are requested to keep a list of private telephone numbers, which will only be used in the event of a request from the cantonal medical service.

7. Remote working: acquiring IT equipment

EPFL has decided to grant a one-time credit of up to CHF 300 per staff member, from their unit's budget, in order to acquire IT equipment that will make it easier for them to work from home over the long term. You can view the list of authorized equipment (monitor, keyboard, mouse, webcam, etc.) in Catalyse.

The unit heads are responsible for approving requests that will be covered by their budget and must ensure the funds are used properly and within the aforementioned limit. An inventory of equipment purchased with these funds is not required.

8. Rules for students to come to campus

8.1. From Monday through Saturday

Only those people listed below are allowed on campus and authorized to use the School's premises and equipment, and they must comply with the health and safety measures at all times:

- Students who belong to the group authorized to attend classes in person that day
- Students authorized to attend practical-work and lab sessions in person
- First-year students attending the Saturday exercise sessions.

People engaged in the following activities are also authorized to be on campus, as long as they comply with this directive:

- **MAKE** cross-disciplinary projects: students can go to the designated site to work on their project. But they must first sign up with the professor and/or the project coordinator or the professor in charge of the laboratory.
- Tutors and student assistants can come to campus to carry out their responsibilities.
- People who have an appointment with an EPFL counselor or psychotherapist.
- Students are authorized to come to campus to attend events (such as conferences, or events held by student associations).
- People involved in student associations can come to campus as long as they comply with this directive, including point 5 in particular.

People in the list above are not authorized to use EPFL's premises and equipment before or after these activities.

8.2. Sundays

- All students are allowed on campus to study, but they must first sign up through the EPFL Campus app in order to reserve a workspace.

9. Room occupancy

In order to comply with the health and safety rules, the following requirements should be used to determine how many people are allowed in shared working areas (offices, open spaces, laboratories, workshops, etc.) at the same time:

- A distance of at least 1.5 meters must be maintained between people at all times.
- Everyone must wear a mask wherever they are working or studying.
- The classrooms and exercise rooms must be set up to allow occupants to comply with these measures.

10. Internal meetings

These rules apply to any meeting run by students or staff members as part of their activities.

- All meetings, talks and so on should continue to be held by video conference wherever possible.
- However, it is possible to meet in person as long as:
 - a distance of at least 1.5 meters is maintained between people
 - everyone wears a mask
 - the meeting organizer draws up and keeps a list of all attendees, using the online form
 - the meeting organizer ensures that all surfaces in the room are disinfected after the meeting; surface disinfectant can be ordered on Catalyse ([COVID-19 catalog](#)).

11. Gatherings

All EPFL students and staff must follow the health and safety rules set forth in this directive (Appendix 1).

When any kind of gathering is held on EPFL premises (a meeting, training course, event, conference, student-association activity, etc.), additional protective measures must be taken to limit the risk of spreading coronavirus in the EPFL community.

To request authorization to hold a gathering, please use the [standard forms](#).

11.1. Protection plans for EPFL events

The protective measures that will be used at a given event should be listed in the event's [protection plan](#), in accordance with the requirements of the Swiss Federal

11.2. Office of Public Health (FOPH).

In light of the large number of events that are held at EPFL, we have developed a protection plan template (Appendix 3) that lists the requirements set forth in Appendix 1 as well as additional measures that must be taken (wearing a mask, what to do if you plan to serve food or beverages, etc.)

Event organizers must develop a protection plan for their event and submit it with their event request form.

11.3. Gatherings that do not require a protection plan

- Gatherings with fewer than 40 people, with no food or beverages, and that take place indoors.
- Classes and training courses with fewer than 300 people, provided that only EPFL students and staff will be attending (no attendees from outside EPFL)

For these types of gatherings, only the standard health and safety measures must be followed (Appendix 1).

11.4. Requirements that apply to all gatherings

- The following are prohibited until 31 December 2020:
 - Any gathering with over 1,000 people
 - Any sporting activity not run by the Sports Center
- Any concert or performance where attendees will be standing

If you would like to hold an event with more than 300 people, you must contact Mediacom Events (MEV) to discuss your plans.

12. Non-EPFL people

Unit heads can authorize non-EPFL people to come to the School's sites if their presence is absolutely essential for the unit to fulfill its missions, subject to the terms of this directive.

