

Directive on Terms of Employment of EPFL Scientific Staff

LEX 4.4.2

1 October 2005, amended on 3 April 2023

The Direction of the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne,
based on Art. 2 § 2 of the *Ordonnance-cadre relative à la loi sur le personnel de la Confédération* of 20 December 2000 ([RS 172.220.11](#)) and
based on Art. 3 of the *Ordonnance sur le personnel du domaine des écoles polytechniques fédérales* of 15 March 2001 ([RS 172.220.113](#))
hereby adopts the following:

Article 1 Scope and Definition

¹ This directive governs the terms of employment of scientific staff.

² Scientific staff members are persons employed by EPFL, after a PhD or equivalent professional experience, to take on training and research assignments.

Article 2 Subordination

Scientific staff report to an immediate superior. This may be a full, associate or tenure-track assistant professor or another person appointed by the dean of the relevant school or by a member of the EPFL Direction.

Article 3 Employment

¹ The employment contract is drawn up in accordance with Art. 16 of [Opers-EPF](#). In addition to the employment contract, each employee is given a detailed job description outlining, amongst other things, their tasks and responsibilities. The EPFL Human Resources department keeps an up-to-date model employment contract in French and English. The employment contract and job description are available in English for employees who do not speak French.

² Upon hiring, any new scientific employee who completed their PhD at EPFL must have spent a minimum of two years of their professional or academic career outside EPFL. These two years are taken to mean the sum of all professional or academic engagements, including a full year prior to any re-employment.

Article 4 Fixed-Term Contract

¹ The immediate superior has the authority to hire a scientific employee under a fixed-term contract, subject to agreement by the school HR manager.

² In the event that a fixed-term contract should extend the total employment duration beyond four years, written approval shall be required by the relevant school dean and, if applicable, by a member of the EPFL Direction. Exceeding the four-year limit shall only be allowed in exceptional cases, as justified by a time-limited teaching and research project and by the employee's skills. The employee's career development as well as EPFL interests shall be taken into account.

³ The maximum employment duration may on request be extended in the event of lengthy absence due to illness, accident, maternity, adoption or other good cause (Art. 17b, § 3 of the ETH Act¹).

⁴ Maternity leave entitles the employee in all cases to an extension of the contract for an equivalent period.

⁵ If a contract ends during the maternity leave and there is no further renewal of the contract, the

¹ Federal Act on the Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH Act) of 4 October 1991 (RS 414.110)

duration of the contract is adjusted to cover both the maternity leave and the extension pursuant to § 4.

Article 5 Open-ended Contract

The school dean has the authority to hire scientific staff under open-ended contracts. The dean decides based on a proposal by the immediate superior or, where applicable, by the centre or institute director, and by the school HR manager. The following terms must specifically be observed:

1. the staff member must have excellent skills which meet the school's requirements;
2. hiring under an open-ended contract must be backed up by long-term funding secured under the school budget.

Article 6 Continuing Education

¹ Scientific staff members have a duty to develop their knowledge and professional skills and to maintain their ability to provide top-level research and teaching.

² Continuing education must be closely connected to professional requirements. The objectives shall be agreed between the immediate superior and the staff member. Continuing education aims in particular at upgrading skills and deepening knowledge.

³ The immediate superior shall take the necessary measures to enable the scientific staff member to participate in continuing education.

Article 7 Educational Leave

¹ In order to be granted educational leave, scientific staff members must have held this position for at least three years and must hold one of the academic titles set out in [LEX 4.4.3 Directive concerning the academic titles conferred on EPFL scientists](#).

² In particular, such leave shall serve to favour the development of a new area of competence and to promote innovation.

³ Educational leave shall be agreed between the immediate superior and the staff member, subject to approval by the dean of the relevant school.

⁴ In cooperation with the staff member, the immediate superior shall take the necessary measures to ensure continuity in their teaching and service during their absence.

⁵ The duration of educational leave and remuneration during this period shall be set by the dean of the relevant school based on the objectives put forward by the immediate superior and the staff member concerned.

⁶ Educational leave shall be the subject of a report submitted to the immediate superior and institute director.

Article 8 Career Advice

¹ The immediate superior, institute director and school HR manager have a responsibility to advise employees in their career development.

² They shall ensure that the staff member undergoes regular training and advise them in selecting visits and internships likely to develop their profile and professional skills.

³ Experience of one or several years acquired outside EPFL shall be encouraged.

Article 9 Entry into Force

¹This directive entered into force on 1 October 2005 and was amended on 15 March 2021 (version 1.3), 30 May 2022 (version 1.4) and 3 April 2023 (version 1.5).

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