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COMPLIANCE GUIDE



EPFL

IMPRESSUM

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COMPLIANCE GUIDE

We would like to thank ETHZ for allowing us to draw inspiration from their Compliance Guide.

For reasons of user-friendliness, the wording of this Compliance Guide does not always correspond precisely to the legal wording of the respective acts and ordinances. Only the provisions set out in the original acts and ordinances and in EPFL's internal rules and regulations are legally binding and enforceable. You will find these enactments on the Polyplex website and in the Classified Compilation of Federal Law (RS).

This Compliance Guide will be updated on an annual basis. The online version provides links for direct access to the documents and websites referred to. Thank you for sending your suggestions and proposals to this email address: compliance@epfl.ch

CONTENTS

Edito	7
Equality, Diversity and Respect	8
Human Resources	16
Harassment	18
Help & Support	22
Data Protection	28
Research Ethics	32
Animal Experimentation	34
Teaching	36
Doctoral School	38
Quality assurance	42
Research & Funding	44
Research Data Management	46
Research Involving Human Beings	48
Export Laws	50
Publications	52
Valorisation & Technology Transfer	54
Ancillary Activities	56
Invitations and Benefits	60
Safety, Prevention and Health	62
IT Security and Data Protection	64
Finance	66
Risk Management and Insurance	68
Travel & Expenses	70
Instructions concerning contracts	72
Philanthropy: sponsorship and patronage	74
Procurement	76
Communications	78
Real Estate and Infrastructure	80

EDITO

Dear Colleagues,

The Compliance Guide has been updated to reflect recent improvements to the support system for harassment, discrimination and other psychosocial risks, and to the system for managing complaints and sanctions in this area. The new features mainly concern the establishment of the Trust and Support Network, whose task is to provide initial listening, guidance and support, and the creation of the position of Respect Compliance Officer, whose mission is to manage formal complaints.

In this update of the Compliance Guide you will also find a new chapter on Quality Assurance. It describes the continuous improvement process to which EPFL is committed.

As a reminder, this book contains the essential rules, practices and values in force at our School. It offers each and every one of us a frame of reference on which to rely in order to study or work at EPFL in complete freedom, i.e.

knowing the basic principles that govern our institution, how to apply them and who is available to answer any question.

The extraordinary diversity of EPFL is a guarantee of its vitality: diversity of teaching, research, nationalities, professions... Imagine all the professional, personal, scientific and ethical questions that this can raise. How could we work together if we did not have common knowledge and ways of doing things? We also share values such as respect, integrity of research and the good use of resources made available to us to do our work. These are all reasons why the Compliance Guide is essential to guarantee our cohesion and to accomplish the School's missions in the same spirit.

Martin Vetterli
EPFL President

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND RESPECT

BASIC PRINCIPLES

At EPFL, people from a wide range of cultural, social and academic backgrounds work and study together. Diversity is a strength. It requires an environment of mutual respect and understanding to allow the members of EPFL community, individually and collectively, to interact, work together and achieve exceptional results. EPFL does not tolerate discrimination, bullying, violence or harassment and pursues an active policy to promote equal opportunities and inclusiveness.

EPFL does not tolerate any discrimination towards students and employees on grounds such as gender, sexual orientation, gender and sexual identity, disability, colour of skin, social origin, religious affiliation, national origin, etc. EPFL encourages diversity and fosters a culture of mutual respect and cooperation. A key topic for EPFL is the active advancement gender balance in all areas of research, education and administration, as highlighted in the ETH Domain's Gender Strategy and the Equal Opportunities Action Plan. At EPFL, this goal goes hand in hand with a broad understanding and an intersectional approach to diversity. This demands an enhanced awareness of existing inequalities, understanding mechanisms and impact of implicit biases as evidenced by research (see section "further information" below), as well as strong social skills and professional expertise from managers at all levels. It also requires of everyone the capacity to understand these principles, the competence to listen and to enter into a dialogue, in order to advance together.

Everyone in the EPFL community has the right to be treated fairly and equally, irrespective of their individual characteristics or those attributed to the particular group to which they belong.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination defines a situation where a person is disadvantaged in some way compared to others in a similar situation based on certain criteria closely related to their personal identity, which have been commonly used to

justify exclusion, marginalization and exploitation. Discrimination degrades the persons affected and offends their personal dignity. It means people are not treated as individuals, but simply labelled as members of certain groups, with specific stereotypical characteristics attributed to them. Discrimination can occur intentionally or unintentionally. It can also be caused by measures and policies which do not explicitly refer to a protected criteria and seem apparently neutral but actually have a negative impact which disproportionately affects members of a certain group (such as women, people with disabilities, people of colour).

It can take different forms. For example:

- **Verbal or written statements or actions of a degrading nature:** such as telling racist jokes, ridiculing gay or lesbian people, sexist portrayal of persons in presentations or video material, etc.
- **Unequal treatment:** such as discrimination because of pregnancy or physical restrictions (such as non-renewal of a contract due to a pregnancy); assignment of tasks or assessment based on stereotypes (such as "Women are better listeners", "Men have better technical skills"), etc.
- **Unfair working conditions:** such as unjustified refusal to grant equal wages or promotions, unjustified restrictions on the level of employment or on working-time arrangements, etc.

The ban on discrimination is enshrined in the Swiss Federal Constitution ([Article 8, Section 2](#)) and in various human rights treaties ratified by Switzerland such as the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([European Convention of Human Rights, ECHR](#)) (see section "legal basis" below). Instances of discrimination at EPFL can result in disciplinary measures and legal consequences.



RESPONSIBILITIES

As a publicly funded institution, EPFL is endowed with a particular responsibility, both with regard to the principle of non-discrimination and in achieving progress for effective equality. By extension, this holds true also for all employees and in particular for those in management and decision-making positions.

Below we highlight some of the grounds of discrimination specified in Art. 8 of the Swiss Federal Constitution concerned with the ban on discrimination and on guaranteeing equal opportunities. It should be mentioned, that the list is not exhaustive and continues to evolve.

No discrimination on grounds of gender:

The principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex and gender in the Federal Constitution of Switzerland goes along with a direct mandate to both legislative and executive authorities – including public institutions such as EPFL – to take action to achieve real equality between women and men. This mandate, together with the International Convention [on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW, art. 4 § 1) and the Gender Equality Act of 1995, provides the legal basis for targeted temporary measures aimed at accelerating effective equality by compensating for the disadvantages of women compared to men in most areas of social, economic and political life.

The Gender Equality Act, a federal law that targets the field of public and private employment relationships, protects both women and men from discriminatory acts: neither sex, marital status, their family situation nor, in the case of women, pregnancy shall give rise to direct or indirect inequality of treatment. The prohibition of discrimination applies in particular to recruitment, assignment of tasks, adjustment of working conditions, remuneration, training and further education, promotion and termination of employment relationships. As mentioned above, the Gender Equality Act specifies that appropriate measures designed to achieve effective equality do not constitute discrimination.

Measures are deemed appropriate if they are effective with regard to the pursued aim, if there isn't another type of action with equal impact that would have less restriction on others (i.e., men), and if the restriction effected on the rights of others (i.e., men) is limited. Positive measures can take different forms, such as mentoring programs, outreach measures, targeted recruiting, quotas fixing a certain percentage of the underrepresented gender to be included on shortlists for academic positions, preferential hiring of the underrepresented gender subject to the condition of equivalent qualification to that of the candidates belonging to the overrepresented gender.

The Gender Equality Act also specifies the prohibition of sexual harassment. It requires the authorities, including the ETH Domain, to take appropriate measures to prevent and address cases of sexual harassment. It also requires authorities, including the ETH Domain, to set up conciliation boards that can be called upon to advise the parties. EPFL has a [dedicated page](#) with advice and resources on this subject. You can also check Chapters 3 (Harassment) and 4 (Help & Support) of the Compliance Guide for additional information.

No discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, sexual or gender identity:

The ban on discrimination on the ground of the sexual orientation, sexual or gender identity is enshrined in the Swiss Federal Constitution via the ban on discrimination based on gender and way of life. Beyond the general protection against discrimination, and the duty for employers to protect the integrity of their employees, formal legal protection for LGBTIQ people in Switzerland is still scarce. With the extension of the scope of the Criminal Code ([Art.261bis](#)), persons who suffer discrimination because of their homosexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality or non-binary identity will be protected against certain forms of publicly expressed acts such as hate speech and service

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EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND RESPECT (CONTINUED)

denial that undermine their human dignity, based on their sexual orientation.

These principles are of central value to EPFL. As a learning and evolving institution, EPFL strives to continually improve its inclusiveness of people who identify as LGBTIQ. More information is available on [Equality and Diversity page](#).

No discrimination on grounds of origin:

This prohibition can refer to a discrimination based on a compound of characteristics, such as nationality, language, skin colour, hair or eye shape, descent. Discrimination based on 'origin' is also often linked to the criterion of religion. No discrimination on the grounds of origin is tolerated at EPFL.

However, based on legal requirements, EPFL may have to apply different rules depending on citizenship or place of residence. For example, type and conditions on work permit for EU citizens or for citizens of non-EU countries.

How should one deal with perceived differences? [The Federal Act on Foreign nationals and Integration](#) defines the aim of integration as the coexistence on the basis of the values of the Federal Constitution and mutual respect and tolerance.

No discrimination on grounds of 'race':

As for the discrimination on the grounds of origin, this form of discrimination can refer to a discrimination based on a compound of characteristics which were relied upon by racist ideologies to classify people into superior and inferior groups. As the concept of "race" is thoroughly discredited and lacks scientific foundation, it is more appropriate to refer to racist discrimination than to racial discrimination.

The Swiss Criminal Code against racist discrimination ([art. 261bis CP](#)) renders punishable acts of explicit or implicit refusal to grant equal rights to human beings on grounds of the colour of their skin or their ethnic or cultural origin or incitement to hatred or discrimination against a person

or a group of persons on the grounds of the colour of their skin or their ethnic or cultural origin, or religion.

As the reports by the [Swiss Network of Counselling Centres for Victims of Racism](#) show, the workplace is one of the contexts where racist incidents are experienced. Racist discrimination at the workplace is the second most frequent kind of racist incidents reported, often in the form of unequal treatment, denigration and insults. Awareness is required from all of us. Racist discrimination is incompatible with values at EPFL and is not tolerated.

No discrimination on grounds of religious, ideological, or political convictions :

Freedom of belief, conscience and opinion is protected by the Swiss Constitution and international treaties that Switzerland has signed such as the ECHR. According to [art. 9 of the ECHR](#), "Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

The need to ensure the proper functioning of an institution can nevertheless justify certain limitations of individual freedoms. The duty of loyalty of employees thus includes the requirement of a reservation in the expression of religious, ideological or political convictions. However, these restrictions depend on the specific mission of the institution, as well as on the place the individual occupies within the institution.

From religious freedom flows the requirement of confessional neutrality of the State. Religious neutrality applies not only to primary and secondary schools but also to post-compulsory public education and universities.

Jurisprudence continues to contribute to the shaping of our understanding of religious freedom. Although highly publicised and discussed, case law arising from conflicts around religion remains relatively rare in Switzerland, since



most conflicts are resolved through dialogue, the search for pragmatic solutions and concessions by the parties. These principles also apply to EPFL.

No discrimination on grounds of physical, mental or psychological disability:

The Federal Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against People with Disabilities ([Disability Discrimination Act, DDA](#)) and the international [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), signed by Switzerland, have the purpose of preventing, reducing or eliminating discrimination against people with disabilities and to ensure the conditions that facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in the life of society, in particular by helping them to be independent in establishing social contacts, completing training or further training and exercising a professional activity. This law therefore applies directly to EPFL and obliges it to take appropriate measures to facilitate equal access to studies and jobs for persons with a physical, mental or psychological disability. EPFL has a [dedicated page](#) with advice and resources for students.

No discrimination on grounds of age:

The age criterion prohibits discrimination on the grounds of both youth and old age. Prohibited is differential treatment based on stereotypical representations of abilities of young or elder persons and the value attributed to them based on this. A differentiation must be made between illicit discrimination based on age and justified protective measures (e.g., provisions on retirement age). Even though only limited jurisprudence exists in Switzerland on the topic of discrimination based on age, there is a growing sensitivity to the issue, resulting in efforts to prevent discrimination and ensure age diversity in hiring. Research funding organisations such as the SNSF and universities increasingly apply academic age (i.e., number of years since PhD) as a criterion as opposed to biological age. EPFL strives to hire an age-diverse population.

Protection of the integrity of students and employees and the duty of fidelity

EPFL as an employer has the responsibility to acknowledge and safeguard, within the employment relationship, employees' personal safety, health and integrity. To this end, EPFL takes all the measures that are shown by experience to be necessary, that are feasible and appropriate to the particular circumstances and may equitably be expected of EPFL. Among others, the Security, Prevention and Health unit ([DSPS](#)), [Human Resources](#), the [Student Affairs](#), the [Person of Trust](#) and the [Trust and Support Network](#) have specific mandates in this respect. However, the responsibility to protect the integrity of employees also follows the lines of hierarchy.

Employees on their side have a duty of loyalty or fidelity ([Art. 20 LPers](#)). They must refrain from any behavior that could harm their employer or employees. This implies, in particular, that irregularities shall be reported internally or to the competent authorities ([LEX 4.1.0.1, art. 22a](#)). More generally, the employee must perform his or her duties in such a way that no damage is caused to the employer's assets (for example EPFL's reputation). This duty of loyalty or fidelity concerns each employee, whatever their position. During their studies, EPFL students are required to respect regulations governing school life and act in accordance to the EPFL Honour Code ([LEX 2.3.1](#)), which includes a general duty to respect the EPFL community as a whole. The scrutiny will be enhanced for executives and managers because of the autonomy conferred on them and the exemplary nature of their duty.

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EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND RESPECT (CONTINUED)

CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

When EPFL finds, after investigation, that one of its members has violated the applicable rules, sanctions may be taken in accordance with the *Ordonnance sur le personnel du domaine des Écoles polytechniques fédérales* (also applicable to professors in this regard, see art. 36 of the *Ordonnance sur le corps professoral*). These range from a warning to the termination of the employment contract. Students are subject to the sanctions provided for in the *Ordinance of the EPFL on disciplinary measures*, which range from reprimand to exclusion from EPFL. When deciding on a possible sanction, EPFL takes into account, in particular, the seriousness of the facts.

LEGAL BASIS

- European Convention of Human Rights, [internet link](#)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), [internet link](#)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), [internet link](#)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), [internet link](#)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, [internet link](#)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, [internet link](#)
- Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation (Art. 8, RS 101), [internet link](#)
- The Swiss Code of Obligations (Art 328): Obligations of the employer (protection of personality), [internet link](#)
- Swiss Criminal Code (Art. 261bis CP): Discrimination and incitement to hatred, [internet link](#)
- Federal Act on Gender Equality (Gender Equality Act, GEA), [internet link](#)
- Federal Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against People with Disabilities (Disability Discrimination Act, DDA), [internet link](#)
- Federal Act on Foreign Nationals and Integration Act, FNIA, [internet link](#)
- LEX 4.1.0.1 “Loi sur le personnel de la Confédération “(art.20, 22a : duty of loyalty), [internet link](#)
- Ordonnance 3 relative à La loi sur le travail, [PDF link](#)
- LEX 1.0.2 « Ordonnance sur le personnel du domaine des écoles polytechniques fédérales » (art 9, RS 172.220.113) : (art. 9 : Protection de la personnalité), [lien internet](#)
- LEX 4.2.0.1 “Ordonnance du CEPF sur le corps professoral des EPF“, [internet link](#)



Ordonnance du CF sur la commission de conciliation selon la LEd, [internet link to come](#)

LEX 2.4.0.2 Ordinance of the EPFL on disciplinary measures, [internet link](#)

LEX 1.8.0.1 "Directives du Conseil des EPF sur le traitement des signalements faits par des personnes relevant du Domaine des EPF et concernant des comportements juridiquement ou éthiquement incorrects (Directives concernant l'instance d'alerte du Conseil des EPF)", [PDF link](#)

LEX 1.8.1 "Directive concerning whistleblowing", [PDF link](#)

LEX 1.8.3 "Directive on psychosocial risks at EPFL", [PDF link](#)

LEX. 2.3.1 EPFL Charter of Ethics, [PDF link](#)

LEX 2.3.1 EPFL Code of Honor, [PDF link](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

EPFL Respect website, [internet link](#)

EPFL Equal Opportunities Office, [internet link](#)

EPFL Information for students with disabilities, [internet link](#)

EPFL Training on "implicit prejudices" (Mooc) (coming soon)

EPFL e-learning "You are not alone. Promoting Respect", [internet link](#)

Swiss Federal Council: Ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation, [internet link](#)

Commission fédérale contre le racisme CFR, [internet link](#)

Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights (SCHR) Etude sur l'accès à la justice en cas de discrimination, [internet link](#)

Swissunability.ch, [internet link](#)

La neutralité religieuse de l'Etat dans l'instruction publique. Master, 2017. University of Geneva, [internet link](#)

League of European Research Universities: Equality, diversity and inclusion at universities: the power of a systemic approach, [internet link](#)

Handbook on European non-discrimination law, [internet link](#)

EPFL Safe Space page, [internet link](#)

Réseau de centres de conseil pour les victimes du racisme, [lien internet](#)

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EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND RESPECT (CONTINUED)

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ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

How can we promote diversity and equal opportunities in our daily work? Being aware of implicit stereotypes and prejudices (see "[FURTHER INFORMATION](#)" above) and wanting to act in an exemplary way are two key elements in this regard. Taking clear action and voluntarily applying good practices to address existing imbalances is a third element.

EPFL offers, for example, the possibility to take part in implicit bias awareness seminars to accompany these efforts.

Below are a series of recommendations designed to guide you when you are the target of, or witness to, discriminatory practices and behaviors:

- **Respond as quickly and as strongly as possible** if the situation allows it. Do not resign yourself to accepting a discriminatory situation: you are always entitled to defend yourself against unfair treatment.
- **As a witness**, if possible, approach the targeted person to offer support.
- **Keep a written record or evidence of the event.** Write down what happened, where, when and in what context it happened, and who may have witnessed it. These notes will help support the story.
- **Are you unsure about something? Talk to someone you trust, ask for help.** Talk about the discrimination you have experienced or witnessed to a colleague or classmate, a manager or a member of the TSN, or a faculty member if you are a student. EPFL has several bodies, gathered in the Trust and Support Network, that you can refer to (see above under Contact).
- **Don't wait** to get help.

- **Make sure you are always exemplary.** Your attitude is crucial. Your example helps shape the standards and values of our organization (ensure that all team members speak and are not interrupted, ensure that ideas expressed are not wrongly attributed, avoid bias during interview processes, etc.).

- **Make your voice heard.** And do so whenever you see inappropriate behavior. Try to stop the inappropriate behavior and ask for help. If you teach, make sure your classes are conducted in an open and respectful atmosphere. If you are a member of a hiring committee, pay attention to comments and evaluations of candidates that reflect implicit bias.

- **Don't look the other way!** Doing nothing is also a way to taking action. By doing nothing, you are portraying the fact that you do not feel responsible and that you think everything is fine. Your inaction will encourage the person who discriminates to continue.

- **Show solidarity with those who are being discriminated against:** it takes a lot of courage to stand up for yourself against degrading behavior, whether it is subtle or brutal. If you have any suspicions, try to discuss the situation personally with the people involved.

- **Raise awareness about the issue.** Be curious and willing to learn. Talk to people around you and talk about situations that make you uncomfortable.

- **Take the Respect Training "You are not alone. Promoting Respect"** for the entire EPFL community. Through various situations you will learn how to spot inappropriate behaviour, how to react to situations that cannot be tolerated and where to turn for help. Internet link

HUMAN RESOURCES



BASIC PRINCIPLES

Within the framework of the EPFL strategic plan, the Human Resources department (HR) contributes to achieving the School's missions by ensuring the availability of necessary skills, by creating favourable conditions for the development of employees and teaching staff, by improving their skills and contributions, by looking after the wellbeing of all staff, and by supporting the organisation design in a rapidly evolving and competitive international academic environment.