Construction/renovation contractors must comply with the directives issued by the Real Estate and Infrastructures Domain (DII, see [Appendix 2](#)).

People coming from another country are allowed on EPFL sites, subject to the criteria set out by the State Secretariat for Migration, Federal Department of Justice and Police.

Non-EPFL people arriving from abroad must comply with the federal government's health guidelines, in particular with regard to the quarantine rules.

Specific directives concerning visiting students have been drawn up. Please refer to this point in this directive.

13. Management of administrative units

Administrative units are now running as normal.

14. Holidays and private travel abroad

EPFL strongly encourages the entire EPFL community to avoid spending their holidays or other leave time traveling to countries or areas with an increased risk of infection according to the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) or that the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs discourages people from visiting.

You may experience travel restrictions in the country you visit and you may be subject to the Swiss government's quarantine requirements. If you're a student, this could prevent you from coming to campus for your exams or a visit; if you're a staff member, any additional time off will be deducted from your holiday entitlement.

15. Work travel

As a rule, meetings, talks and so on should continue to be held via video conference. Everyone must make every effort to avoid work-related travel, including within Switzerland.

- Travel within Switzerland and to certain countries is only authorized if it is an absolute requirement for EPFL to function properly.
- Unit heads are responsible for determining whether a given trip is absolutely essential for the unit to fulfill its missions, and they must state that in the employee's travel request.
- Professional travel is prohibited through 31 December 2020 to any country:
 - outside the European Union, the Schengen Area and the UK
 - with an increased risk of infection, according to the FOPH
 - that the FDFA discourages people from traveling to
- People at especially high risk are not permitted to travel for work purposes.
- When planning a trip abroad:
 - check for any entry restrictions put in place by the destination country – such as border-opening dates and self-isolation requirements – and by your airline.
 - plan your travel through EPFL's travel agency, which will be able to advise you and help you book your itinerary in keeping with EPFL's requirements.
- When planning your trip, it is advisable to purchase flexible and/or refundable tickets so that you can postpone your trip in the event the public-health situation changes.
- If travel is authorized, unit heads must also do whatever they can to ensure that the health and safety guidelines are complied with.
- EPFL will not provide foreign assistance to staff who fail to comply with this Directive.

16. Study-related travel abroad

As a precaution, EPFL students must comply with the following measures on foreign travel.

- For the fall 2020 semester, all internships and Master's projects with companies are prohibited in countries:
 - with an increased risk of infection, according to the FOPH
 - that the FDFA discourages people from traveling to
- Internships and Master's projects with companies are only permitted if the students comply with the rules put in place by the partner company.
- Other travel abroad by students (exchanges, academic mobility, study trips, project-related travel, etc.) is prohibited for the entire fall 2020 semester in countries:
 - outside the European Union, the Schengen Area and the UK
 - with an increased risk of infection, according to the FOPH
 - that the FDFA discourages people from traveling to.
- The following rules will apply if the Swiss government makes changes to the country lists that it has drawn up:
 - When a country is added to a list:
 - Before departure: Trips to that country will no longer be permitted and will therefore be canceled.
 - After departure: The DSPS will evaluate the situation in the country in question. It will then issue a recommendation on whether the trip should be allowed to continue or not.
 - When a country is removed from a list: if the trip has already been canceled, the student will not be permitted to travel abroad.
- All study-related travel abroad (Master's projects, exchanges, internships, etc.) will take place under the student's personal responsibility.
- EPFL will not provide foreign assistance to students who fail to comply with these recommendations.
- No additional contributions to travel costs will be granted beyond the measures already in place.

17. Visiting students

Visiting students coming to carry out a project in an EPFL laboratory will be allowed on campus as of 31 August, as long as they meet the following standard conditions set out by the Registrar's Office:

- the professor must have granted approval
- the visit must last more than two months
- the project must be worth credits.

This does not apply to external students already on campus who began their projects before 8 June.

By way of reciprocity, student visits to EPFL from countries that are off limits to EPFL students are canceled.

If you have any questions on this topic, please contact the Registrar's Office.

18. Reassessing these measures

The measures set out in this directive may be reassessed or amended at any time up to 31 January 2021, depending on how the pandemic evolves. The updated directive will then be scheduled to take effect no later than the start of spring.