

Lausanne, July 29, 2024

Recommendation Letter for Mrs Sama Eltawil

It is my great pleasure to write this letter for Sama Eltawil, a student who just finished her first year in the Robotics Master I am coordinating at EPFL. Not only I followed her selection as candidate to the master, but I have directly supervised her in my course, "Basics of Mobile Robotics" (4 ECTS), and I have seen her performances in the "Robotics Practicals" (2 ECTS), where I am contributing with one practical. Finally, I hired Mrs Eltawil as Teaching Assistant for my bachelor course (in French) "Systèmes Embarqués et Robotique" (6 ECTS) where she supervised the practical exercises.

Just as background, I am professor in Robotics, coordinator of the robotics master and academic director of the center for Learning Sciences, the largest center at EPFL.

Sama Eltawil came as external candidate to our master from Coventry University, where she did her bachelor. As our selection is extremely strict, entering EPFL from a university with this ranking is extremely hard. Her application files impressed the EPFL professors in charge of the selection, we decided to admit her, and we have not been disappointed. During her first year, and despite she had to recover several disciplines, Sama Eltawil has shown to be brilliant, getting an average of 5.23 over 6 on the hardest courses, which is excellent for EPFL students. This average is equivalent to what we see from students coming from Oxford, for instance.

In my course "Basics of Mobile Robotics", one of the hard compulsory courses of the master, the evaluation is done by a project (group work, 60% of the grade) and a written exam (40% of the grade). Sama Eltawil was randomly placed in a group of three others colleagues that finally revealed to be very weak. The group got a bad grade, and Sama Eltawil saved her performance in the course by making a good grade at the exam. In the "Robotics Practicals", where I contribute with a concrete exercise on ROS, Sama Eltawil could express herself much better and got the maximal grade, 6 over 6. Those two courses show her true value: able to perform very well both in theory and practical work, able to recover problems by a rigorous discipline and hard work.

Finally, because of her capabilities, I decided for the first time to hire for my bachelor course a Teaching Assistant who did not follow the course before: her. The task is demanding: 5 hours of practical robotics exercises per week. This was a bet and again Sama Eltawil performed very well, integrating very well my team and delivering an excellent performance in the very difficult role of learning a course and at the same time supervising it, the whole in parallel to the first hard year of master studies.

Based on these observations, I can very confidently say that Sama Eltawil is really very smart and committed, has excellent engineering skills and an outstanding understanding of both practical and theoretical aspects. She can integrate very well in new situations, but from a technical and social perspective. I wish her all the best and I am available for any request of information about her.

Best regards,

Francesco Mondada