Within the framework of its employment policy, EPFL wishes to offer first class services, to encourage diversity in all its forms and to promote women's careers, work-family balance, equal opportunities, access to sport, and respect of the legal and regulatory framework.

HR guarantee the principles governing employee management and work in close cooperation with the Schools and Colleges, Faculty Affairs (APR), the network of associated campuses, the Vice Presidencies and all other relevant partners.

Employment Contracts

Employment at EPFL is subject to a written employment contract with a job description, signed by both parties. Any extension, modification or termination of the contract requires the approval of the hierarchical superior and HR and must also be made in writing. The HR department is in charge of implementing the wage policy based on the New Salary System (NSS) as well as fixed salaries (Doctoral and Post-doc assistants).

Employment contracts are for an indefinite duration or for a limited period (Art. 19 of the *Ordonnance sur le personnel du domaine des EPF* (OPers-EPF) and Art. 17b of the FIT Act). Fixed-term contracts may be renewed more than once, as follows:

- For professors and assistant professors, a maximum period of eight years;
- For assistants, senior assistants and other persons car-

rying out a similar role, a maximum period of six years; if an assistant is promoted to a senior assistant position, the years spent working as an assistant are not taken into account;

- For employees hired to work on teaching and research projects as well as persons hired to work on third-party-funded projects, a maximum period of nine years;
- For all other employees, a maximum period of five years.

Any request pertaining to an employment contract must be sent to the HR Manager for the relevant School or Vice Presidency.

The ETH Board appoints professors, assistant professors, tenure track assistant professors (PATT), associate professors and full professors. These members of the teaching staff are hired under either public or private law. Their contracts are managed by Faculty Affairs.

Specificities of Tenure Track Assistant Professors (PATT) (LEX 4.2.1)

Tenure Track Assistant Professors are appointed for four years. Their contract is renewable once for a further four years. In case of pregnancy, an extension of the employment period of one year with a corresponding deferral of deadlines relating to evaluation is automatically granted, in addition to a release from teaching for two terms.

Specificities of Doctoral Assistants (LEX 4.4.1)

Doctoral assistants are hired for a fixed term of one year, renewable for a total period of six years. The annual assessment of thesis work is decisive in renewing the contract. In case of enrolment at EPFL, doctoral assistants receive a fixed remuneration, with annual increments which may vary, particularly in light of budgetary constraints.

Specificities of Scientific Staff (LEX 4.4.2)

Scientific staff are commonly called "post-docs". At the time of hiring, holders of a doctoral degree from EPFL shall have spent a minimum of two years of their professional or academic career outside EPFL. The Heads of Unit are

competent to hire these post-docs, under a fixed-term contract, subject to agreement by the School HR Manager. The School Dean's approval is required to hire scientific staff under open-ended contracts on an exceptional basis

Specificities of Foreign Nationals

The employment of foreign nationals may be subject to the approval of the cantonal and federal authorities based on the person's nationality, that is to say, the obtention of a valid work permit. The HR department takes care of the necessary paperwork, along with the person hired.

Employing Relatives or Partners

It is possible to hire two people living as a couple (married to each other or otherwise) provided that this does not create a relationship of subordination between them. The same rule applies to first- and second-degree blood relatives and first-degree relatives by marriage.

Staff Training

The Talent & Development unit is available to develop customised training for individuals and teams in addition to the standard training programme, or to develop training courses in line with the specific needs of units. An e-Learning programme is available at all times: link (<https://epfl.eu.crossknowledge.com/site/home>).

Gifts or Benefits

The provisions of LEX 4.6.1 "Directive concerning the acceptance of benefits and invitations received", shall be respected (see chapter on "Invitations & Benefits").

RESPONSIBILITIES

Heads of Unit draw up and update the job description of each employee. They organise an individual, bilateral meeting each year. Objectives and an individualised training programme are set on this occasion or upon a second interview. Constructive feedback is also provided, in order to ensure good staff development.

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

For Heads of Unit: ensure that each person employed has an annual interview.

In case of conflict, promptly inform your HR Manager.

In case of any threat to site security or a person's safety, immediately call security (115).

Systematically apply a policy of equal opportunities in the selection of candidates and in the treatment of staff.

Promptly notify HR of any subsidiary activities (see chapter on "[External or Subsidiary Activities](#)").

Plan your training and make use of the wide supply of online training ([e-learning](#)).

For employees from countries outside Europe, allow at least 3 months between recruitment and entry into service due to the delays inherent in obtaining valid official documents.

Heads of Unit also ensure the harmonious development of their group (atmosphere and respect).

They are responsible for keeping the absence management system up to date (with the support of their team) and for the annual validation of outstanding vacation and overtime in this same application.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Equal Opportunities Office, [internet link](#)

HELP network, [internet link](#)

New Salary System (NSS), [internet link](#)

Absence management system, [internet link](#)

Trust and Support Network, [internet link](#)

Your Human Resources, [internet link](#)

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 4.1.0.1 "Loi sur le personnel de la Confédération", [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.0.4 "Ordonnance sur le personnel du domaine des Ecoles polytechniques fédérales", [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.4 "Rules and Regulations concerning Working Time Management (RGT)", [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.6 "Directive concerning the acceptance of benefits and invitations received", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 4.2.0.1 "Ordonnance du Conseil des EPF sur le corps professoral des écoles polytechniques fédérales", [internet link](#)

LEX 4.2.1 "Rules and Regulations Concerning EPFL Tenure-Track Assistant Professors", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 4.4.1 "Directive on Terms of Employment of EPFL Assistants", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 4.4.2 "Directive on Terms of Employment of EPFL Scientific Staff", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 4.1.1 "Directive concerning the management of conflicts of interest", [link \(PDF\)](#)

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HARASSMENT

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Introduction

Respect is a fundamental value in our community and commits us all.

EPFL takes allegations of harassment against its employees and students very seriously. All members of the EPFL are expected to respect the personal dignity and integrity of their colleagues and peers and to contribute, through their behavior, to a motivating study and work atmosphere and a spirit of respect. Each and every one is also invited to report any situation of harassment of which they are aware.

Sexual Harassment

The EPFL community's culture of respect repudiates all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and aggression, as well as any behavior or act that produces discrimination, disparity (inequality, see chapter "[Equality, diversity and respect](#)") between the genders, fear, exclusion, insecurity, degradation that limits opportunities and freedom in the workplace or in the study environment.

Sexual harassment and sexism

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination (art. 4 of the [Federal Act on Gender Equality](#)). It also contravenes the Ordinance of the EPFL on disciplinary measures, ([LEX 2.4.0.2](#)).

Sexual or sexist harassment is therefore defined as any comment or act with a sexual connotation, unwanted by the person who is confronted with it, whether it occurs in the context of studies, work or during events peripheral to these (for example, during festivities, colloquia or other events organized by the EPFL). This includes electronic exchanges and telephone calls.

Sexual harassment may be committed by a superior, subordinates, colleagues, students or any other person with whom one may collaborate or interact in the context of work or studies.

It is important to clarify that what is taken into account to characterize a situation of sexual harassment is not the intention of the person who acts, but the way in which the person concerned perceives, receives or feels the behaviour. Thus, even if a person has neither the awareness nor the will to bother another person by his or her words or attitudes, sexual harassment may be constituted.

A single act may be sufficient to constitute sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment can take verbal, non-verbal and physical forms such as:

- Undressing looks, whistling, winking, facial expressions, obscene gestures, etc.
- Sexual assault, sexual coercion, attempted rape or rape
- Advances or insults, or lewd or embarrassing remarks about physical appearance.
- Sexist remarks or jokes about sexual characteristics, sexual behavior or emotional and sexual orientation.
- Display or exhibition of pornographic material.
- Unwelcome invitations for sexual purposes.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Practices of following colleagues in or out of school.
- Attempted approaches with promises of reward or threats of retaliation.

Sexual harassment can result in sanctions ranging from a warning and reprimand to dismissal. Sexual coercion (Art. 189 Swiss Criminal Code) and rape (Art. 190 Swiss Criminal Code) are criminal offences, defined in the Swiss Criminal Code. Both offences are punishable by a custodial sentence.

Sexual violence includes all acts of a sexual nature or concerning sexuality that occur without the explicit consent of all persons involved. Sexual assault is any form of unwanted physical contact on the buttocks, sex, breasts, mouth or between the thighs (as defined by the Swiss Criminal Code and case law).

Any person can be a victim of sexual harassment and



violence. However, certain categories of people are more exposed to sexual and sexist harassment and violence that aim to establish and/or perpetuate a relationship of domination, particularly related to gender.

Flirting or harassment?

Flirting is a part of life, also at EPFL. It is therefore important to distinguish harassment from flirting. Sexual harassment aims to establish a relationship of power and domination. Flirting is distinguished from harassment by the following aspects (see box).

Flirting

- is a reciprocal approach
- is constructive, stimulating
- is desired by both parties
- is a source of pleasure
- increases self-confidence
- respects personal boundaries

Harassment

- is a one-sided approach
- is degrading, hurtful
- is not desired by one party
- is a source of irritation
- diminishes self-confidence
- violates personal boundaries

Psychological harassment or mobbing

According to the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)¹, mobbing is a form of attack on the integrity of the person. The actions that constitute mobbing can take different forms:

- Attacks on the ability to communicate: e.g. preventing the

person from expressing himself, constantly interrupting him, shouting at him.

- Damage to social relations: e.g. refusing all contact with the person, not greeting them, ignoring them, excluding them, isolating them.
- Damage to reputation: e.g. ridiculing the person, spreading rumours about them, mocking them, humiliating them, making insulting remarks.
- Damage to quality of life and employment status: e.g. assigning absurd, inappropriate or offensive tasks, gratuitous criticism, depriving the person of important tasks.
- Attacks on health: e.g. overloading the person with work, threatening him or her or inflicting physical violence.

Psychological harassment is defined as negative and destructive actions by one or more persons, directed or indirectly against a third party, which are repeated systematically, frequently and over a prolonged period of time, and which are intended to harm and discredit a person, to isolate or exclude him or her, and to progressively remove him or her from his or her job or program of study.

It is a set of events that, taken in isolation, may seem benign but, because of their repetition, have a destructive effect on the person.

Is it mobbing... or not?

Not every unpleasant experience constitutes mobbing. However, situations that do not formally constitute mobbing can nevertheless cause tension and suffering. Do not hesitate to clarify the situation, to talk about it around you and to ask for help if necessary.

For example, it is not considered as mobbing to:

- Demand an improvement in performance
- Express criticism in a constructive way
- Unwisely give instructions without intending to do so
- Have a verbal argument or violent disagreement
- Be occasionally ill-tempered.

¹ SECO provides a non-exhaustive list of the forms that psychological harassment can take on its website and has published several articles on this subject.

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HARASSMENT (CONTINUED)

Consequences of Sexual or Psychological Harassment in the Workplace and in Education

These behaviors constitute an attack on personal integrity and can have serious repercussions on the health of the persons concerned, on their social relationships and on their professional performance and career.

It may also have a negative impact on the general working atmosphere in the department concerned and on the serenity of the people around them.

In general, everyone suffers from such situations, which hinder the proper execution of missions or projects, not to mention the damage to the image and reputation of EPFL.

RESPONSIBILITIES

When it comes to harassment, we are all concerned. Any person who is aware of a situation that seems to constitute harassment is invited to report it so that it can be analyzed and dealt with (see "FURTHER INFORMATION" below). There are many prejudices that must also be overcome because they facilitate the commission of acts of both sexual and psychological harassment. For example, they may target groups of people based on their physical characteristics or perceived background.

Sanctions and protection against retaliation

Those responsible for psychological or sexual harassment face serious consequences, regardless of their status or function. Such allegations may give rise to an administrative and/or disciplinary investigation and, if confirmed, to sanctions that will depend on the seriousness of the facts and may range from a warning or reprimand to dismissal or exclusion. These sanctions are provided for in the Ordonnance sur le personnel du domaine des Ecoles polytechniques fédérales and the Ordinance of the EPFL on disciplinary measures.

Anyone who intentionally and improperly accuses an innocent person of harassment is subject to the same consequences.

EPFL will protect any person who, in good faith, reports facts perceived as harassment. No form of retaliation will be tolerated against such persons.

LEGAL BASIS

"Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation, (art.8; RS 101)", [internet link](#)

"Federal Act on Gender Equality", [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.0.1 "Loi sur le personnel de la Confédération" (Art. 22), [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.0.4 "Ordonnance sur le personnel du domaine des Ecole polytechniques fédérales", [internet link](#)

LEX 1.0.2 "Ordonnance sur le domaine des Ecoles polytechniques fédérales, (art 9 ; RS 172.220.113)", [internet link](#)

LEX 2.4.0.2 "Ordinance of the EPFL on disciplinary measures" [internet link](#)

"Ordonnance 3 relative à La loi sur le travail", [internet link](#)

LEX 1.8.1 "Directive concerning whistleblowing at EPFL", [PDF link](#)

LEX 1.8.3 "Directive on psychosocial risks", [PDF link](#)

LEX 1.8.0.1 "Directives du Conseil des EPF sur le traitement des signalements faits par des personnes relevant du Domaine des EPF et concernant des comportements juridiquement ou éthiquement incorrects (Directives concernant l'instance d'alerte du Conseil des EPF)", [PDF link](#)

Lex 2.3.1 "EPFL Code of Honor", [PDF link](#)

"Swiss Civil Code (RS 210)", [internet link](#) and "Swiss Criminal Code (RS 311.0)", [internet link](#)



FURTHER INFORMATION

You will find relevant further information in the chapter "Equality, Diversity, Respect" of the Compliance Guide. In addition, the Respect website and the chapter "HELP & SUPPORT" of this guide will provide you with all the information you need to act in the most appropriate way.

SECO website, [internet link](#)

CONTACT

EPFL Trust and Support Network Website

Whistleblowing Ombudsperson of the EPFL
Me Isabelle Salomé Daïna
Salomé Preile Associées
isabelle.salome-daina@salomepreile.ch

Ombudsperson Service of the ETH Board
Dr. Michael Daphinoff, Rechtsanwalt, LL.M.
Kellerhals Carrard Bern
Effingerstrasse 1, 3001 Bern
Phone 058 200 35 51
michael.daphinoff@kellerhals-carrard.ch

Cendrine Rouvinez, avocate, MLaw
Kellerhals Carrard Lausanne/Sion
Place St-Francois 1, 1002 Lausanne
Phone 058 200 33 38
cendrine.rouvinez@kellerhals-carrard.ch

The Conciliation Commission for the ETH Domain
Anne-Catherine Hahn
schlichtungskommission.eth-bereich@ethrat.ch

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Take the Respect Training "You are not alone. Promoting Respect" for the entire EPFL community. Through various situations you will learn to spot inappropriate behaviour, to react to situations that cannot be tolerated and to get to know the Trust and Support Network.

HELP & SUPPORT



INTRODUCTION

EPFL's extraordinary diversity is a testament to its vitality. EPFL thrives on the care we take of each other. EPFL does not accept inappropriate behavior. It is everyone's responsibility to foster, through their attitude, a culture of respect, tolerance, inclusion and caring. You can read more about this issue in the chapter "[Equality, diversity, respect](#)".

EPFL can count on the [Trust and Support Network](#) (TSN), which includes specific contact persons for students, PhD students, staff and faculty. In all situations and whenever possible, we encourage you to actively and promptly speak up and clarify any situation that you feel is not fair.

Anyone who feels that their health or personality has been violated and who has not found a consensual solution to their difficulties through informal means may contact the Respect Compliance Office (RCO).

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of contacts with the bodies mentioned in this chapter and of information provided by the person contacting them is safeguarded as far as possible. However, confidentiality is excluded in cases where the disclosure of information is mandatory by virtue of legal or regulatory provisions, legal proceedings or when it is necessary to preserve the overriding interests of EPFL or the public. The identity of the person making the report is also disclosed to those mandated to carry out the procedure.

Trust and Support Network

The EPFL Trust and Support Network brings together internal and external EPFL bodies whose task is to provide listening, guidance and initial support. These bodies are available to members of the EPFL community and provide targeted support at all times, according to needs, with a mandate to provide initial support in situations of harassment, discrimination, and any other inappropriate behavior or psychosocial risks.

The TSN manager is responsible for coordinating the var-

ious bodies described above and can be called upon for advice or guidance.

At EPFL

- [The Student Affairs](#) (SAE): The SAE offers a listening ear, information and confidential advice¹ to the PhD Students through the social and psychotherapeutic consultation. The person in charge of the SAE can take the necessary measures to try to resolve a problematic situation.
- [Doctoral school](#) (EDOC): The EDOC offers listening, information and confidential advice¹ to PhD Students. It can take the necessary measures to try to resolve a problematic situation. It ensures that the person who has requested it receives the necessary support and assistance.
- [Equal Opportunity Office](#) (EGA): The Equal Opportunity Officer offers a listening ear, information and confidential advice¹ to the entire EPFL community.
- [Human Resources Managers](#) (HR managers): HR managers are at the service of staff members (PhD students, employees, professors, managers) to support and accompany them in the management of their work relationships. This includes conflict prevention and the identification of solutions according to needs and in compliance with the legal framework. HR managers are responsible for ensuring confidentiality¹.
- [Health Point](#): Consultations, listening and advice in complete confidentiality. The Health Point: is composed of two entities: [Health at work](#), which offers consultations for EPFL employees and PhD Students as well as for faculty members in the context of specific occupational health risks, and [nursing consultations](#), open to

¹. In certain circumstances, the person consulted may be required to act and to share information with the persons concerned or with third parties. As a general rule, the student will be asked for permission to share confidential information with third parties.

². Confidentiality is guaranteed, except in cases involving criminal law.

all EPFL members. The nurses, medical assistants and doctors of these services are subject to professional secrecy.

- **Spiritual care service:** Discussion, sharing, individual or group meetings, learning. Spiritual care service is a place to meet and support anyone who is going through difficult personal, family or spiritual times. Chaplains are available to offer a listening ear, advice and practical help to people in difficulty in complete confidentiality. Spiritual care service is a place of welcome and respect where each person is considered unique and valuable, regardless of his or her beliefs or spiritual, sexual or other orientation.

Outside EPFL

Person of Trust: The Person of Trust is a professional in conflict management and law. He or she listens, advises and, if necessary, refers to the right people for any type of problem encountered in the workplace (demotivation, malaise, burnout, work overload, communication problems, tensions, disagreements, conflicts, violence, moral and sexual harassment, etc.). He or she can also propose mediation. The Person of Trust can also be called upon by EPFL students. She deals with requests submitted to her by staff members, PhD Students or the students, in the best interests of the consultants, in a totally independent manner and with a guarantee of complete confidentiality and anonymity.

All these internal and external services and bodies may, with the agreement of the person concerned, transfer a situation to another body in the network or to the Respect Compliance Office for a Formal Complaint, depending on the person's needs.

Initial action

If possible, clarify the situation and state what you consider to be inappropriate behaviour. In cases of conflict, it is recommended that this initial contact be made with the person concerned. The Trust and Support Network can help you prepare for this discussion if you wish.

Do not hesitate to note what happened, where, when and in what context the event took place and who may have witnessed it. These notes will be important in substantiating the facts.

It is always a good idea to speak quickly to someone you trust in your immediate circle: family, friends, classmates, The Student Affairs (SAE), the Student Services Desk or your doctor.

However, do not wait to ask for help.

In addition, if you feel that your health or personality has been affected, you can contact one of the Trust and Support Network offices, as you wish.

If you are a student you may wish to contact

- The Student Affairs Service (SAE) for: listening, advice, relay and intervention, through the social consultation consultation.sociale@epfl.ch and the psychotherapeutic consultation consult.psy-epfl@chuv.ch
- The Equal Opportunity Office (EGA) for: listening, counseling and relay, helene.fueger@epfl.ch
- The Health Point: (nursing consultations) for: consultations, listening and advice in complete confidentiality, pointsante@epfl.ch
- The person in charge of the Trust and Support Network for: listening, advice, relay ines.ariceta@epfl.ch
- Spiritual care service for listening, advice and relay, aumonerie@epfl.ch
- The Person of Trust (external and independent authority): mediation, listening, advice and relay, personnedefiance@epfl.ch

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HELP & SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

If you are a PhD Students, ask for help from

- Your thesis director/mentor for: listening, advice and intervention ;
- The program director for: listening and intervention ;
- The Student Affairs (SAE) for: listening, advice, relay and intervention, through the social consultation consultation.sociale@epfl.ch and psychotherapeutic consultation. consult.psy-epfl@chuv.ch ;
- Assistant to the VP Postgraduate Education: listening and intervention ;
- Your HR Manager for: listening, advice and intervention ;
- Occupational health ;
- 1. The Health Point: (nursing consultations) for: consultations, listening and advice in complete confidentiality, pointsante@epfl.ch ;
- 2. Occupational medicine for: consultations, listening and advice in complete confidentiality, sante@epfl.ch ;
- Spiritual care service for listening, counseling and relay, aumonerie@epfl.ch ;
- The person in charge of the Trust and Support Network for: listening, advice, relay ines.ariceta@epfl.ch ;
- The Person of Trust (external and independent body): mediation, listening, advice and relay, personnedeconfiance@epfl.ch ;

If you are a member of the staff, ask for help from

- Your direct hierarchy, superior or above for: listening and intervention ;
- Your HR Manager for: listening, advice and intervention
- The Equal Opportunity Office (EGA) for: listening, advice and relay, helene.fueger@epfl.ch ;
- Health at work ;
- 1. The Health Point: (nursing consultations) for: consultations, listening and advice in complete confidentiality, pointsante@epfl.ch ;
- 2. Occupational medicine for: consultations, listening and advice in complete confidentiality, sante@epfl.ch ;
- Spiritual care service for listening, counseling and relay, aumonerie@epfl.ch ;
- The person in charge of the Trust and Support Network for: listening, advice, relay ines.ariceta@epfl.ch ;
- The Person of Trust (external and independent authority)

for: mediation, listening, advice and relay in complete confidentiality, personnedeconfiance@epfl.ch ;

If you are a professor, ask for help from, among others

- Your Dean or Director of the college, for listening and intervention ;
- The Person of Trust (external and independent authority) for: mediation, listening, advice and relay in complete confidentiality; personnedeconfiance@epfl.ch ;
- Your HR manager for: listening, advice and intervention ;
- The Equality Office (EGA) for: listening, advice and relay, helene.fueger@epfl.ch ;
- Health at work ;
- 1. The Health Point: (nursing consultations) for: consultations, listening and advice in complete confidentiality, pointsante@epfl.ch ;
- 2. Occupational medicine for: consultations, listening and advice in complete confidentiality, sante@epfl.ch ;
- Spiritual care service for listening, counseling and relay, aumonerie@epfl.ch ;
- The person in charge of the Trust and Support Network for: listening, counselling, relay ines.ariceta@epfl.ch ;

It is important to note that breaches of scientific misconduct must be reported to the EPFL Scientific Ombudsman (see sub-chapter "Scientific misconduct" below).

Making a report (Formal Complaint)

Any employee, student or teacher who feels that his or her health or personality has been violated in the context of his or her activities or studies at EPFL may file a complaint. To initiate a formal complaint, a written complaint must be addressed to the Respect Compliance Office (RCO). The Respect Compliance Office is composed of a Respect Compliance Officer and other representative members of the EPFL community. This body acts in complete independence. All its members are subject to official secrecy.

The Respect Compliance Office advises on resolution solutions such as mediation, HR follow-up or any other action or form of support deemed appropriate. These solu-



tions require the support of both parties: the complainant and the respondent.

You can send your Formal Complaints or contact the Respect Compliance Office (respect@epfl.ch).

Formal investigation

If a situation cannot be dealt with by consensus or through the Respect Compliance Office, the latter, with the assistance of the Direction of Legal Affairs, will draw up a report for the attention of the EPFL President in order to explain the situation and propose additional investigation measures (audit, administrative or disciplinary investigation). When such investigations are ordered, they are entrusted to independent external experts. However, when the complaint concerns a student, the investigations are conducted by the bodies designated in the Ordinance of the EPFL on disciplinary measures.

Measures and Sanctions

On the basis of the facts established following a formal investigation, the EPFL President takes appropriate measures, including sanctions, when individuals are found responsible for unlawful acts. Sanctions are decided in particular according to the seriousness of the facts established and the degree of negligence or intention of the person responsible, as well as the risk of recidivism. They may range from a warning to dismissal or, for students, from a reprimand to exclusion from EPFL.

Psychological support

The person who has lodged a complaint with the Respect Compliance Office or the Ombudsperson may request assistance from the RCO in the form of five sessions of psychological support given by an approved therapist (by the professional body concerned). In case of justified need, this number of sessions may be increased to ten.

The person implicated by a complaint (filed with the Respect Compliance Office or the Ombudsperson) may also request psychological support under the same conditions as in the previous paragraph. However, EPFL will

not pay for such support if, at the end of the procedure, the respondent is judged to be responsible for an attack on his/her personality or health.

Prohibition of retaliation

If the complaint is made in good faith, EPFL will do its utmost to ensure that the person making the complaint will not suffer any professional or academic prejudice as a result of his or her action and will be able to do so without fear of intimidation, reprisals or discrimination. It is therefore prohibited to dismiss an employee for this reason.

What should I do if I witness harassment or other psychosocial risks?

If you witness such a situation, which does not directly affect your own health or personality, you can first contact the Trust and Support Network. You can also file a formal report with one of the following whistleblowing bodies (not with the Respect Compliance Office, which deals with complaints filed by people who are victims of such behavior):

EPFL Ombudsperson for the reporting of harassment or psychosocial risks

The Ombudsperson is an external body, independent of EPFL. Its task is to examine reports of misconduct on the part of EPFL members that are submitted to it and to examine - from a legal point of view - their admissibility. If the alleged facts justify an investigation, the Ombudsperson then forwards the file to the EPFL President. It is important to specify that the Ombudsperson for reports related to harassment or psychosocial risks is a different body from the EPFL Scientific Ombudsperson (see below "Scientific misconduct").

Contact:

Me Isabelle Salomé Daina, BMG Avocats
isabelle.salome.daina@bmglaw.ch

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HELP & SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

Conciliation Commission according to the Law on Equality for the ETH Domain personnel.

This commission informs and advises the parties (employer, employees) in the event of disputes falling within the scope of the Equality Act and concerning the employment relationship within the ETH Domain. Its objective is to reach an amicable settlement of the dispute in an oral procedure in order to avoid legal action. The Conciliation Commission does not pass judgement. It deals with cases confidentially, but not anonymously.

ETH Board Ombuds Office

An independent office of the ETH Board registers complaints about ethically incorrect behavior.

The ETH Board Ombuds Office (E-Mail: nyffenegger@mgnrecht.ch) is an independent body. The office is responsible for receiving, on a subsidiary basis, reports from members of the ETH Domain about unlawful or unethical behavior that they have experienced in the course of their work within the ETH Domain. The subsidiary nature of the ombudsman service means that improper conduct must be reported, first and foremost within the ETH or research institution concerned, to the higher authorities or, if this is deemed preferable, to the competent department of the institution in question.

Whistleblowing Unit of the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO)

If you are a person employed by the Confederation, you cannot be harmed in your professional position and are protected against dismissal. You can report this type of offence or inappropriate behaviour to the Swiss Federal Audit Office ([internet link](#)).

All that is required is a valid suspicion of a criminal act or other irregularities. You do not need any proof. The Swiss Federal Audit Office treats reports confidentially. You can also contact them anonymously.

Scientific misconduct

Scientific misconduct means the deliberate intention to deceive an addressee, the public or the scientific community when using, disseminating or publishing ideas, concepts, theories, methods or experimental data. There is no exclusive or exhaustive description of all the acts that may be carried out for this purpose. For further examples of acts considered as Scientific misconduct: see Code of Scientific Integrity published by the Swiss Academies of Sciences, [internet link](#).

Any natural or legal person may file a report on a breach of scientific misconduct by a member or a group of members of EPFL. The reasoned report is addressed to the EPFL Scientific Ombudsperson (scientific-ombuds@epfl.ch). The entire internal procedure will be conducted in a confidential manner. However, confidentiality is excluded in cases where the disclosure of information is mandatory by virtue of legal or regulatory provisions, legal proceedings or when it is necessary to preserve the overriding interests of EPFL or the public. The identity of the person making the report is also disclosed to those mandated to carry out the procedure.

Obligation to Report Criminal Offenses

In accordance with Article 22a of the Loi sur le personnel de la Confédération (LPers), employees are obliged to report all crimes and misdemeanours of which they have knowledge or which have been brought to their attention in the course of their duties to the criminal prosecution authorities, to their superiors or to the Swiss Federal Audit Office ([www.whistleblowing.admin.ch](#)).



LEGAL BASIS

LEX 1.8.1 “Directive concerning whistleblowing at EPFL”, [PDF link](#)

LEX 1.8.3 “Directive on psychosocial risks”, [PDF link](#)

LEX 3.3.3 “Ordinance concerning the procedure to follow in cases of suspected scientific misconduct”, [PDF link](#)

LEX 4.1.0.1 “Loi sur le personnel de la Confédération” (Art. 22), [internet link](#)

LEX 2.4.0.2 “Ordinance of the EPFL on disciplinary measures”, [PDF link](#)

LEX 1.8.0.1 “Directives du Conseil des EPF sur le traitement des signalements faits par des personnes relevant du Domaine des EPF et concernant des comportements juridiquement ou éthiquement incorrects (Directives concernant l’instance d’alerte du Conseil des EPF)”, [PDF link](#)

CONTACT

Trust and Support Network

[Website](#)

respect@epfl.ch

Conciliation commission according to the Equality Act for the staff of the ETH Domain
[Website](#)

Whistleblowing Ombudsperson of the EPFL
Me Isabelle Salomé Daina
Salomé Preile Associées
isabelle.salome-daina@salomepreile.ch

Scientific Ombudsperson

Winship Herr
Av. du Leman 47, 1025 St-Sulpice
Phone 079 766 60 48
scientific-ombuds@epfl.ch

Ombudsperson Service of the ETH Board

Dr. Michael Daphinoff, Rechtsanwalt, LL.M.
Kellerhals Carrard Bern
Effingerstrasse 1, 3001 Bern
Phone 058 200 35 51
michael.daphinoff@kellerhals-carrard.ch

Cendrine Rouvinez, avocate, MLaw
Kellerhals Carrard Lausanne/Sion
Place St-Francois 1, 1002 Lausanne
Phone 058 200 33 38
cendrine.rouvinez@kellerhals-carrard.ch

Whistleblowing Unit of the Swiss Federal Audit Office
[Website](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

As far as possible, clarify the situation and state what you consider to be inappropriate behavior.

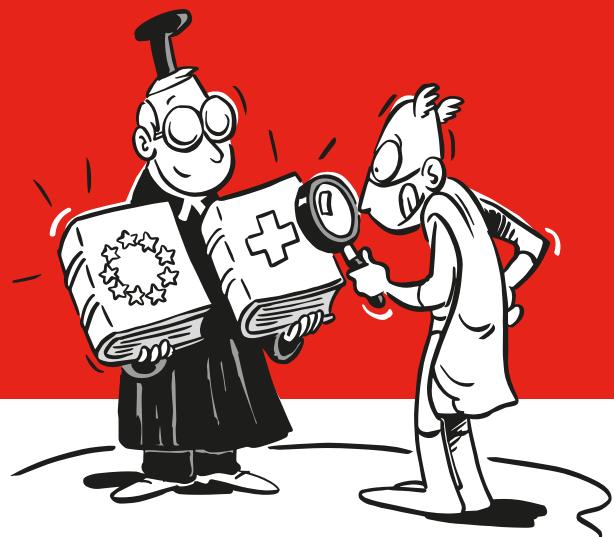
Do not hesitate to note what happened, where, when and in what context the event took place and who may have witnessed it.

Speak quickly to someone you trust in your immediate circle. If you are unsure of where to turn, you can contact Legal Affairs for guidance.

In case of a problem related to security, threat, aggression, call 115.

See the chapter “[Safety, prevention and health](#)” for more information.

DATA PROTECTION



BASIC PRINCIPLES

Data protection is intended to protect the personality and fundamental rights of persons who are the subject of data processing. It applies to any processing of information (collection, communication, storage, etc.) that relates to an identified or identifiable person, regardless of the form (written, image, sound or a combination of these elements). Examples of personal data are an IP address, an email address, a SCIPER number, personal work-related notes, the content of a written work, a voice recording or even a person's handwriting. There is a special category of personal data called sensitive data that requires additional protection measures. This includes data on religious, ideological, political or trade-union-related views or activities, data on health, privacy or racial or ethnic origin, genetic data, biometric data that uniquely identify an individual, data on criminal and administrative proceedings or sanctions and data on social security measures.

The right to data protection is a fundamental right enshrined in the Federal Constitution and implemented by the Federal Act on Data Protection. In addition, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) may, in certain cases, be applicable in Switzerland.

Legally, EPFL is the controller of the personal data it processes. A personal data protection policy has been established at EPFL and is available [here](#).

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF DATA PROTECTION

Lawfulness, fairness and transparency

Since EPFL is a public institution, the collection or other processing of data must in principle have a legal basis to be lawful. In certain cases, particularly in the field of research, another legal basis – such as the consent of the data subject – may constitute an adequate basis. At the time of the data collection, the data subject must be informed of the collection, its purposes, his or her rights, the categories of recipients and whether the data will be

transferred to third parties and/or outside of Switzerland.

Proportionality/data minimization

Personal data must be processed for the purpose stated at the time of collection.

Only data that are suitable and necessary for the purposes of the processing operation may be processed. Furthermore, there must be a reasonable relationship between the purposes and the means used, and the rights of the data subject must be safeguarded to the greatest extent possible.

Accuracy

Personal data that are found to be inaccurate must be erased or rectified as soon as possible.

Limitation of storage period

The duration of data storage must be limited to that which is strictly necessary to achieve the purpose of the processing, in compliance with the various legal provisions on storage that may apply depending on the nature of the data. As soon as personal data are no longer necessary for the purposes of the processing, they must be destroyed or anonymized.

Data security

Data controllers and processors must adequately secure personal data in relation to the risk involved, by using appropriate organizational and technical measures.

The measures must be such as to avoid any breach of data security. These measures include pseudonymization, encryption, the use of passwords or strong authentication, and access authorization limited to persons who have an objective need to access the data in order to perform their duties at EPFL. Physical documents must also be protected. They must be kept under lock and key.

Breach of security of personal data

A breach of security of personal data is any breach of

security that results in the accidental or unlawful loss, alteration, erasure, destruction or disclosure of, or unauthorized access to, personal data.

Any suspected or actual data breach must be reported immediately to the independent data protection officer (DPO), using the [ServiceNow form](#) (authentication required). With the entry into force of the new Federal Data Protection Act, EPFL will be obliged to notify the Federal Data Protection Commissioner and, if applicable, the competent European authorities of any data breach. The DPO is responsible for reporting the data breach within the legal deadlines. The communication of the data breach to the data subjects and to the authorities is coordinated by the DPO.

Data transfer outside of Switzerland

Subject to the lawfulness of such a transfer and in the absence of a valid alternative, personal data may be transferred outside of Switzerland (and outside of the EU if the GDPR applies), provided that certain protective measures are put in place beforehand: standard contractual clauses of the Federal Data Protection Commissioner (or the European Commission if the GDPR applies), or an adequacy decision of the Federal Data Protection Commissioner (or the European Commission if the GDPR applies) regarding the recipient state. Transfers to the United States require special attention due to the risk of mass surveillance by the US government (additional security measures should be taken).

Privacy by design and privacy by default

Data protection features must be embedded in IT systems when they are designed. The controller must implement appropriate technical and organizational measures to ensure that, by default, only personal data that are necessary for each specific purpose of processing are processed.

This obligation applies to the amount of personal data

collected, the extent of processing, the period of data storage and the accessibility of the data. The application of the principle of privacy by design and by default is an important instrument to prevent security breaches of personal data.

Cloud Computing

When considering a cloud solution, it is important to be aware of the issues and risks inherent in sending personal data to the servers of a third-party service provider. In this respect, it is important to use one of the solutions proposed or approved by EPFL (see "[Further information](#)"). Before processing data in a cloud, care must also be taken not to violate official secrecy (Article 320 of the Criminal Code: [internet link](#)). Appropriate technical protection measures (encryption, anonymization, hash function, etc.) must also be in place. If the planned cloud solution is a SaaS (Software as a Service) model, particular care must be taken to ensure that the service provider and its subcontractors can only access encrypted data in the system (for routine management, updates, bug fixes, user support, etc.).

Data protection impact assessment

Before launching a new technology or project involving the processing of personal data, a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) must be carried out for any situation where the processing of data creates a high risk to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

Use of freely available data

The fact that personal data are freely available to the public does not necessarily mean that these data can be used freely. The use of such "public" personal data, in particular for research purposes, requires a data protection analysis. As regards the legal basis for processing, certain exceptions may be raised, for example in the context of research, or if data subjects have already received information about

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DATA PROTECTION (CONTINUED)

the processing. In general, the controller must carry out a balancing of interests between the effort to inform the data subjects and the possible effects on them. This balancing of interests must be documented and should lead to the implementation of appropriate measures. This may involve making the information publicly available on the controller's website or in a newspaper, or carrying out a DPIA.

Anonymization

Anonymization means processing that irreversibly prevents the re-identification of a person. It involves the removal of any direct or indirect identifiers linked to that person, making re-identification extremely difficult or impossible. It also implies that there are no legal means for the data holder to obtain additional identifying information from a third party. Possible technical means include homomorphic encryption, randomization techniques (noise addition, permutation of values, differential privacy) and generalization techniques (aggregation and k-anonymity, l-diversity). Anonymized data are not subject to data protection law. If anonymization ultimately fails, the data protection law will apply.

Individuals' right to access their data

Any person may ask EPFL whether any data concerns him or her and, if so, to be informed of this personal data, as well as the purpose, the legal basis of the processing, the categories of data processed, the participants in the file and the recipients of the data. The request for access should be sent to dpo@epfl.ch.

LEGAL BASIS

Federal Act on Data Protection (RS 235.1), [internet link](#)

Ordinance to the Federal Act on Data Protection (SR 235.11), [internet link](#)

New Federal Act on Data Protection (entry into force: end of 2022): [internet link](#)

Message on the federal law on the total revision of the Federal Act on Data Protection and on the amendment of other federal laws, [link \(PDF\)](#)

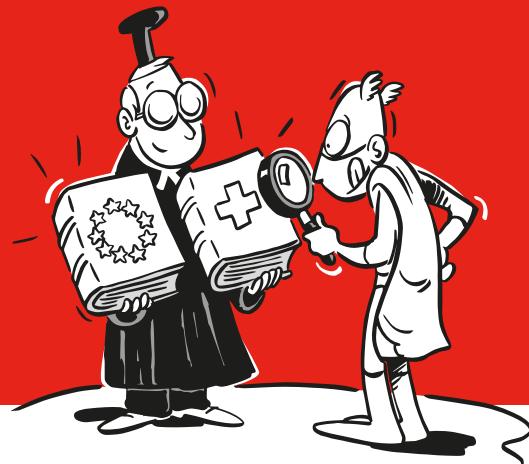
LEX 1.0.1 "Federal Act on the Federal Institutes of Technology", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 4.1.0.4 "Ordinance of the ETH Board on the Personnel of the ETH Domain", [internet link](#)

Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (LERI) (RS 420.1, Art. 1), [internet link](#)

Act on Research on Human Beings, [internet link](#)

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union, [internet link](#)



FURTHER INFORMATION

Privacy policy, [internet link](#)

Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner (Bern), [internet link](#)

Standard contractual clauses of the Federal Data Protection Commissioner, [internet link](#), European Commission if GDPR applicable: [internet link](#)

EPFL page “document storage”, [internet link](#)

CONTACT

Data Protection Officer

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RESEARCH ETHICS

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Of all the qualities required in science, honesty is foremost. Scientific integrity is not only dictated by ethics, it also contributes to EPFL's reputation as an institution. EPFL therefore attaches great importance to its staff and faculty members implementing best practice in their research. Any misconduct in this area is severely sanctioned.

Research integrity implies that:

- all persons involved in EPFL research carefully archive their data (see chapter on "[Research Data Management](#)"). They must be able to prove the veracity of their results and share them with their peers for at least ten years following publication;
- no research data or result may be fabricated, altered, selected or presented in a misleading manner;
- no one may appropriate the creation or intellectual property of others or use these inappropriately. The authors and appropriate references should be stated in all scientific papers. Plagiarism and fraud in any form, whether in teaching or research, will not be tolerated at EPFL and have serious consequences for offenders;
- the list of authors of a scientific paper must include all the persons – and only these – who have made an essential contribution to the subject of the communication. Requests for the inclusion of authors of convenience or requests motivated by a management consideration are not permitted;
- experiments (clinical or non-clinical) involving human beings, animals, or the collection of data relating to specific human individuals, and research with military or potentially violent applications, are regulated. Such experiments must be approved before being initiated (see chapters on "[Research Involving Human Beings](#)" and "[Animal Experimentation](#)");
- research project managers actively steer and supervise their research team and ensure that it observes the above principles;
- research supervisors must display exemplary conduct in terms of integrity and be aware of relevant directives and best practice.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All persons involved in EPFL research are responsible for their own conduct and compliance with directives and best practice in terms of integrity. However, as part of their leadership duties, project and research group leaders, and especially professors, bear the final responsibility.

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 1.8.1 "Directive concerning whistleblowing at EPFL", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 3.3.2 "Directive concerning research integrity and good scientific practice at EPFL", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 3.3.3 "Ordinance concerning the procedure to follow in cases of suspected scientific misconduct", [link \(PDF\)](#)

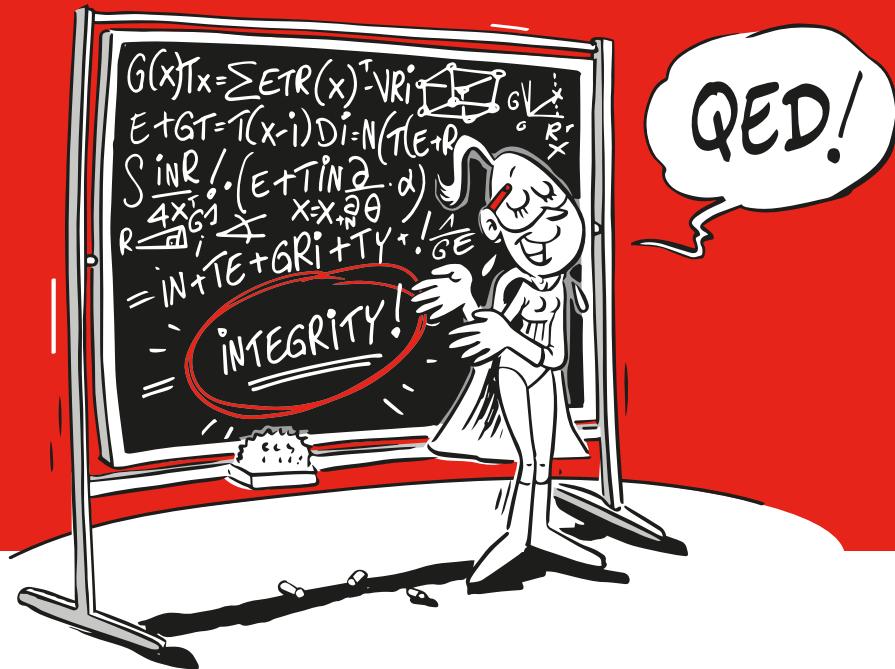
FURTHER INFORMATION

Information about research ethics, [internet link](#)

Information about plagiarism, [internet link](#)

Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences: "Code of conduct for scientific integrity", [internet link](#)

European Science Foundation and ALLEA (All European Academies) "The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity" and other documents, [internet link](#)



CONTACT

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Scientific Ombudsman

Winship Herr

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scientific-ombuds@epfl.ch

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

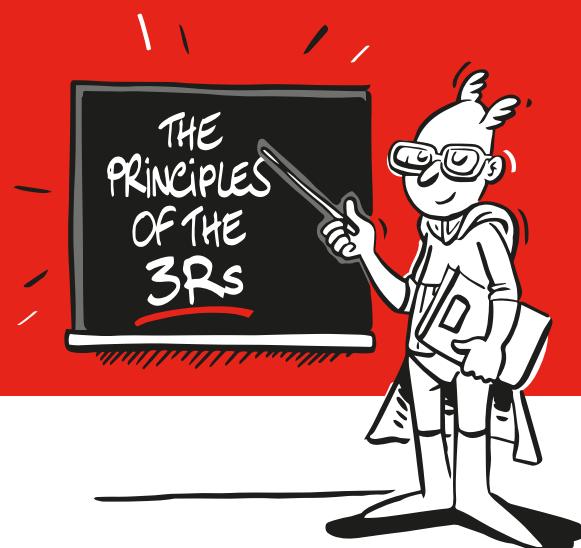
It is recommended to decide on authorship before starting to draw up a manuscript based on the contributions from the entire team.

To be classified as an author, the person involved in the research activity must have made an essential contribution to the design, completion, interpretation or drawing up of the research work and must have approved the final version of the manuscript (LEX 3.3.2).

Other persons who have contributed to the study, but only partially fulfil the above criteria, must be recognised in the acknowledgements, but are not designated as authors.

For questions relating to best scientific practice or to report a possible breach thereof, all members of the institution may contact, in confidence, the Head of Ethics Affairs in the Research Office or the Ombudsman appointed by EPFL (see “Contact” and the chapter on [“Help & Support: Scientific Misconduct”](#)).

ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION



BASIC PRINCIPLES

Animal experimentation is practiced in numerous research projects to validate *in vivo* (via an experiment performed on a living organism) hypotheses whose aim is to better understand human or animal diseases in relation to basic life processes, or in connection with environmental issues, where it is often ethically and legally impossible to test these assumptions directly on human beings. The *in vivo* approach is also used to validate experimental results obtained *in silico* (using computer simulation) and/or *in vitro* (without using a living organism).

A responsible and ethical treatment of animals is a prerequisite for this type of experiment. The EPFL Direction is committed to enforcing compliance with all currently applicable Swiss laws in this area in its research groups. EPFL also promotes the most innovative approaches to ensure a responsible and respectful treatment of animals. To this end EPFL supports the document "Principes de swissuniversities concernant l'expérimentation animale" adopted by swissuniversities on 14th December 2016 and the ethical principles and directives for animal experimentation established jointly by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences and the Swiss Academy of Sciences.

The Animal Welfare Act ("Loi fédérale sur la protection des animaux" - LPA) specifies what is deemed to be an animal experiment. In short, this includes:

- *in vivo* verification of a scientific hypothesis;
- testing the effectiveness of a substance on an animal;
- use of live animals for teaching or training purposes or obtaining cells, organs or bodily fluids.

The LPA is the basis of the legal framework for animal experimentation in Switzerland. Particular importance is attached to the indispensability of experiments conducted, all of which must be duly justified. Several ordinances – the "Ordonnance sur la protection des animaux (OPAn)" and the "Ordonnance sur l'expérimentation animale (OExAn)" in particular - define the rules for its practical implementation. These ordinances also provide the legal framework

governing the use of genetically modified animals.

Specific roles and obligations for the protection of animals are assigned to the various individuals involved in the field of animal experimentation. At EPFL, the role of Resource Manager (Directrice ou Directeur de l'Expérimentation Animale) is assigned to a professor or to the Dean of the School of Life Sciences. EPFL also appoints an Animal Welfare Officer (DPA). Other functions defined by law, such as those of experimenter and study director, play a major role within the research groups.

All persons conducting or leading animal experiments must have completed compulsory initial training (module 1 for experimenters and modules 1 and 2 for study directors). For individuals from the FIT involved in research activities, this training, accredited by the Cantonal Veterinary Office, is provided by the Lemanic Animal Facility Network (Resal). Qualification equivalence may be granted to persons having gained experience of having completed similar training abroad. Additionally, experimenters and study directors must regularly attend further education courses (4 days over 4 years).

Any experiment with animals is subject to authorisation by the Cantonal Veterinary Office. The experiment application is submitted to the authorities via the electronic animal experiment administration system, animex-ch. The application must detail the purpose of the experiment, all experimental procedures to be followed, the number of animals used and the constraints (degree of severity) to which the animal will be subjected according to the principles of the 3Rs (Replacement - Reduction - Refinement). From an ethical point of view, the application must explicitly specify the indispensability of the proposed experiments, thus allowing for the weighing up of interests between the knowledge to be gained through the experiment and the degree of the stress experienced by the animals.

At the end of each calendar year and upon expiry of the

authorisation, authorisation holders are required to submit a progress report to the Cantonal Veterinary Office via animex-ch, detailing all of the experiments carried out, the number of animals used over the past year and the degree of constraint retrospectively subjected to the animals.

All experiments with animals conducted outside of Switzerland must be evaluated and approved by the Animal Research Ethics Committee, AREC. The Committee has the authority to approve or refuse research projects involving animals which are conducted abroad, from the point of view of ethical acceptability. As well as the examination by AREC, the projects must also be authorised by the competent authority for research on animals of the country concerned. The AREC evaluation is based on the country where the experiments are to be conducted, the animal models¹ used and the degree of severity of the experiments.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the various individuals involved in animal experimentation are defined in the OPAn Ordinance. In particular, responsibility for the implementation of directives, laws and ordinances on animal protection lies with any person who carries out (experimenter) or oversees (supervisor) an experiment. Overall responsibility for animal

testing at EPFL lies with the Resource Manager (Directrice ou Directeur de l'Expérimentation Animale). Amongst other things, the Animal Welfare Officer supervises the creation of all authorisation requests for experiments from a legal standpoint.

LEGAL BASIS

“Animal Welfare Act”, [internet link](#)

“Ordonnance sur la protection des animaux”, [internet link](#)

“FSVO Ordinance on Laboratory Animal Husbandry, the Production of Genetically Modified Animals and Methods of Animal Experimentation”, [internet link](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Swissuniversities policy for animal research, [link \(PDF\)](#)

Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) website regarding Animal experiments, [internet link](#)

Website of the Lemanic Animal Facility Network (Resal) which organises basic training and continuing education, [internet link](#)

“animex-ch” tool, [internet link](#)

EPFL Animal Research Ethics Committee (AREC), [internet link](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Obtaining an authorisation for your research may take several months. It is therefore highly advisable to take this timing into consideration and to submit your application as early as possible.

The experiment authorisation is valid for a maximum of three years. Once the Cantonal Veterinary Office has given its approval, the Federal Veterinary Office (FSVO) has a 30-day deadline to appeal before experiments can begin.

Any changes which have to be made to planned experiments must be approved in advance by the Cantonal Veterinary Office.

All experimenters and study directors must undergo compulsory training before the start of any experiment. It is therefore advisable to register for courses as soon as possible.

Information can be obtained from the EPFL Center of PhenoGenomics (CPG), located on the Lausanne campus, whose mission is to provide research groups with the necessary logistical, veterinary and legal support to conduct animal experimentation.

Any contact with the media regarding animal testing must imperatively go through Mediacom.

1. In animal experimentation, it is not the animal itself (mouse, rat, fish, etc.) that is studied; rather the animal is used to model a pathology or an aspect of a scientific question, for example. It is for this reason that the term “model” is used.

CONTACT

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Phoukham Phothirath

Animal Welfare Officer
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TEACHING



BASIC PRINCIPLES

Education is the priority mission of EPFL. Our institution develops the technical, scientific, professional and social skills of our students, enabling them to become responsible engineers, architects and scientists.

Course Design and Delivery

The Sections develop curricula that match the disciplinary and interdisciplinary qualification profile required by companies that will potentially recruit students. The various forms of teaching (lectures, exercises, labs, projects, etc.) build upon previous learning and prepare these students for the rest of their curriculum.

At PhD level, the doctoral programmes establish study plans which correspond to the disciplinary and interdisciplinary competency profile, while the doctoral Commission establishes a study plan for transferable skills.

For each curriculum and each course, the learning outcomes are clearly set out, transparent, ambitious and binding. Course content must match the learning outcomes stated at the start of the course.

The credits carried by each course reflect the average workload required for a student. At EPFL, one ECTS credit corresponds to a total of 25-30 hours of work.

Whatever the course format, the service concerned by the organisation is responsible for ensuring the safety of those who participate. Laboratory sessions, practical work, work placements and excursions/field trips must be organised so as to reduce the risk of accidents. The department of Security, Safety and Facilities Operations (DSE) offers specific assistance (see "[Safety, Prevention and Health](#)").

Performance Assessment

Examinations serve to check that students have reached the learning outcomes. They cover the content of the course and its prerequisites. They are developed with education in mind, continuously renewed and method-

ologically reliable. They guarantee observance of the following principles:

- grading conditions are the same for all students in a course;
- all individuals may view a copy of their own marked and graded exams (or the original under supervision);
- written and oral examination protocols, reports and test copies are safely stored in a place that is inaccessible to unauthorised persons and archived in accordance with legal requirements.

Fraud and Plagiarism

The authors of written work guarantee its originality and are required to quote their sources according to the rules. Lecturers also take care to mention all sources used in their course materials.

They endeavour to identify all attempts at fraud by students by immediately reporting any suspected breach of the disciplinary ordinance to the Section or Programme Director concerned for PhD courses, and to the Legal services of the Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs.

Teaching Evaluation & Quality Assurance

Courses delivered by EPFL are regularly evaluated by the students. Moreover, the Sections, doctoral programmes and their training offers are regularly subject to quality assessment by peers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Lecturers must fulfil their teaching duties and responsibilities.

Section Directors, with the support of the Teaching Commissions, are responsible for the relevance of the educational curriculum, assessment of its quality and compliance with study regulations. For doctoral programmes, the Programme Directors have this responsibility, with support from the Doctoral Commission.

Students with disabilities

EPFL must implement the support measures necessary for enabling students with disabilities to follow the curriculum

and participate in exams without being placed at a disadvantage, unless the measures required for such support are deemed disproportionate. The course objectives must be met and cannot be modified due to a disability.

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 2.1.0.1 “Ordonnance sur l'admission à l'EPFL”, [internet link](#)

LEX 2.11.0.1 “Ordonnance sur la formation à l'EPFL”, [internet link](#)

LEX 2.6.0.1 “Ordonnance sur le contrôle des études à l'EPFL”, [internet link](#)

LEX 2.4.0.1 “Ordonnance sur le doctorat à l'EPFL”, [internet link](#)

LEX 2.7.0.1 “Ordonnance sur la formation continue à l'EPFL”, [internet link](#)

LEX 2.6.1 “Internal directive concerning examinations at EPFL”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 1.3.3 “Directive concerning the citing and referencing of sources”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 2.4.0.2 “Ordinance on disciplinary measures”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 2.5.1 “Directive concerning the evaluation and recognition of teaching at the EPFL”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 2.6.5 “Procedure for support measures and adapted study schedules for disabled students at EPFL”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Admission

No assurances of admission should ever be given before the official decision, regardless of the study level (Bachelor, Master, PhD or Continuing Education).

Lecturers asked to provide a letter of reference ensure that it covers only those elements which are verifiable and give the reference directly to the final recipient. In case of a refusal to provide such a letter, the student who has made the request will be informed accordingly.

Notification of Results

The grades for session exams are systematically and exclusively notified to the students by the Registrar's Office (SAC). Any informal communication of results (e.g. after an oral exam or project defence) is prohibited.

Personal Student Data

Personal student data refers to any information relating to an identified student or a student identifiable by the school (SCIPER number, electronic address, form and content of answers in an examination, result obtained, file note concerning them, email written by them, etc.). This information must be handled in accordance with the legal provisions on the protection of personal data. For this reason, it is imperative that all appropriate technical and organisational measures be taken. In particular, access to documents relating to a student (copy of an examination, for example) shall be reserved for those for whom access is objectively necessary for carrying out their role within EPFL. It is also noted that documents shall be held under key in a locked storage area, with a “clean desk” policy. For dematerialised files, it is essential to provide at least one access with password (see chapter on “[Information security and data protection](#)”). It is also necessary to use a storage solution offered or approved by EPFL, if possible, one specifically dedicated to the storage of academic materials.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Polylex website is a collection of all legal documents, [internet link](#)

For teaching staff: all relevant information can be found on the Teaching Portal, [internet link](#)

and on the homepage of the Teaching Support Centre, [internet link](#)

For the student body: for any additional information please refer to the Student Services desk, [internet link](#)

CONTACT

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AVP – Postgraduate Education
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[internet link](#)

DOCTORAL SCHOOL

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The Doctoral School is the administrative unit that coordinates and manages doctoral studies at EPFL. It operates across individual schools, sections (teaching) and institutes (research) and is headed by the Associate Vice-President for Postgraduate Education (AVP-PGE). Doctoral programs are designed to pool the resources of individual research units around a specific discipline or research domain; they can be interdisciplinary (e.g. Photonics, Energy, or Robotics) or oriented toward a specific discipline (e.g. Chemistry or Mathematics).

Over the course of their doctoral studies, PhD students should become true experts in their thesis subject, and be at the forefront of the related research. They are taught to be rigorous researchers who are able to find independently a previously unknown road to address a specific research topic. The research is carried out under the guidance and supervision of an EPFL thesis director (Professor or MER). PhD students should acquire broad knowledge about their thesis subject and communication skills – writing, presentation, convincing – to share their research results and their impact. EPFL doctoral studies prepare PhD students for careers in the academic as well as the non-academic sector.

After succeeding the candidacy exam, submitting a research plan, fulfilling the first-year course requirements (ECTS), and obtaining confirmation from an EPFL thesis director of his/her willingness to supervise the thesis, PhD students can continue with the thesis preparation. During the remaining PhD time, they conduct research, take doctoral courses, participate in the teaching assistantship to Bachelor and Master students, and write their doctoral thesis. To graduate, each PhD student successfully defends his/her thesis during a private oral exam and a public defense. Details on the exams can be found in the Ordinance and Directives on the doctorate at EPFL, while the number of required course credits – between 12 and 30 ECTS depending on the doctoral program – are specified in the doctoral program regulations. Each

doctoral student is integrated in one of the 21 doctoral programs.

PhD students are generally employed by an EPFL laboratory, but externally funded PhD students are also integrated in EPFL's Doctoral School.

Participation and involvement in the Doctoral School

- **PhD students:** They are part of the EPFL scientific community and therefore encouraged to take part in initiatives and activities (PhD welcome event, doctoral program scientific days, seminars, etc.). PhD students regularly elect their doctoral program's PhD student representative(s), who then becomes a formal doctoral program committee member and helps to develop the program's academic requirements and activities (course requirements, seminars, scientific events, etc.).
- **Thesis directors:** They are invited to actively participate in the management and development of the Doctoral School. Involvements can be manifold: be director (if they are professor) or a member of the doctoral program committee, act as an internal expert or thesis jury president, organize scientific seminars, lecture a doctoral (scientific/transferable) course, or organize community-building events such as a scientific challenge or hackathon.

RESPONSIBILITIES

PhD students

To graduate, each PhD student must fulfil the PhD requirements (see Ordinance/Directives on the doctorate at EPFL). PhD students are advised to take advantage of the opportunities to build up a professional network, not just among the other researchers in the laboratory but also among the global scientific community. Relations with researchers of other labs, schools and international research consortiums are particularly valuable. The development of transferable skills – by taking dedicated courses, organizing a summer school, etc. – is important for the career preparation. PhD students also participate in the teaching assistantship to Bachelor and Master students. In doing so, PhD students

improve their capability to explain complex subjects to broad audiences, and develop their transferable skills.

Thesis directors

Thesis directors supervise their PhD students, in some cases together with a thesis co-director. In the case of a thesis co-director coming from outside EPFL, the thesis director attached to EPFL is responsible for decisions concerning the progress of the thesis vis-à-vis the PhD student and EPFL. It is the responsibility of thesis directors to not only lead and deliver instructions, but also to dedicate an important part of their time to their PhD students for discussing, providing feedback, and giving advice. Thesis directors are role models and greatly influence the team's culture. EPFL's Doctoral School is committed to a leadership culture that is open and based on dialogue.

Recommendations are:

- Be conscious of the responsibilities that the leadership role involves;
- Lead by objectives and focus on development;
- Communicate openly and clearly;
- Actively support personal and professional development;
- Promote team spirit.

Mentors

Each doctoral program has a pool of thesis directors who are willing to serve as mentors. Mentors offer advice and support to PhD students in the context of their training. They are a person of reference for the PhD students in case of questions, personal issues and/or if the relationship with their thesis director is not going well.

Each pool of mentors meets regularly with the program director, but they only report problems with the agreement of the PhD student.

PhD student & thesis director: Progress updates

PhD students give regular updates on their progress to their thesis directors, and thesis directors carefully follow the progress of the work of PhD students, and discuss options or new possible directions in light of emerging findings. Regular meetings can be setup for this purpose, but the exchange may also be informal. Most important is

that communication takes place regularly; typically, once every two weeks: exchanges should normally occur at least once a month. Time to listen to each other and to develop ideas should be spared. During these exchanges, the thesis director should provide constructive and fact-based feedback.

Annual report (AR)

According to the Ordinance on the doctorate at EPFL, "each year, the candidate submits a report to the thesis director on the state of progress of his/her work. The thesis director gives the candidate his/her opinion in writing and submits a report to the program director". The AR includes four sections: (i) general information/questions, (ii) research progress and plans, (iii) progress assessment, and (iv) overall appraisal. The report should be discussed between the PhD student and the thesis director, keeping in mind that:

- PhD students: The thesis director is responsible for guiding them in their research and for leading them to reach the scientific level of a PhD. The critical feedback of the thesis director plays a key role in this process and thus also for the PhD student's success. Signing the AR means that the PhD student has discussed with the thesis director and understand the expectations for improvement, if any, in the identified areas, and that he/she agrees on the plan to reach these milestones.
- Thesis directors: His/her signature indicates that he/she has discussed all sections of the AR with the PhD student and considered his/her feedback regarding any potential problem; has explained his/her expectations for improvement, when appropriate, including mechanisms for intermediate progress assessments; and has discussed a plan for timely publication of the results and for the thesis defense.

As part of the annual report, mentors meet with the PhD students to discuss the progress of their work and their well-being in the laboratory.

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DOCTORAL SCHOOL (CONTINUED)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Doctoral School websites

Doctoral School, [internet link](#)

Overview of doctoral programs, [internet link](#)

PhD student representatives, [internet link](#)

Transversal Skills Courses, [internet link](#)

PhD Guide, [internet link](#)

Harassment and bullying

To know what exactly constitutes harassment, and what EPFL's policies are, please visit this [internet link](#) and the chapter "[Harassment](#)" of the Compliance Guide.

Counselling and wellbeing services

A PhD journey is not always straightforward. It can include phases with a significant amount of stress and PhD students may find that at times their personal motivation varies. However, whilst some level of stress is acceptable, prolonged distress and anxiety due to stressful situations is not. How can you proceed in case of difficulties or anxiety?

- Speak to a member of your academic community – peers, thesis director, mentor, doctoral program director or administrator (visit this [internet link](#))
- EPFL provides social consultation including individual support. The service includes – free of charge – a broad scope of coaching, counselling, and wellbeing services (visit this [internet link](#))
- Psychotherapeutic consultation for temporary medical support or in case of crisis. The service – the first consultation is free of charge – is offered in English or French (visit this [internet link](#))

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 2.4.0.1 Ordonnance sur le doctorat à l'EPFL, [internet link](#)

LEX 2.4.1 Directive concerning doctoral studies at EPFL, [link \(PDF\)](#)

Doctoral Program Regulations, [internet link](#)

LEX 4.4.1 Directive on Terms of Employment of EPFL Assistants, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 4.1.4 Rules and Regulations concerning Working Time Management, [link \(PDF\)](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Communicate!

Communication is paramount for good science, both with immediate colleagues in the laboratory and department, as well as with the broader academic community. Continuous efforts to communicate, and to improve this communication, are a key element of quality and success. Difficult situations, misunderstandings, or conflicts can often be avoided by direct and open discussion between the thesis director and the PhD student. Thesis directors should foster this open culture in their laboratory, and doctoral program directors in their program. PhD students should bring up early concerns or problems to their thesis director (and vice versa), and not postpone them to when it is too late. PhD students can also communicate worries or problems to their mentor, doctoral program director, or the Doctoral School.

Matching expectations

The PhD student and thesis director are encouraged to clearly define the framework of their working relationship at an early stage. Both need to have an in-depth exchange about their expectations, working style

and priorities. As the requirements (the content of the thesis, the scope of work, timing, possible partnerships/collaborations and the necessary equipment or resources) may change with time, PhD students and thesis directors are encouraged to re-evaluate and re-discuss expectations as necessary. A checklist is available to help you to prepare for this discussion. (Visit this [internet link](#))

Present at conferences and workshops

It is important to disseminate research as early as possible, typically in year 2 or 3. This can be achieved by presenting the findings to colleagues, groups of professionals at conferences or scientific meetings. It provides an opportunity to receive feedback from other experts in the field. The related discussion process is fundamental for research and allows PhD students to improve their skills. PhD students often find conferences a source of motivation and creativity. Furthermore, it is essential to become part of a broader scientific community and build up a network. Conferences and seminars provide an excellent opportunity for this.

CONTACT

Doctoral program directors

Overview of EPFL doctoral programs and contacts
[website link](#)

Doctoral School

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

COMMITMENT

EPFL has long been committed to continuous improvement and quality management and strives to constantly improve its services, whether they be managerial, academic, operational or financial.

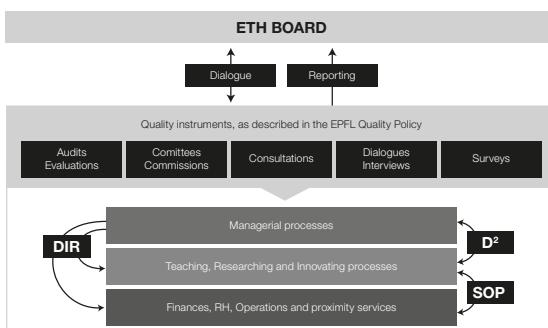
SWISS SYSTEM

According to the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HEdA), all institutions wishing to use the protected title of «university» in Switzerland or to benefit from federal subsidies must implement a quality management system and demonstrate its effectiveness against 18 national standards during institutional accreditation.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

EPFL's quality management system has been developed for over 30 years.

EPFL has 3 types of processes. Each process is placed under the responsibility of a pilot who ensures that it is efficient and documented. The processes follow the Deming circle (PDCA cycle), i.e. they are planned, implemented by specifically dedicated teams, controlled by specific instruments and improved.



A whole range of instruments and mechanisms is used to monitor whether EPFL's performance is constantly improving and whether the conditions are right to foster the EPFL community's commitment to quality.

The instruments are described in detail [here](#).

RESPONSIBILITIES

At EPFL, responsibility for Quality Assurance is collective:

- The EPFL President has overall responsibility for the governance of EPFL. He or she is accountable to the ETH Board.
- The Direction of EPFL determines the quality strategy, provides the necessary means or instruments for its implementation and assigns specific tasks.
- Each Vice President (VP) ensures the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the processes within his or her area of activity. He or she approves the continuous improvement objectives and appoints the process drivers responsible for documenting and implementing the measures.
- The Deans of the Faculties and the Directors of the Colleges ensure that their entities are fully involved in the quality approach. They regularly submit their activities to a peer review, whose opinion is analyzed and, if necessary, integrated into the activities of their entity.
- EPFL professors ensure that their teaching and research are of high quality. They adhere to the principle of continuous improvement, taking into account the results of student surveys and peer reviews to improve their performance.
- Students engage as representatives and/or class delegates in the governance of EPFL and provide input to the Direction or its representatives.
- By responding to surveys, students can express their views on teaching, working conditions or campus life.
- The Secretary general coordinates quality-related activities at EPFL. He or she is assisted by the Quality Office.

QUALITY COMMISSION

The Quality Commission is one of the advisory commissions of the Direction of EPFL. It is placed under the responsibility of the Secretary general. Its mission is to promote and support the development of a quality culture and the improvement of EPFL's quality management system. The composition of the Commission is [available here](#).

PERIODIC EVALUATIONS

EPFL's quality is periodically evaluated at three levels.

- Institutional accreditation aims to evaluate the design and effectiveness of the quality management system according to the 18 national standards. The procedure consists of three stages, a self-evaluation stage, a visit by external experts and a decision by the [Swiss Accreditation Council](#). For more information, [click here](#).
- Every 8 years, a group of experts selected by the Direction of EPFL evaluates the performance of each Faculty and College according to the terms of reference defined by the Direction of EPFL, and in accordance with the framework defined by the ETH Board. For more information, [click here](#).
- Master's programs that award the title of engineer are accredited by the French [Commission des titres d'ingénieur](#)¹ (CTI). For more information, [click here](#).

CONTACT

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LEGAL BASIS

LEX 1.0.1 «ETH Act», [internet link](#)

«Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HEdA)», [internet link](#)

«Ordinance of the Higher Education Council on Accreditation within the Higher Education Sector» (HEdA Accreditation Ordinance), [Internet link](#)

«Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area», [PDF link](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

EPFL's Quality Policy, [internet link](#)

THE ESSENTIALS IN BRIEF

EPFL's Quality Assurance processes are under the responsibility of the process leaders. They are planned, implemented, controlled and improved (PDCA cycle). In short, in order to continuously improve its services, EPFL takes the following measures

- Stakeholder satisfaction is systematically monitored.
- All EPFL services are periodically evaluated.
- Institutional data is collected and made available to the community to enable evidence-based decision making.
- Participation in decision making is crucial to the proper functioning of the quality management system. Each member of the EPFL community plays a specific and differentiated role in EPFL's quality management.
- Do not hesitate to ask for more information!

¹ The term «titre d'ingénieur» is intended for people of all genders. It is kept in the masculine form in this book because of its official use by the CTI.

RESEARCH & FUNDING

BASIC PRINCIPLES

EPFL funding is made up of about 30% of external funds. These are essential for ensuring the financing of research, the School's equipment and sustainability of the institution. Central Services, in particular the Research Office (ReO), Technology Transfer Office (TTO) and the Equipment and Centers Management Office (ECO) accompany, encourage and support employees and members of the teaching staff in identifying third-party funding. These services report to the Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs (VPA).

Project Funding by Public Institutions or Non-Profit Organisations

The ReO acts as a transmission belt between research and funding by public institutions and non-profit organisations such as foundations. It supports research teams looking for funding opportunities and assists them in drawing up funding applications and research agreements. It then provides support for these people in the field of administrative management throughout their research projects.

Project Funding and Collaboration with Industry and Business

The TTO advises research teams on all matters relating to the management of intellectual property and its exploitation, particularly within the context of collaborations with industry and business. The TTO negotiates and approves research and service contracts with industrial partners. For TTO activities related to the exploitation of research results, see the chapter on "[Valorisation & Technology Transfer](#)".

Funding and Provision of Equipment for Research Purposes

The ECO supports research teams in funding scientific equipment and in the preparation of calls to tender, which must be public if the amounts exceed CHF 230,000.00. It also approves the conditions for the use of EPFL equipment by third parties.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Recording Research Projects in GrantsDB

All research projects, contracts and use of scientific equipment belonging to EPFL must be recorded in the EPFL GrantsDB database.

Contract Validation

Research and scientific service contracts and contracts concerning the use of scientific equipment by third parties are subject to the approval of the Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs according to the applicable directives.

Contract Content

When negotiating contract terms, you must ensure that:

- the research results can be published by EPFL (within a reasonable time),
- the allocation of rights on research results is appropriate and compatible with other existing contracts,
- EPFL's liability is appropriately limited.

Ethical aspects, the generation or use of personal data and issues related to dual-use (civilian and military) technologies should also be reviewed (see chapters on "[Research Involving Human Beings](#)", "[Animal Experimentation](#)" and "[Export Laws](#)"). In addition, the provision of services must be offered on terms that do not affect free competition.

When persons not employed by EPFL (e.g. students or guest researchers) participate, under EPFL's responsibility, in a project, in services performed under a contract which foresees obligations or exploitation activities concerning rights on the results and/or confidentiality, such participants must sign an agreement with EPFL to enable the latter to fulfil these obligations or to complete this activity. The TTO and ReO provide templates.

Overhead Rates and User Fees for Equipment

The ReO, respectively TTO, sets the overhead rate according to EPFL directives (LEX 5.1.1), regardless of the contract amount. For public institutions or non-profit organisations



LEGAL BASIS

which formalise the overhead rate, the maximum rate stated in their directives is applicable.

Fees for the use of scientific equipment belonging to EPFL by third parties are approved by the ECO.

Double Signature

Research contracts must be jointly signed by the Head of Unit concerned and an authorised representative of the Vice Presidency for Academic Affairs in accordance with the relevant directives in force (LEX 3.4.1).

After Signing a Contract

Once the contract is signed by all parties, the Head of Unit is responsible for ensuring that all obligations specified in the contract are met (performance of research or services, ensuring of ethical compliance, respect of confidentiality, data protection, publication of results, granting of rights, acquisition of licences, billing, reporting, etc.).

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Contact the VPA services via research@epfl.ch at the earliest possible stage when preparing a new project. You will receive a confirmation of receipt message which will enable you to contact the specialists from ReO, TTO or ECO directly regarding your requirements.

Certain contracts, particularly those with companies, are subject to negotiations. This means that the conclusion of such an agreement requires discussion and several exchanges between the parties. Verifications and authorisation requests relating to ethical aspects, the use of personal data or questions regarding dual-use (civil and military) technologies may also require a certain amount of time.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website for laboratory services, [internet link](#)

CONTACT

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RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Research data are essential components of any research project and one of the pillars of Open Science. EPFL promotes excellence in scientific research, encourages (full) reproducibility of its research projects and incorporates the international FAIR principles. EPFL highlights the importance of sound management of data throughout their life cycle (including archiving).

Several funding sources require the establishment of a Data Management Plan (DMP) as a condition for funding projects. Such a plan aims to ensure proper management of data and code, and long-term backup. In particular, this is one of the Swiss National Science Foundation's requirements for the majority of its funding programmes and one of the European Commission's requirements in the context of its framework programmes for research. Furthermore, funding source requirements are leaning increasingly towards openness and the ready availability of data, at least those relating to publications produced throughout the funded projects.

In addition to the requirements of funding sources, a growing number of publishing houses are following this movement in terms of the openness and ready availability of data relating to publications.

EPFL offers its research teams a support service for managing research data throughout their life cycle. This service is provided by the EPFL Library and includes, amongst other things, personalised support for researchers and research groups to enable them to meet the demands of funding sources and publishing houses, while ensuring the protection of their research results, notably through concrete assistance in the preparation of DMPs and the provision of technical infrastructure such as ACOUA (Academic Output Archive) for long-term storage, for example.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All EPFL employees are responsible for the proper management of their own research data.

Heads of Unit ensure proper management of research data relating to any project in their unit.

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 3.3.2 “Directive concerning research integrity and good scientific practice at EPFL”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

SNSF Open Research Data, [internet link](#)

SNSF Data Management Plan (DMP) – Guidelines for researchers, [internet link](#)

Guidelines on Open Access to Scientific Publications and Research Data in Horizon 2020, [link \(PDF\)](#)

Open access - H2020 Online Manual: publication and data, [internet link](#)

European commission and research data, new requirements from 2017, [internet link](#)

Open Research Data and Data Management Plans Information for ERC grantees, [internet link](#)

FAIR Data principles, [internet link](#)

Information about research data on the EPFL Library website, [internet link](#)

ACOUA (Academic Output Archive), [internet link](#)

ACOUA (Support), [internet link](#)



ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Think in terms of data life cycle (creation, processing, analysing, storage, access and re-use of data) and document practices for a research project and for a group/a lab.

Add a brief section at the proposal submission stage outlining the main aspects of your data management policy (standards, access strategies, curation, storage) for your research project. This will help you to anticipate and integrate data management costs and to develop the Data Management Plan (DMP).

The DMP and a data management strategy are tools that help researchers in planning good data management for their own project. They describe what data will be produced during the research project, and how each type of data will be organised, classified, shared, distributed, protected, even anonymised, and archived. They also define who will be responsible for DMP implementation and establish procedures to be followed in terms of budget and intellectual property. See the chapter on "[IT Security and Data Protection](#)" for further information regarding the processing of computer data, as well as the chapter on "[Data Protection](#)". The EPFL Library can be contacted for all questions relating to research data management.

CONTACT

Research data management

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Research data management coordinator

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RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN BEINGS

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The authority of the HREC (Human Research Ethics Committee) is subsidiary to that of the cantonal ethics committees on human research ("Commission cantonale d'éthique de la recherche sur l'être humain").

The Federal Act on Research involving Human Beings (Human Research Act, HRA) entered into force in early 2014 with three Ordinances: Ordinance on Clinical Trials in Human Research (Clinical Trials Ordinance, ClinO), Ordinance on Human Research with the Exception of Clinical Trials (Human Research Ordinance, HRO), and the Ordinance on Organisational Aspects of the Human Research Act (HRA Organisation Ordinance, OrgO-HRA). Legislation on research involving humans intends to protect every human being and ensure respectful treatment of personal data related to health.

The Human Research Act governs research involving:

- living or deceased persons,
- in vivo human embryos and foetuses,
- human biological material (i.e. bodily substances derived from living persons),
- collection of health-related personal data (but also research concerning the structure and function of the human body and studies on human diseases in the field of the humanities and social science).

Under the framework of the HRA, when such research is conducted in order to gain a better understanding of human diseases or the structure and function of the human body, it must be authorised in advance by the relevant cantonal ethics committee on human research ("Commission cantonale d'éthique de la recherche sur l'être humain"). Research conducted on anonymised biological material or data collected anonymously or irreversibly anonymised with the donor's general consent is not subject to such authorisation.

Outside of the scope of the HRA, the EPFL Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has the authority

to approve or refuse any project for non-invasive human research or research involving in particular the collection of personal data, on the basis of conformity to ethical standards. The HREC reserves the right, in addition to stating its opinion regarding the ethical conformity of a project, to comment on ethics in relation to the project in a broader sense, beyond the project's conformity.

Trial subjects must be informed and state their consent for the use of the data or material. For the processing of personal data, the laws applicable to data protection also apply and must be respected (namely the Federal Act on Data Protection, and even the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), if applicable). For more information, see the chapter on "[Data Protection](#)". Furthermore, the directives applicable for the publication of results and the insurances necessary may apply. For all questions on insurance relating to clinical trials/human research projects, contact the Internal Control and Risk Management Department (see "Contact" section).

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Look up the booklet "Research with human subjects

- A manual for practitioners" which answers many questions regarding the legal or ethical compliance of a proposed project.

Allow enough time in your research plan to obtain approval from a cantonal ethics committee or the EPFL Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC): the processing time for an application for approval is at least three to four weeks.

Make sure that any biological material or personal data purchased from institutional or commercial suppliers have been collected in compliance with statutory regulations under Swiss law and EPFL directives in force.

For suppliers abroad, contractually ensure that local laws comply with Swiss law and EPFL directives.



RESPONSIBILITIES

Heads of Unit are responsible for compliance with laws and internal regulations governing ethics and research involving human beings.

LEGAL BASIS

“Federal Act on Research involving Human Beings (Human Research Act, HRA)”, [internet link](#)

“Federal Act on Medicinal Products and Medical Devices (Therapeutic Products Act, TPA)”, [internet link](#)

“Ordinance on Human Research with the Exception of Clinical Trials (Human Research Ordinance, HRO)”, [internet link](#)

“Ordinance on Clinical Trials in with Medical Devices (ClinO-MD)”, [internet link](#)

“Ordinance on Organisational Aspects of the Human Research Act (HRA Organisation Ordinance, OrgO-HRA)”, [internet link](#)

“Medical Devices Ordinance (MedDO)”, [internet link](#)

LEX 3.3.2 “Directive concerning research integrity and good scientific practice at EPFL”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 4.1.0.8 “Ordinance of the ETH Board on the Organisation of the Conciliation Commission under the Gender Equality Act for the ETH Domain”, [internet link](#)

“Ordinance to the Federal Act on Data Protection (DPO)”, [internet link](#)

“General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)”, [internet link](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

“Research with human subjects - A manual for practitioners (2nd edition, revised in 2015)”, [internet link](#)

Commission cantonale d'éthique de la recherche sur l'être humain CER-VD (Vaud, Fribourg, Neuchâtel, Valais), [internet link](#)

Commission cantonale d'éthique de la recherche CCER (Geneva), [internet link](#)

EPFL Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), [internet link](#)

CONTACT

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EXPORT LAWS

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Switzerland is a party to several international agreements aiming to control the export, import or transit of goods that could be used to produce or distribute weapons of mass destruction, military equipment and dual-use goods.

In Switzerland, control of these categories of goods is governed by two laws: the Goods Control Act (GCA) of 13th December 1996 and the Federal Act on War Material (WMA) of 13th December 1996.

The WMA governs the manufacture and transfer (import, export and transit) of war material as well as its brokerage and trade. The following are deemed to be war material: weapons, munitions and military explosives, as well as equipment that has been specifically conceived or modified for use in combat or for the conduct of combat.

The GCA mainly governs the export of dual-use goods, i.e. commodities, but also knowledge, including technologies (information for the development, manufacture or use of goods that is neither generally accessible nor serves the purposes of pure scientific research) and software that may be used both for civilian and military purposes. These goods are listed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the related Ordinance ("Ordonnance sur le contrôle des biens - OCB").

The OCB stipulates in particular that:

- the export of dual-purpose goods, components, software, technologies and information is subject to authorisation by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO);
- the export of goods, components, software, technologies and information that are known to be or could be intended for the development, production or use of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons (weapons of mass destruction/WMD) or vector systems (rockets, missiles, drones, etc.) intended for the use of such weapons must be previously declared to the SECO.

Criminal sanctions are foreseen against persons failing to comply with these obligations.

Consequences for EPFL employees and members of teaching staff

Within the framework of their activities for EPFL, employees and members of teaching staff may be led to transmit outside of Switzerland (export) information, research results, demonstrators, prototypes or software that are liable to fall foul of this legislation. This may involve transmission occurring e.g. as part of research or service contracts (contracts with industrial companies, public institutions or non-profit organisations) or technology transfer contracts (licences on patents or software, transfer of inventions or patents, etc.). It should be highlighted that the transmission of information in the context of informal contacts on a non-contractual basis (discussions, exchange, etc.) or in the context of discussions covered by a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) may also fall under this legislation.

CONTACT

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RESPONSIBILITIES

Heads of Unit and project leaders are responsible for compliance with laws and internal regulations on export control.

LEGAL BASIS

“Federal Act on the Control of Dual-Use Goods, Specific Military Goods and Strategic Goods (Goods Control Act, GCA)”, [internet link](#)

“Ordinance on the Export, Import and Transit of Dual Use Goods, Specific Military Goods and Strategic Goods (Goods Control Ordinance, GCO)”, [internet link](#)

“Federal Act on War Material (War Material Act, WMA)”, [internet link](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) website, [internet link](#)

Sanctions and embargoes enforced by Switzerland, [internet link](#)

Legal bases and lists of goods (annexes), [internet link](#)

Annexes 1 and 2 GCO: List of dual-use goods, [internet link](#)

Annex 7 GCO: List of States, [internet link](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

EPFL holds a general export licence authorising transfers of dual-purpose goods to certain countries (listed in Appendix 4 of the OCB); however, this general licence does not cover:

- nuclear goods and technologies
- certain biological substances
- goods and technologies that are known to be or could be intended for the development, production or use of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons (weapons of mass destruction/WMD) or vector systems (rockets, missiles, drones, etc.) intended for the use of such weapons.

Therefore, prior to any (formal or informal) transmission to a company, person or institution outside Switzerland of any information, research results, demonstrators, prototypes, etc. that do not fall within the public domain, you must check whether the elements to be trans-

mitted are subject to an authorisation (see the lists of goods and GCO appendices on the SECO website) or to a declaration to SECO.

If in doubt, or if the EPFL general export licence does not apply, you must imperatively contact the VPA Legal Affairs department prior to any export via research@epfl.ch.

Also note that some foreign laws on export control, particularly US laws, differ from Swiss laws in that they prohibit not only export to certain countries but also access to certain technologies, software and information for persons of certain nationalities. You should therefore be especially cautious in the context of international collaborations, notably with US companies or research institutes, and ensure in advance that the foreign legislation on export control is observed.

PUBLICATIONS

BASIC PRINCIPLES

In accordance with EPFL's Open Access policy, in force since February 2019, EPFL actors must disseminate the results of their work according to the Open Access (OA) publication model. These individuals remain free to choose the journals in which they wish to disseminate the results of their research.

Open Access is synonymous with free access, wide and free of charge in the furtherance of scientific knowledge, without financial barriers (subscriptions) or legal barriers (distribution rights). Simply put, anyone who surfs the internet may access and download the publication.

The different forms of Open Access are:

- Green Open Access: free for readers and authors alike. It consists of depositing a journal-approved version (generally the version accepted prior to layout and formatting by the publisher) of an article published in a journal available by subscription into an open archive (Infoscience at EPFL). The publisher's policy may restrict this practice, for instance by imposing an embargo period.
- Gold Open Access: free for readers, generally fee-paying for authors or institutions. It consists in publishing in a journal whose entire content is freely accessible to anyone on the internet, in its final version, formatted by the publisher. The journal is funded by way of publication fees (Article Processing Charge - APC) which vary according to the journal.
- There is also an alternative form of the Gold OA called "hybrid OA", which consists of paying an OA option for a journal available by subscription in order to make the article freely accessible. Access to the publication is thus paid for twice: through the subscription and through the OA option. This is termed "double dipping".

Open Access, be it in its Green or Gold form, aims to provide researchers with the greatest possible visibility for their scientific output and leads to an increased num-

ber of citations. Moreover, it serves to comply with the requirements of most funding sources, including the Swiss National Science Foundation and European programmes (ERC).

EPFL encourages publication in Gold Open Access and supports authors to this end, notably by partially covering the APC subject to certain conditions. However, EPFL does not support the "hybrid" publication option for the reasons mentioned above, unless this type of publication is provided for in a Read&Publish agreement. These new contracts cover both access to journals ("Read") and the Open Access publication costs ("Publish").

In the case of Green OA, EPFL requires that its authors deposit the full text of their publications in Infoscience, the EPFL institutional repository, at the latest 6 months after publication. Where the publisher's policy and EPFL's Open Access policy are non-compatible, EPFL recommends that its authors communicate and submit the "EPFL Author Amendment" addendum to the publication contract. Authors are also strongly advised, where possible, not to transfer copyright ownership to the publisher in order to retain the maximum rights to reuse the work.

RESPONSIBILITIES

EPFL actively supports wide dissemination of research findings generated by its researchers and accompanies them throughout the publishing process. The EPFL Library is the reference for all matters related to scientific publication.



LEGAL BASIS

LEX 3.3.2 “Directive concerning research integrity and good scientific practice at EPFL”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 3.5.1 “EPFL Open Access policy”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information about Open Access on the EPFL Library website, [internet link](#)

EPFL Author Amendment, [link \(PDF\)](#)

“Infoscience, EPFL institutional archive, [internet link](#)

Website about the Berlin Declaration, [internet link](#)

Website about publishers’ self-archiving policies - Sherpa/RoMEO website, [internet link](#)

Website about the Swiss National Open Access Strategy, [internet link](#)

Website about the negotiation of Read&Publish licences, [internet link](#)

Website about SNSF Open Access, [internet link](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

For articles published in Gold Open Access for which the final publisher’s version is freely accessible on the journal’s website, the filing of a copy of this version (pdf) in Infoscience is authorised.

For articles published in the traditional manner, the filing of the accepted version in Infoscience is generally authorised, with or without an embargo period. Only a minority of publishers do not allow the deposit of these versions.

Contact the EPFL Library in case of doubt about the right of self-archiving or the type of version to be filed.

CONTACT

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VALORISATION & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The transfer of research results to the economy and society is one of the three missions of EPFL.

The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) manages the intellectual property created by EPFL employees and members of the teaching staff as well as licences with industry and start-ups; the TTO is also in charge of drawing up collaboration agreements with industry.

The TTO advises EPFL research teams on all aspects related to assessment of their research results, their protection (patents, copyrights, designs, etc.) and opportunities to transfer these to existing companies or start-ups. The main objective is to allow promising results to be developed so that society may benefit through the marketing of new products.

Inventions, software and other research results generated by EPFL employees and members of the teaching staff belong to EPFL. The individuals involved in research activities therefore need to notify the TTO of their inventions, software and other results with potential for commercial development. They must participate in the various stages in cooperation with the TTO: drafting any patent and procedure for obtaining it, development of prototypes, promotional activities for the invention, etc. Patents are filed by the TTO on behalf of EPFL with a specific acknowledgement of inventorship.

For each invention (or other intellectual property asset) transferred, the inventor(s) is/are entitled to a share of the net result generated by the related technology transfer contract (1/3 of revenue after deduction of expenses, subject to exceptions in accordance with applicable directives).

Protecting an invention through a patent is often essential if it is intended to be transferred to the economy. In order to obtain a patent, an invention must not be made public before a patent application is filed. Research teams are therefore invited to contact the TTO before talking about their invention outside EPFL or publishing it.

One of the major channels for technology transfer is the creation of start-ups. EPFL therefore encourages the creation of such companies through various initiatives. Interactions with these start-ups remain subject to the same rules as EPFL's relationships with other companies. Whenever a start-up needs to use EPFL inventions, patents, software, other intellectual property rights or services, a contract must be concluded.

In order to advance the commercial development of technologies, the TTO provides support to research teams through its ENABLE programme. ENABLE helps to reduce technologies by supporting the development of prototypes, analysing the business opportunities available for an invention and providing advice on the preparation of a business plan. Together with the Research Office (ReO), it also provides advice regarding third party funding opportunities such as Proof of Concept.



RESPONSIBILITIES

All contracts (or agreements) granting rights to inventions, patents, software or other intellectual property generated at EPFL must be negotiated, approved and signed jointly by the TTO. These contracts must safeguard the interests of EPFL and, in particular, allow continued use of the relevant inventions for teaching and research purposes, limit the liability of EPFL and provide appropriate compensation.

The Head of the Unit concerned is responsible for carrying out the scientific tasks outlined in technology transfer contracts, in particular the transfer of knowledge and expertise. The TTO is responsible for the management of these contracts, in particular the receipt and distribution of revenue, in accordance with the law and EPFL directives.

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 3.4.1 “EPFL Directive on Grants, Research Contracts and Technology Transfer (DSCR TT)”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 3.4.0.1 “Ordonnance du Conseil des EPF sur les biens immatériels dans le domaine des EPF”, [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.1 “Directive concerning the management of conflicts of interest within the context of activities or public duties engaged in outside the working sphere”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Any employee who establish (or works for) a start-up must report this activity to his/her superior, to the EPFL President or to his/her Dean/Director/VP, to the TTO and to Human Resources and sign a personal commitment.

In order to serve on the board of directors of a company, permission must be requested and obtained from the EPFL President if the person concerned is a professor, or from the Dean/Director/VP to whom the person concerned is attached in the case of other employees.

All contracts (or agreements) granting rights to third parties on inventions, patents, software or other intellectual property generated at EPFL must be negotiated and signed jointly by the TTO.

Research teams must notify the TTO of their inventions, software and results with potential for commercial development.

CONTACT

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FURTHER INFORMATION

TTO website, [internet link](#)

ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES

BASIC PRINCIPLES

It is often beneficial for both teaching and research when EPFL's employees and professors¹ interact with industry, the economy and other institutions. EPFL encourages such interactions as long as they do not interfere with the employees' and professors' activities, service or commitment to the institution.

An "ancillary activity" is any activity engaged in by employees and professors outside their employment relationship with EPFL – regardless of whether such activity is remunerated or not. The activity may be engaged in by an employee or professor on their own behalf or on behalf of a private company or public institution and may also involve teaching assignments or holding public office. Activities that are considered leisure pursuits or that take place in the private sphere, such as those relating to cultural or sporting associations, are not considered ancillary activities within the meaning of the Directive concerning the management of conflicts of interest within the context of activities or public duties engaged in outside the working sphere (LEX 4.1.1).

Ancillary activities therefore take place in the private sphere and are engaged in under the sole responsibility of the individual concerned.

A conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which an ancillary activity can harm the interests of EPFL, including but not limited to:

- any situation in which an employee or professor is occupied by the ancillary activity in a way that impacts or reduces their ability to work;
- any situation that restrict academic liberty;
- any situation that could infringe the intellectual property of EPFL, including intellectual property generated by the employees or professors engaged in the ancillary activity;
- any situation in which an employee or professor may

influence the decisions of EPFL or its relationships with third parties, or in which an employee or professor may appear biased due to an ancillary activity that they engage in on their own behalf or on behalf of a third party;

- any situation in which an action or a stand taken by an employee or professor in an ancillary activity could constitute a reputational risk for EPFL.

Employees and professors must defend the legitimate interests of the Confederation and EPFL. All employees and professors also have a duty of loyalty to their employer.

Special rule for professors

Full-time professors are entitled to spend a maximum of 20% of their working time, or one day per week, on ancillary activities.

Duty to report and requests for authorization

All ancillary activities as defined above must be reported. Employees must report the activities to their direct superior. Professors must report them, once a year, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Professors must also report any activities of an academic nature for which they are paid more than Fr. 200 (per year or per assignment) or if the activities give them the power to obtain an advantage for themselves or their immediate circle.

Note that employees do not have to report unremunerated ancillary activities if such activities do not involve the risk of a conflict of interest or the risk of compromising the reputation of EPFL or another ETH institution or the ETH Board.

In addition, certain types of ancillary activities are subject to prior authorization:

Employees must obtain the authorization of their direct superior for the following activities:

1. All persons under an employment contract with EPFL or the ETH Board.



- activities that occupy the employee in such a way as to compromise the services they provide for EPFL, and particularly if the combined rate of activity for EPFL and the ancillary activity exceeds 110%;
- activities that involve serving as the managing partner or a member of the board or management of a company (including startups);
- activities that involve serving as a member of a foundation board or the executive committee of a foundation, association or public institution, if this could impair the reputation of EPFL;
- activities that involve a potential conflict of interest with EPFL, another ETH institution or the ETH Board;
- activities that involve the use of EPFL resources, in which case authorization must also be obtained from the Technology Transfer Office (TTO);
- activities that involve the founding/development of a company, in which case authorization must also be obtained from the Technology Transfer Office (TTO).

Professors must obtain the authorization of the Dean or the Vice President for Academic Affairs in the following cases:

- any ancillary activity where the time devoted to the activity, or to all of the professor's ancillary activities, exceeds one day per week for a full-time professor;
- activities that involve serving as the managing partner or a member of the board or management of a company (including startups);
- activities that involve serving as a member of a foundation board or the executive committee of a foundation, association or public institution, if this could impair the reputation of EPFL;
- activities that involve a potential conflict of interest with EPFL or a significant risk for the reputation of EPFL;
- being named as a professor at an institution other than EPFL;
- activities that involve the use of EPFL resources, in which case authorization must also be obtained from the Technology Transfer Office (TTO);

- activities that involve the founding/development of a company, in which case authorization must also be obtained from the Technology Transfer Office (TTO).

A new authorization must be requested if changes are made to an ancillary activity that is subject to authorization, such as a change in the amount of time allocated to the activity.

SPECIAL MATTERS

Use of EPFL's Name

Employees and professors engaged in an ancillary activity must ensure that the activity does not appear to be carried out on behalf of EPFL. Thus, for example, it is strictly prohibited to use EPFL letterhead, the EPFL logo or invoices on EPFL letterhead or to incorporate pages from the EPFL website into another website except via a simple hypertext link. Opening bank accounts in the name of EPFL is also prohibited.

Use of EPFL Resources

The use of EPFL resources requires authorization in accordance with Articles 8 and 11 of LEX 4.1.1 as well as a contract between EPFL and the third party for which the ancillary activity is performed, or between EPFL and the employee or professor if the ancillary activity is not performed for a third party.

A contract must also be signed in order to use intangible assets that belong to EPFL, such as inventions, patents and software, in connection with an ancillary activity.

Interests of EPFL

The interests of EPFL must be protected. In particular, this means preventing research work carried out at EPFL from being used or disclosed in connection with an ancillary activity.

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ANCILLARY ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Furthermore, an ancillary activity must never prevent EPFL from using, protecting and/or transferring the results of its research.

In this regard, employees and professors engaged in an ancillary activity must ensure that they do not exert any influence to promote or harm the interests of EPFL. If necessary, they must recuse themselves; this means that they must withdraw from involvement in the business or negotiations in question so that they can proceed without a risk of bias.

EPFL Teaching Activities

In the event of a potential conflict of interest relating to an ancillary activity involving the completion of a thesis or a post-doctorate, such as where the salary of the doctoral or postdoctoral student is funded by a company in which the supervisor has interests, the Dean must be notified of this situation by the supervisor. The Dean will then inform the doctoral school in order to arrange possible means of mitigating the risks caused by this situation.

Founding of New Companies (Startups)

An employee or professor who participates in founding and developing a company must sign and transmit to the Technology Transfer Office a personal undertaking, the content of which is outlined in the annexes to LEX 4.1.1. If this person engages in an activity for the startup that is subject to authorization pursuant to LEX 4.1.1, they must request such authorization and then report the activity if authorization is granted.

Entry into Contracts

Entry into a research or technology transfer contract between EPFL and an entity in which the employee or professor has interests (a startup or other entity) must be approved in advance by the VPA. These contracts must also be cosigned by the Dean to whom the professor is attached, or by the Vice President to whom the head of unit is attached.

Members of the EPFL Direction

Any share of income from ancillary activities by members of the EPFL Direction exceeding 30% of their EPFL compensation must be handed over to the employer. Furthermore, any such ancillary activity must not compromise the performance of services for EPFL. All ancillary activities must be authorized by the ETH Board.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Measures to be Adopted in the Case of a Conflict of Interest: Mediation

Any immediate superior who identifies the existence of a situation that does not comply with this directive must endeavor to settle the matter directly with the individual concerned, supported by the Dean acting as mediator or, in the case of central administration staff, by the appropriate Vice President or Associate Vice President. If a professor is involved, the Dean will attempt to settle the matter, supported by the Vice President for Academic Affairs acting as mediator.

Measures to be Adopted in the Case of a Conflict of Interest: Intervention by Legal Affairs or the President

If no agreement can be reached to terminate the situation of non-compliance, the mediator will submit the dossier to the Director of Legal Affairs (or to the President in the case of a professor), so that they can take or arrange for any measures considered necessary to bring the situation into compliance.

The professor or employee will be notified by the mediator that the dossier is being submitted to the Director of Legal Affairs or the President.



LEGAL BASIS

LEX 4.2.0.1 "Ordinance of the ETH Board for professors at the Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH Professorial Ordinance)", [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.0.4 "Ordonnance du Conseil des EPF sur le personnel du domaine des écoles polytechniques fédérales" (Arts. 53 and 56), [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.1 "Directive concerning the management of conflicts of interest within the context of activities or public duties engaged in outside the working sphere", [link \(PDF\)](#)

"Ordonnance sur la rémunération et sur d'autres conditions contractuelles convenues avec les cadres du plus haut niveau hiérarchique et les membres des organes dirigeants des entreprises et des établissements de la Confédération", [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.0.1 «Loi sur le personnel de la Confédération», [lien internet](#)

CONTACT

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FURTHER INFORMATION

TTO website on startups, [internet link](#)

INVITATIONS AND BENEFITS

BASIC PRINCIPLES

As part of its concern for excellence, EPFL has created a set of clear rules regarding the acceptance of invitations and benefits by employees and members of teaching staff, as well as by members of the EPFL Direction in the broad sense¹, including the EPFL President. The aim of these rules is to prevent the independence of employees and members of teaching staff or members of the Direction in the broad sense from being compromised.

Accordingly, the Directive concerning the acceptance of benefits and invitations received LEX 4.1.6 defines the conditions under which invitations and benefits received from third parties may be accepted.

The term “benefit” namely refers to:

- Presents;
- Donations;
- Commissions.

The term “invitation” namely refers to:

- Business or social invitations outside the context of the standard activities of the employee or member of teaching staff or EPFL Direction member in the broad sense.

These rules should also be used as a guide for all employees or members of teaching staff or members of the EPFL Direction in the broad sense wishing to give invitations or benefits to a third party.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees, members of teaching staff and members of the Direction may accept benefits (donations or gifts) for which the market value does not exceed CHF 200.00. Cash may in no cases be accepted.

1. The phrasing “Member of the EPFL Direction in the broad sense” refers to: members of the EPFL Direction (President, Vice President), Vice Presidents and Associate Vice Presidents, Directors within the VPO, the General Secretary, the Director of Legal Affairs, College Dean/Directors.

It is also important to ensure that multiple benefits are not accepted at regular intervals from the same source in order to avoid a “salami slicing” effect.

The conditions of acceptance for a benefit or an invitation shall be respected.

The Direction of Legal Affairs keeps an inventory of all invitations accepted by members of the Direction in the broad sense as well as all benefits which have not been refused for reasons of courtesy, civility or standard social practice (see “Further Information” below).

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Refuse all benefits or invitations which may compromise your independence or freedom of action.

Refuse all benefits for which the market value exceeds CHF 200.00.

Unless you have written authorisation from your superior, refuse invitations abroad.

If in doubt regarding the acceptance of an invitation or a benefit:

- for employees and members of teaching staff, contact your superior in writing. Your superior will reply in writing;
- for members of the Direction in the broad sense and for employees and members of teaching staff, contact the Director of Legal Affairs.

In accordance with the provisions regarding sponsorship and patronage, all benefits or commissions addressed to an EPFL employee or member of teaching staff or member of the Direction in the broad sense who is involved in handling fundraising activities are to be refused.

If you are participating in a buying process (for example, a call for tender) or a decision process, you should refuse all benefits and invitations for which it is not possible to exclude a link between the benefit received and the buying or decision process.



Invitations				
	Acceptance decision	If in buying process	Expenses paid	Register of invitations
Staff members (inc. professors)	By the staff members (+ pos. superior) ≠ abroad	Acceptance possible if no link between benefit and process	EPFL	No
Members of the Direction in the broad sense	By DIR according to 3 principles (link EPFL activity, partner, proportionality)			Yes
Benefits				
	Acceptance decision < CHF 200.00	If in buying process	If acceptance is necessary (courtesy, etc.)	Register of benefits > CHF 200.-
Staff members (inc. professors)	By the person themselves	Acceptance possible if no link between benefit and process	OK > CHF 200.- AJ decides usage	Yes
Members of the Direction in the broad sense			OK > CHF 200.- DIR decides usage	

These provisions are summarised in two tables (see above)

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 4.1.0.4 “Ordonnance du Conseil des EPF sur le personnel du domaine des écoles polytechniques fédérales”, [internet link](#)

“Ordonnance sur le personnel de la Confédération”, [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.6 “Directive concerning the acceptance of benefits and invitations received”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 1.10.1 “Directive on Sponsorship and Patronage at EPFL”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

LEX 4.1.6 also provides for situations in which certain benefits cannot be refused for reasons of courtesy, civility or standard social practice. In such cases, employees and members of teaching staff are to submit advantages received to the Director of Legal Affairs and members of the Direction in the broad sense must consult the Direction, who will decide how the benefit is to be used.

In all cases, invitations and benefits received are to be used in favour of EPFL.

CONTACT

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SAFETY, PREVENTION AND HEALTH

BASIC PRINCIPLES

EPFL promotes an exemplary occupational safety and security culture based on honesty and social responsibility. Beyond compliance with regulatory security, prevention and health requirements, this commitment also implies a responsible approach to risk and respect for others.

At EPFL, the experts of the Security and Operations department (DSE) advise all EPFL members on matters related to safety, security, prevention and health protection. These specialists also provide support in enforcing the necessary measures. These activities are taken care of by two DSE services: the Security and Intervention Service (SIS) and the Occupational Health and Safety Service (OHS). The DSE regularly holds courses and workshops to train the EPFL community in these areas.

The Director of the DSE is the guarantor of the EPFL's overall security concept. Additional responsibilities in this field (fire safety, security, biosafety, etc.) are assigned to various specialists in the DSE team, within the SIS and OHS units. The Director has the authority to prohibit access to the campus and to take legal action.

The DSE represents EPFL in discussions related to safety, security and hazard prevention with the relevant authorities (police, fire brigade, cantonal and federal offices), in close cooperation with the EPFL Legal Affairs.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees and members of teaching staff, particularly Heads of Unit (professors, section directors, senior scientists (MER), heads of central services or workshop managers) must be aware of and comply with the legal provisions applicable to their work activity in terms of safety, prevention and health. All employees and members of teaching staff must observe the recommendations and directives issued by EPFL in order to avoid occupational accidents and workplace health hazards. Heads of Unit ensure that their teams are trained and that the specified measures on occupational health and safety are enforced.

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 1.1.1 “Ordinance on the organisation of the EPFL”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 1.5.1 “Directive concerning occupational health and safety (DSST)”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

“Ordonnance 3 relative à la loi sur le travail”, [internet link](#)

“Ordonnance 4 relative à la loi sur le travail”, [internet link](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

DSPS homepage, [internet link](#)

Training available from DSPS, [internet link](#)



ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Define the particular dangers within your area of responsibility and make sure that you are familiar with the legal provisions that apply with regards to occupational health and safety.

Appoint a safety delegate (COSEC) for each research group and appoint a delegate for radiation protection or biosafety if your research covers these areas.

Clarify with the relevant service of the DSE whether any authorisation is required for your group's activities.

Take advantage of the basic or specialist training provided by the DSE in the fields of occupational health and safety.

Be aware of and apply the appropriate waste disposal procedures, particularly in the fields of chemistry and biology.

Adopt appropriate behaviour in an emergency:

- Save the emergency number **115** or **+41 21 693 3000** (on your mobile phone);
- Locate the security features on your premises (evac-

uation plan, emergency exits, eye wash, shower, etc.);

- Be aware of the evacuation instructions on the SIS website and ensure that your staff are also familiar with these;

Do not leave valuables unattended and carefully lock windows and doors when leaving to reduce the risk of theft;

Lock your computer when you leave your workstation;

Keep your Camipro card with you at all times;

consult the SST website for advice on occupational health (e.g. workstation ergonomics);

Heed the information in the DSE and Point Santé leaflets;

In case of a conflict or problem, employees or members of teaching staff should request advice and assistance from the Human Resources department (see "[Human Resources](#)" chapter). In case of a threat or violence, please consult the Safety, Prevention and Health (DSPS) [website](#) to find the procedure to be followed.

CONTACT

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IT SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION



BASIC PRINCIPLES

Risks related to IT security at EPFL are increasing due to growing IT needs and the increasing number of interconnections, as well as system complexity.

The security of the EPFL information system - namely its availability, integrity, confidentiality and traceability - ensures the continuation of EPFL activities and protects the institution's reputation. EPFL owns the product of the administrative work of its employees and members of teaching staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The behaviour of employees and members of teaching staff has a significant impact on protecting the information system. EPFL is responsible for ensuring that its employees, teaching staff, student body, guests and service providers have access to reliable and efficient IT resources which are appropriate to their requirements. EPFL is required to provide appropriate training to its employees and members of teaching staff for the use of these IT resources.

In exchange, each user should:

- take all necessary measures to protect the information system available to him/her;
- immediately notify the Direction of the Information Systems Department (DSI) of any breach of information system security and refrain from disclosing this to unauthorised third parties;
- notify the Data Protection Officer (PDO) of any personal and/or sensitive data leaks without undue delay, using the [ServiceNow form](#);
- only use the resources at his/her disposal to carry out the tasks entrusted to him/her under his/her contractual relationship with EPFL
- protect any information which he/she removes from the scope of the EPFL information system (USB flash drive, smartphone, etc.) or which he/she accesses from outside EPFL (via VPN, smartphone, etc.).

Heads of Unit are responsible for ensuring that the employees and members of teaching staff under their responsibility are aware of these directives and enforce them.

Each member of teaching staff is required to inform his/her students of their obligations regarding third-party rights (copyright, royalties, licences, etc.) for software, works of authorship, etc.

See also the "[Research Data Management](#)" and "[Data Protection](#)" chapters.

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 1.0.1 "Loi fédérale sur les écoles polytechniques" (Arts 36a and 36b), [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.0.1 "Loi sur le personnel de la Confédération" (Art. 22), [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.0.4 "Ordonnance sur le personnel du domaine des Ecoles polytechniques fédérales" (Art. 57), [internet link](#)

LEX 6.5.1 "Information System Security Policy (PSSI)", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 6.1.4 "Directive on the Use of EPFL Electronic Infrastructure", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 6.1.3 "Directive on the Use of Private Computer Equipment for Professional Purposes", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 6.1.5 "Ordinance for the Use of Software Subject to a License Agreement", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 4.1.0.8 "Ordinance of the ETH Board on the Organisation of the Conciliation Commission under the Gender Equality Act for the ETH Domain", [internet link](#)

"Ordinance to the Federal Act on Data Protection", [internet link](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Refer to the basic training on IT security created by the Direction of the Information Systems Department and made available on the Human Resources website for training courses ([internet link](#)). In case of doubt, contact 1234 before attempting to solve the problem.

Data Storage

Laptop hard drives are not suitable for data storage. Ensure that data are regularly backed up so that they may be retrieved in case of equipment failure, deliberate alteration or human error. This data backup is guaranteed for data stored centrally by the Information Systems Department Direction based on the subscribed service level (system of "Common[unit]" drive). Regularly check that old data can be retrieved and remain aware of the terms/specifications for backups (frequency of backups, period during which data can be recovered, how to retrieve saved data).

Confidential data stored on removable storage media (USB drives, hard drives, etc.) must be encrypted. The encryption key must be safely stored and not on the encrypted medium, but accessible to employees and members of teaching staff and their unit to avoid losing access to data. If encryption is not possible, please keep data storage devices under lock and key.

External Data Storage

Both the storage and the processing of sensitive and/or personal data in the cloud are subject to legal restrictions (the notion of professional secrecy and the Data Protection Act, for example). Likewise for support based abroad where there is the possibility of accessing these categories of data stored or processes in Switzerland. The DSI provides a guide for the use of the cloud in order to better understand the situation in relation to certain laws and regulations ([internet link](#)).

Use of Mobile Devices

Mobile devices (phones, laptops, tablets, USB drives) can be tapped or lost and are therefore not appropriate for storing sensitive data. Any mobile device containing or giving access to EPFL data which is taken off the EPFL premises must be protected with a password, and hard drives must be encrypted. If encryption is not technically possible, they shall be protected from theft or loss at all times (they shall not be left unsupervised, for example).

Authentication and Passwords

Protect all accounts with secure passwords. A strong password:

- comprises at least 10 characters;
- contains none of the following: the user's name, the name of someone in the user's close circle, the name of EPFL or an EPFL unit, a word from a dictionary;
- does not contain a complete word;
- is completely different from the user's previous passwords;
- includes uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and special characters (£, !, /, etc.).

EPFL staff logins must not be released and the related password should never be disclosed on the phone, by email or on any website outside EPFL. The IT Support Service Desk and IT proximity support will never ask a user to share their password.

The EPFL password should not be used for other websites. It should be stored in encrypted form.

Users are responsible for any actions committed with their digital identity, and are personally liable for any damage to EPFL or to third parties.

FURTHER INFORMATION

About Information Systems, including IT security, [internet link](#)

How to be prepared for cyber attacks, [link \(PDF\)](#)

Film for raising awareness about IT security, [internet link](#)

CONTACT

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FINANCE

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Management

The EPFL Financial Regulations (LEX 5.1.1) is the reference document for financial management at EPFL.

All financial resources provided to EPFL become the property of EPFL, irrespective of their source of funding.

Heads of Unit manage and control the financial resources entrusted to them. They are accountable for responsible use of such financial resources.

In particular, Heads of Unit must carry out monthly and half-yearly controls of the funds under their responsibility (Arts. 71 and 72 of the EPFL Financial Regulations). They may delegate some of these controls to a unit administrator but remain responsible for the use of these financial resources, managed via funds.

Heads of Unit are also in charge of checking, on a yearly basis, that the inventory of assets related to their unit is accurate and up-to-date.

Signatory Rights: Purchases

Signatory rights for any commitments with a financial impact are based on the spending powers defined in the Financial Regulations. The following thresholds must be observed for all financial obligations towards third parties (purchases of goods and services):

- up to CHF 5,000: individual signature by an authorised person from the Unit.
- CHF 5,001 to 50,000: joint signature by two authorised persons from the Unit.
- CHF 50,001 to 100,000: joint signature by the person in charge of the fund responsible for the transaction and the person in charge of the Level 3 unit (or the person granted equivalent authority to that of the Level 3 Unit manager).
- CHF 100,001 to 250,000: joint signature by the person in charge of the fund responsible for the transaction and the person in charge of the Level 2b Unit (or the

person granted equivalent authority to that of the Level 2b Unit manager).

- CHF 250,001 to 500,000: joint signature by the person in charge of the fund responsible for the transaction and the person in charge of the Level 2 Unit (or the person granted equivalent authority to that of the Level 2 Unit manager).
- over CHF 500,000: joint signature by two members of the EPFL Direction.

Validation regulations regarding professional expenses are specified in the chapter on "[Travel & Expenses](#)".

Validation regulations regarding real estate are subject to specific provisions (LEX 7.1.0.2).

Signatory Rights: Income-Generating Contracts

Sponsoring, donation and legacy contracts as from CHF 50,000 must be approved by the EPFL Direction.

Research and service contracts with companies or other for-profit entities are signed by:

- the Head of the Unit concerned if the amount is under CHF 50,000;
- the Head of Unit and the Head of the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) if the amount is CHF 50,000 or over.

Grant, research and service contracts with funding bodies or other non-profit entities are jointly signed by the Head of Unit or Principal Investigator (first) and then by the Research Office (REO).

Technology transfer contracts and licencing agreements are signed by the Head of TTO and the Head of the Unit directly concerned. See chapter on "[Technology Transfer](#)".



RESPONSIBILITIES

The rules for approval and the responsibilities for financial transactions are described in more detail in the matrix provided in annex to the EPFL Financial Regulations. The duties, powers and responsibilities for the management and control of financial resources are specified in Chapters 2 and 10 of the EPFL Financial Regulations (LEX 5.1.1)..

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 5.1.1 "EPFL Financial Regulations", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 5.1.0.3 "Manuel de présentation des comptes pour le Domaine des EPF", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 5.1.0.2 "Ordonnance sur les finances et la comptabilité du domaine des EPF", [internet link](#)

LEX 1.10.1 "Directive on Sponsorship and Patronage at EPFL", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 3.4.1 "EPFL Directive on Grants, Research Contracts and Technology Transfer (DSCRTT)", [link \(PDF\)](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

VPF website, [internet link](#)

SESAME portal, [internet link](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

- Look up the website for the Vice Presidency for Finances (VPF) and the Financial Regulations.
- Delegate the administrative management and daily checks to a unit administrator. However, Heads of Unit remain fully responsible for the proper use of financial resources.
- Use the SESAME (Infocentre) portal to see and process the financial data of your unit's funds.
- Get help from the Controlling service: for instance, it provides support to researchers for the production of financial reports on research projects funded by third parties.
- A purchase order must be created to purchase any goods or services, as this will facilitate invoice approval workflows and improve financial management within your unit.

For Heads of Unit:

- Carry out a monthly control of the entirety and accuracy of accounting entries, and of the status of contracts.
- Approve, sign and archive the list of the balances of all the funds of their unit every six months.

For unit administrators:

- A list of training courses is available online. [internet link](#)

CONTACT

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RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Risk Management

Risk management is steered by the Risk Management Committee (CRM) which coordinates the activities of the committees attached to it: Safety, Prevention and Health; IT Security; Insurance; Disputes; Internal Control System; and Audit Coordination.

Risks and mitigation actions at EPFL are analysed, evaluated and then entered in a central register; this register is updated once per year by the owner of each risk. Each risk owner informs his/her colleagues of the mitigation actions to be implemented and ensures their monitoring.

Early detection of risks is key to good management of them. Whether you work in research, teaching, innovation or administration, your contribution is important. All employees and members of teaching staff are invited to communicate to the CRM President any potential significant new risk of which they become aware in the context of their work.

Significant risks are closely monitored by the CRM and the School Direction. These risks notably include:

- scientific misconduct
- organisational governance
- compliance with the legal framework
- management and sources of funding for the School
- protection of data and information systems
- health and safety of people on campus

The risk of financial irregularities (annual accounts) are identified by the internal control system (SCI) at EPFL and through the audit of the annual accounts by the Federal Audit Office. The SCI documentation is composed of a flowchart and a matrix of risks and controls.

Insurances

Regarding public liability insurance and property insurance, EPFL is covered as a whole. Aside from certain specific risks, an excess of CHF 100,000.00 per event is generally applicable.

Research projects, particularly those concerning clinical trials (research on human beings), may require specific further insurance cover. This is the case, for example, when EPFL is the promotor and if the clinical trial or research project is subject to a guarantee obligation as defined in the Federal Act on Research involving Human Beings (HRA) and the related Ordinance (HRO).

EPFL bears a share of the risks itself (principle of self-insurance). The majority of the real estate on the Ecublens site is the property of the Confederation. The Confederation bears the risk for damages incurred on these buildings.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The tasks, authority and responsibilities regarding risk management are laid out in the Risk Management Regulations at EPFL (LEX 1.4.3).

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 1.4.3 “Risk Management Regulations at EPFL”,
[link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 1.7.1 “Directive on the Internal Control System (ICS) at EPFL”,
[link \(PDF\)](#)



ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

In the event of an accident and for all questions relating to existing insurance policies or insurance policies to be concluded, contact Internal Controls and Risk Management (CIGR).

Useful links:

CIGR website, [internet link](#)

Insurance website, [internet link](#)

CONTACT

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TRAVEL & EXPENSES



BASIC PRINCIPLES

Any travel requiring an air travel ticket or a night of overnight stay (in Switzerland or abroad) is subject to a prior travel request, which has been approved in the "Expense Management" tool by the Head of Unit or by his/her delegate.

EPFL possesses its own travel agency, responsible for organising business trips. Purchase requests for air travel tickets shall preferably be placed with this agency in order to benefit from tariffs negotiated with airlines. Ordering tickets via the agency allows for the provision of medical or security assistance to the person undertaking travel where necessary, in collaboration with International SOS.

Expense claims, prepared using the "Expense Management" tool, must include proof of payment and be approved by the immediate superior.

Heads of Unit and frequent travellers may request an individual credit card from the Accounting Department for their travel and professional expenses.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Heads of Unit are required to ensure that their employees are aware of the existence and content of the Directives concerning professional travel and the reimbursement of expenses, and that these Directives are duly respected.

Heads of Unit ensure the responsible use of resources and the lack of personal gain.

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 5.1.1 "EPFL Financial Regulations" (Art. 48), [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 5.6.1 "Directives concerning professional travel and the reimbursement of expenses", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 5.4.1 "Directive on the use of credit cards at EPFL", [link \(PDF\)](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Practical Guide for the Expense Management tool, [link \(PDF\)](#)

Expense Management tool, via Sesame2, [internet link](#)

Website concerning travel (EPFL travel agency, TicketShop, Booking.com), [internet link](#)

Information on car sharing, car pooling and sustainable development initiatives, [internet link](#)

Videoconferencing, [internet link](#)

SBB travelcard for employees, [internet link](#)



ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Refer to the information provided on the [travel website](#).

Favour videoconferencing in order to reduce travel.

An approved travel request is required in advance of all trips implying an air travel ticket or overnight stay (in Switzerland or abroad) or all orders placed with the EPFL travel agency. The travel request serves to:

- set a spending budget for the trip in question;
- give the person travelling the right to incur the full planned expenses for the trip.

Air travel: all employees travel in economy class in Europe. Heads of Unit may authorise a higher category for intercontinental flights

Use the EPFL travel agency to purchase plane tickets, not the credit card.

Train: domestic and international train tickets must be purchased from the online SBB Business TicketShop. Call the BusinessTravel Service Center (tel. 0848 111 456) in case of problems. Ordering through these channels entitles a 10% discount on standard tickets in Switzerland.

Staff members with an employment contract of one year or over (and employed on a basis of at least 50%) are entitled to an SBB Half-Fare travelcard, ordered via the Human Resources service, [internet link](#).

Rental cars: Europcar is EPFL's preferred supplier of rental cars. Also consider the car sharing solutions offered by Mobility, [internet link](#)

Accommodation for guests: wherever possible, use the hotel facilities available on campus. Hospitality expenses with third parties, meetings held externally, end-of-year meals: systematically indicate the purpose of the event, the number of participants and their names. The maximum spending amount is CHF 100 per person.

Ensure that expense claims are duly completed and approved, and include all necessary receipts.

Heads of Unit must ensure that expenses incurred by the members of their unit comply with applicable directives and correspond to their usefulness for the unit.

CONTACT REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

In case of questions
contact sf@epfl.ch

Manager/Point of contact
Bertold Walther
Head of Accounting and Consolidation
bertold.walther@epfl.ch

CONTACT MOBILITY & TRAVEL

Contact person
Luca Fontana
Project Manager
luca.fontana@epfl.ch

INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING CONTRACTS

BASIC PRINCIPLES

All contracts linking EPFL to a third party, with the exception of employment contracts between EPFL and its members of staff and its teaching staff within the meaning of the LPers and the OPers-EPF¹, must be drafted in accordance with several mandatory principles.

These principles provide a framework for use of the EPFL address², the quality and number of signatories, the drafting language and other necessary clauses and formalities, namely:

- the number of original copies
- the date and duration, termination and renewal
- status (is it an amendment to an existing contract?)
- financial clauses
- rights and obligations of parties
- reporting
- exclusion from liability (for research contracts)
- application of Swiss law and place of jurisdiction set as Lausanne

Methods of contract communication and filing must also be respected.

All exemptions from these principles must be justified.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is essential that the relevant EPFL services be consulted for the drafting of all new contracts. These services are listed in the "Advice for Day-to-Day Business" and "Contact" sections below.

Approval and Signature

Contracts shall be approved by the competent persons prior to their signature. The matrix of roles and responsibilities (Annex 3 of the EPFL Financial Regulations) indicates, by contract category, the competent persons. The rules concerning signatory rights for contracts can be found in the EPFL Financial Regulations (see Art. 34 and thereafter) and in the EPFL Directive on Grants, Research Contracts and Technology Transfer (see Art. 15 and thereafter).

Protection and confidentiality of personal data

The member of staff or member of the teaching staff responsible for drafting the contract must consider whether clauses relating to data protection are necessary.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The EPFL Legal Affairs may be contacted for all further information regarding the principles listed above and for all problems encountered within the context of their application. All requests for exemption from the basic principles outlined in this chapter must also be addressed to the EPFL Legal Affairs.

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 5.1.1 "EPFL Financial Regulations", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 1.10.1 "Directive on Sponsorship and Patronage at EPFL", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 3.4.1 "EPFL Directive on Grants, Research Contracts and Technology Transfer (DSCRTT)", [link \(PDF\)](#)

1. These employment contracts meet the requirements of the chapter on "Human Resources" and are governed by LPers (RS 172.220.1) and OPers-EPF (RS 172.220.113).

2. The registered address for EPFL to be included on all contracts is: Bâtiment CE – 3.316, Station 1, CH-1015 Lausanne.



CONTACT

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Contracts relating to training

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Contracts relating to research

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ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Upon drafting a contract, consultations must be conducted with the services concerned (e.g. TTO, VPF, VPA, VPO, Deans).

PHILANTHROPY : SPONSORSHIP AND PATRONAGE

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The principle of scientific freedom is rooted in the Swiss Constitution (Art. 20) and is non-negotiable.

The source of funds and the reputation of sponsors and patrons must be clearly established. Patronage and sponsorship activities must be free of any religious or political connotations.

Contacts established between EPFL and current or potential sponsors or patrons must be free of any conflict of interest and not be exploited for personal gain.

Patrons' and sponsors' interests are taken into account in all negotiations as well as throughout the performance of the contract. However, academic freedom, the independence of education and the rules in force at EPFL must not be hindered. Moreover, patrons and sponsors do not have the right to veto the appointment of a professor when financing a chair. Nevertheless, they do have the right to refuse to associate their name with a candidate. In such a case, EPFL waives the contract and hires the professor without financial support from the patron or sponsor.

LEX 1.10.1 applies to patronage and sponsorship contracts and - subject to the Directive on Subsidies, Research Contracts and Technology Transfer (DSCRTT, LEX 3.4.1) - to research donations, and governs their acceptance.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The EPFL Direction is in charge of the EPFL philanthropy and sponsoring strategy. On behalf of the EPFL Direction, the Philanthropy is responsible for related due diligence as well as assistance in the fundraising process and implementation, stewardship of patrons and sponsors, communication coordination and the supervision of proper contract performance.

As the superiors and immediate superiors of beneficiaries, the Deans and College Directors are responsible for the proper performance of contracts relating to their School or College. Where the beneficiary is not attached to a faculty or college, the relevant Vice-President is responsible for overseeing and ensuring proper execution of the contract.

The holders of a sponsored chair or project are responsible for performing all contractual obligations and must collaborate with the Philanthropy in informing patrons and sponsors of their activities through annual reports, for example.



LEGAL BASIS

LEX 1.10.1 "Directive on Sponsorship and Patronage at EPFL", [link \(PDF\)](#)

"Federal Act on Freedom of Information in the Administration (Freedom of Information Act, FoIA)", [internet link](#)

LEX 7.1.0.2 "Directive sur la gestion de l'immobilier dans le Domaine des écoles polytechniques fédérales", [link \(PDF\)](#)

"Directive relative au traitement des dons et parrainages concernant les immeubles du domaine des EPF", [link \(PDF\)](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Donations, [internet link](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Contact the Philanthropy for advice and opinions on procedures and policies concerning sponsoring and patronage (compliance and due diligence).

Do not share or distribute information or confidential documents with third parties without first ensuring compliance with the FADP and the GDPR.

Keep relationships with sponsors and patrons and potential sponsors and patrons strictly professional and refrain from exploiting these relationships for private purposes.

Refuse any compensation based on a commission or a percentage of the funds raised.

Refuse any external reward for obtaining a donation or information likely to lead to a donation.

During negotiations, inform the sponsor or patron that the contract is subject to the principle of transparency and may be submitted to a third party upon their request.

CONTACT

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PROCUREMENT



BASIC PRINCIPLES

The Purchasing Department (DA) advises and supports EPFL units for the purchase of goods and services. All employees and members of teaching staff must comply with applicable procurement laws and ordinances as well as EPFL directives in this field.

Purchases must be made according to the following principles:

- Compliance with laws, ordinances and directives;
- Observance of the rules of ethics;
- Actual need;
- Drawing up of specifications (mandatory for all purchases upwards of CHF 150,000);
- Use of preferred suppliers (lists of suppliers by category are available from the Purchasing Department (DA));
- Negotiation to obtain goods and services on the best terms;
- Transparency in the selection of suppliers;
- Equal treatment of suppliers;
- Observance of sustainable development principles;
- Registration of all orders in Catalyse.

Purchasing Procedures and Thresholds

For orders equal to or over CHF 10,000, the Purchasing Department (DA) recommends obtaining at least three tenders from three different suppliers. This is also strongly advised in the case of controls carried out for external funding agencies for laboratories in order to ensure that funds are spent in respect of cost effectiveness criteria.

For all procurement of over CHF 150,000 (excluding VAT), specifications be prepared by the unit concerned and at least three tenders from three different tenderers must be obtained.

For all orders over the threshold value according to the LMP/OMP public procurement legislation (2021: CHF 230,000 excluding tax), the procedure for public calls for tender as defined in the LMP/OMP must be followed. The Purchasing Department (DA) assists employees and mem-

bers of teaching staff and checks that these procedures are implemented and respected. Model specifications and contracts are available on the DA website.

Ethics

All employees and members of teaching staff involved in a purchasing process are bound by strict rules of ethics. If an especially close relationship exists between an employee or member of teaching staff and a provider and this may give rise to a conflict of interest (or to the perception that a conflict of interest may exist), the employee or member of teaching staff is required to recuse himself/herself. Especially close relationships include, for example, close current or former personal business ties with natural or legal persons (e.g. secondary employment, shareholding, employment relationships), partnership (marriage, de facto marriage), blood relationship, or economic dependency, amongst others.

Employees and members of teaching staff involved in procurement projects, as well as the staff of the Purchasing Offices, must comply in particular with the following principles:

- immediately inform, in writing, their superior and the Purchasing Department (DA) if a tender is received from a provider with which they have an especially close relationship;
- act exclusively in the interests of EPFL when evaluating tenders;
- handle all information, documents and results connected with a procurement project confidentially before, during and after the tender process. These data must not be disclosed to unauthorised third parties under any circumstances;
- as far as possible, avoid contact with potential suppliers before or during the procurement project which could jeopardise equal treatment of all tenderers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The tasks, powers and responsibilities regarding the procurement process at EPFL are defined in the Directives concerning purchases and inventory. According to these, the Purchasing Department (DA) is responsible for procurement and for supervision of the competent purchasing offices within EPFL. The Purchasing Department (DA) website references processes and preferred suppliers by purchase category.

The heads of EPFL units are required to know the procurement principles and the rules on conflict of interest and recusal and to put these into practice in their area of responsibility.

All EPFL employees or members of teaching staff are required to observe the above principles when initiating any purchase.

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 5.8.0.2 “*Loi fédérale sur les marchés publics (LMP)*”, [internet link](#)

LEX 5.8.0.3 “*Ordonnance sur les marchés publics (OMP)*”, [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.0.1 “*Loi sur le personnel de la Confédération*”, [internet link](#)

LEX 4.1.6 “*Directive concerning the acceptance of benefits and invitations received*”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Purchasing Department (DA) website, [internet link](#)

Polylex page, [internet link](#)

CONTACT

Purchasing Department
Phone 021 693 02 00
personnel.vpo-a@epfl.ch

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Article 21, para. 3 of the LPers and Article 56b of the OPers-EPF specify that within the context of their professional duties, employees shall not accept from third parties, be it for themselves or for their close circle, any gifts or other benefits beyond modest customary tokens of politeness, which may lead to relations of dependency. These provisions are also repeated in LEX 4.6.1 “Directive concerning the acceptance of benefits and invitations received” (see chapter on [Invitations & Benefits](#)).

As a person involved in an ongoing procurement process, you must turn down all gifts, invitations or benefits offered to you by existing or potential providers, regardless of the amount, and immediately notify your superior and the Purchasing Department (DA).

Contact the Purchasing Department (DA) at the beginning of the requirements planning/procurement process to benefit from advice and the best possible terms. Involve the ECO in the procurement of scientific equipment.

For public calls for tender:

- allow at least six months between drafting the specifications and signing the order;
- define the specifications on the basis of your own

minimum technical requirements rather than the manufacturer's product specifications;

- wherever possible (and regardless of the amount), always try to obtain several tenders and negotiate terms for all purchases, services and business expenses.

Use the central purchasing portal for all orders and purchases. By doing so, you ensure compliance with spending authority provisions, archiving of the purchase documents, traceability and correct processing of your order.

Purchases carried out in the framework of research projects are subject to the EPFL rules on procurement and, where applicable, to applicable rules on public procurement.

Where prototypes or new types of services are being developed with an industrial partner, purchases must likewise be approved by the Purchasing Department (DA) so as to ensure compliance with applicable rules on procurement.

Only the Vice Presidency for Operations is authorised to enter into lease agreements (see chapter on [“Real Estate & Infrastructure”](#)).

COMMUNICATIONS

BASIC PRINCIPLES

As a university mainly funded by the Swiss Confederation, EPFL must earn the trust and approval of society and the political arena. It is therefore essential that EPFL communications are clear, credible, factual and transparent. Furthermore, ensuring a dialogue with the public is one of the main missions of the ETHs.

The Mediacom division is responsible for internal and external EPFL communications and events at our various outposts (VD, FR, GE, NE and VS), off-campus institutional events, and EPFL's visual identity. Mediacom issues information to the EPFL community, the public, the media and the political and business worlds on the services, activities, values and choices of the university. It also ensures that EPFL's corporate identity is professional and consistent.

EPFL employees and members of the teaching staff who act on behalf of the university contribute to its image. All of these members are required to maintain professional and official confidentiality in accordance with the law and must carefully consider the impact which their public addresses may have on EPFL or the Confederation. Issues which may endanger the reputation of EPFL are dealt with exclusively by the EPFL Direction or in close collaboration with Mediacom and not by units. Such topics must therefore be reported to the EPFL Direction as soon as they arise to enable Mediacom to perform any necessary investigation and communication.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Any significant institutional communication project, including events, must be coordinated with Mediacom from the start.

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 8.3.1 "Informations générales pour l'organisation de manifestations à l'EPFL", [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 8.3.4 "Provisions concerning the use of the EPFL Logo within the framework of community activities and events", [link \(PDF\)](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Mediacom website, [internet link](#)

Information about the EPFL corporate identity & logo, [internet link](#)



ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

Members of the EPFL community may contact Mediacom to organise an event or for advice on the internal and external communication process, regardless of the proposed communication channel.

Consistent use of the corporate identity will ensure recognisability and continuity in all internal and external communication materials, thereby strengthening the reach and image of the EPFL "brand".

You must imperatively use the digital templates with the EPFL corporate design as well as the PowerPoint presentation templates provided on the Mediacom website.

All EPFL units must use the EPFL logo, always keeping the acronym and the name of the institution together. This is the only official logo. EPFL units are not authorised to create logos and should contact Mediacom in case of specific requirements. Any use of the name or logo of a private company or non-academic partner in association with the EPFL logo or name is prohibited unless explicitly approved by Mediacom.

Any public statement on behalf of EPFL should be restricted to the framework of the speaker's function, institutional role or specialist expertise.

Please contact the Mediacom team in advance should you wish to approach the media, or if you are approached by the media.

If you are contacted directly by journalists:

- ascertain the type of media and context of the enquiry as precisely as possible;
- no-one is required to provide information immediately: if in doubt, do not make any spontaneous statements on the telephone;
- inform the Mediacom team via presse@epfl.ch, who will quickly provide advice;
- all individuals are entitled to personality rights and right of personal portrayal. When interviewed, you are entitled to ask to review reporters' quotes and see any picture of yourself for approval before publication.

CONTACT

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Head of Mediacom Events
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REAL ESTATE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Real estate and infrastructure are the responsibility of the Vice Presidency for Operations (VPO), which notably regroups the Development and Construction Department (VPO-DC) and the Security and Operations Department (VPO-SE). It seeks to maintain use value through construction and maintenance projects to meet the specific requirements of the members of the EPFL community.

Outdoor facilities are also managed by these two departments – road and park maintenance and parking management.

The VPO-SE is responsible for all facility management services (caretaking, cleaning, printing and photocopying, telephone reception, audio-visual).

RESPONSIBILITIES

The VPO-DC and VPO-SE are the only bodies authorised to perform any work related to EPFL infrastructure.

Work Orders

Any alterations in infrastructure required to meet the needs of users shall be requested through the “work order” web portal (website in French only). These requests are reviewed and, if approved by the relevant bodies of the VPO, the work is ordered and monitored by project managers competent in the required fields.

Removals & Furniture

Requests for removals or furniture are likewise processed via a “work order”. Only the VPO-DC and VPO-SE departments have the authority to purchase furniture, based on a standard model catalogue. Specific requests will be considered and accepted only in exceptional and fully justified cases.

Scientific Equipment

Services related to scientific equipment are under the responsibility and at the cost of the Schools and units

concerned. Connections to central infrastructure, however, are the responsibility of the VPO-DC and VPO-SE departments and are subject to a “work order”.

The assembling and dismantling of these facilities, as well as their packing and removal, are the responsibility of the Schools. The VPO-DC and VPO-SE departments act as a coordinator only where such interventions are related to the layout of premises under its responsibility. When moving, EPFL employees and members of teaching staff are responsible for vacating and cleaning the premises before handing them over. If applicable, any costs incurred will be charged to those units responsible.

Deadlines

It is the responsibility of EPFL members to make their requests at an early stage so that services may be provided within the necessary timeframe. Calls for tenders and ordering procedures may take 8 to 10 weeks before delivery (and longer with certain suppliers during holiday periods).

Allocation of Premises & Leases

The VPO-DC Department's Project Management Office (PMO) is responsible for the only official EPFL database of premises and facilities. Any parallel database is prohibited.

The allocation and provision of premises are governed by the PMO, which is the only department authorised to enter into leases on behalf of EPFL.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The “Real Estate and Logistics” web page provides information about services, placing work orders and the necessary contact details for any repairs, [internet link](#)

LEGAL BASIS

LEX 7.1.0.1 “Ordonnance concernant la gestion de l’immobilier et la logistique de la Confédération”, [internet link](#)

LEX 7.1.0.2 “Directive sur la gestion de l’immobilier dans le Domaine des EPF”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 7.1.0.3 “Règles de cofinancement pour les projets de construction du domaine des EPF selon le NMC”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 7.3.1 “EPFL Directive on Mobile Telephony”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

LEX 7.5.1 “Rules and Regulations governing Parking at EPFL - Lausanne”, [link \(PDF\)](#)

ADVICE FOR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

The project leaders from the Development and Construction Department (VPO-DC) and the Security and Operations Department (VPO-SE) are available to advise EPFL members on issues regarding moving, construction and technical issues. A request via a work order form is the best way of directing and providing an optimal response to your needs.

CONTACT

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PERSONAL NOTES

