

# Directives for Doctoral Students Employed at ETH Zurich

ETH Zurich is committed to providing fair employment conditions for doctoral students. The Directives for Doctoral Students Employed at ETH Zurich, the Ordinance Governing Scientific Employees and the Ordinance on the Doctorate serve as the basis for this.

Information sheet, December 2021

The Directives for Doctoral Students Employed at ETH Zurich ([Directives](#)), the Ordinance Governing Scientific Employees of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich ([VO Scientific Staff](#)) and the Ordinance on the Doctorate ([DV](#)) state the key provisions regarding doctoral student employment and the pursuit of a doctorate at ETH Zurich. The main points concerning employment are as follows:

| Employment topics   | Basics: Directives for Doctoral Students Employed, Ordinance Governing Scientific Employees und Ordinance on Doctoral Studies  |
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| <p><b>Duration of employment</b><br/>Employment lasts from the date of matriculation until the doctoral examination. This applies to all newly matriculated doctoral students from 1 January 2022 onwards. It applies to already matriculated doctoral students from 1 January 2023 onwards.</p> <p><b>Confirmation of admission</b> is the prerequisite for starting the employment process. The contract must be aligned with the starting date.</p> <p><b>Remuneration and level of employment</b><br/>Doctoral students are employed on a full-time basis, i.e. 100%. They are remunerated according to standard, defined salary rates, fairly and transparently applied.</p> <p>Transparent and fair application of wage rates.</p> <p><b>Financing through scholarships</b><br/>If doctoral students are funded through scholarships which fail to pay them at the defined standard rate, their employment will be topped up to provide at least the standard rate. The only exception is where the rules of a scholarship provider prevent this.</p> | <p>Directives clause 2<br/><sup>1</sup> Employment of doctoral students generally lasts from matriculation to at least the end of the month of the doctoral examination. The financing of their employment is to be secured for the entire duration by the Budget Officer.</p> <p>VO Scientific Staff, Art. 8<br/><sup>1</sup> The salary is determined as follows: doctoral students: rates as set out in Annex 2</p> <p>Directives clause 1<br/><sup>2</sup> Doctoral students are employed on a full-time basis, i.e. 100%. Part-time employment is admissible in justifiable cases, particularly if the employee has parental duties or works for an additional employer.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> The departments are responsible for ensuring transparent, fair application of salary rates. If doctoral students provide services in teaching or other additional services in excess of the normal minimum level of teaching in the department, they are entitled to a higher rate of payment in accordance with Annex 2 of the OGSE.</p> <p>Directives clause 3<br/><sup>1</sup> If doctoral students are funded through scholarships which fail to pay them at the standard rate set out in Annex 2 of the OGSE, their employment will be topped up to provide at least the standard rate or, where possible, the usual rate for the department. Funding is provided by the professorship. The regulations governing Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships at ETH Zurich serve as orientation here.<br/><sup>2</sup> Excepted are scholarships which, for regulatory reasons on the part of the scholarship provider, may not be increased.</p> |

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| <p><b>Duration of employment contracts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First contract: At least 18 months (trial period of a minimum of three months, and conditional on the verdict of the aptitude colloquium)</li> <li>• Subsequent contracts: At least 12 months</li> </ul> <p><b>Progress report and status conversation</b><br/>A <a href="#">status conversation</a> must be conducted each year.</p> <p><b>If objectives are not achieved</b><br/>Written grounds for not extending the employment contract must be drawn up and the document must be uploaded to ETHIS.</p> <p><b>Extension of the employment contract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication: Preferably six months (and at the latest three months) before the contract expires</li> <li>• Initiation of the extension process: Two months before the contract expires at the latest.</li> </ul> <p><b>Withdrawal of the doctoral thesis supervisor</b><br/>If the doctoral thesis supervisor withdraws from the supervision task, the affected doctoral student has six months to find a new supervisor.</p> <p><b>It is possible to break off the doctorate under the following circumstances:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The doctoral student wishes it (Art. 21, Doctorate Ordinance).</li> <li>• The doctoral thesis supervisor wishes it (Art. 30, Doctorate Ordinance).</li> <li>• The doctoral student fails the aptitude colloquium examination (a one-off repetition is possible within 3 months after having received the result). The employment relationship will be terminated by mutual agreement (Art. 14, Doctorate Ordinance; Point 2, Para. 4, Directives).</li> <li>• At the behest of ETH Zurich (Art. 22, Doctorate Ordinance)</li> </ul> <p>If the doctoral thesis supervisor withdraws or the doctorate is broken off, Human Resources should be involved at an early stage.</p> | <p>Directives clause 4<br/><sup>1</sup> Employment contracts for doctoral students may be issued for further fixed terms. The first employment contract is generally issued for eighteen (18) months, subject to the definitive admission to doctoral studies (aptitude interview) pursuant as set out in Art. 17 of the DV.</p> <p>Directives clause 2<br/><sup>5</sup> The employment contract cannot be extended if the performance or progress agreed upon is not achieved or maintained. At a minimum, expected performance and progress must be documented in the annual progress report and interim discussion as set out in Art. 29 of the Ordinance on the Doctorate at ETH Zurich (DV). [...]</p> <p>Directives clause 2<br/><sup>5</sup> [...] If the doctoral student fails to perform as agreed, a discussion between the doctoral supervisor and the doctoral student should be held promptly and a written agreement on targets drawn up. Failure to reach the objectives in the agreed time will generally result in non-extension of the employment contract. Here the reasons for non-extension must be discussed with the doctoral student and documented. The supervisor, in consultation with Human Resources, must inform the doctoral student in good time if the contract will not be extended, preferably at least six (6) months but certainly no later than three (3) months before the contract is to be terminated. Written justification of the decision is required (see Section 5).</p> <p>Directives clause 5<br/><sup>2</sup> If the contract is not to be extended, the doctoral student must be informed promptly, preferably six (6) but certainly not later than three (3) months before it expires. A written justification is required (see Section 2, Para. 5).</p> <p>Ordinance on the Doctorate, Art. 30<br/><sup>2</sup> After the withdrawal of the supervisor it is the responsibility of the doctoral student to find a new doctoral thesis supervisor within a maximum of six months.</p> <p>Directives clause 2<br/><sup>4</sup> On termination of the doctorate or definitive non-admission to doctoral studies, the fixed-term position will be terminated prematurely or at the end of the contract by mutual agreement. Mutual termination of the employment contract requires the written agreement of ETH Zurich (represented by Human Resources), the doctoral supervisor and the doctoral student.</p> |
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| <p><b>Extension of the employment contract in the final phase of the doctorate</b></p> <p>This is usually possible for periods of at least three months up until the doctoral examination (grounds for extensions of less than 12 months must be entered in the workflow).</p> <p><b>Further employment following the doctoral examination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The personnel consultant must be involved in setting appropriate remuneration for any employment following the doctoral examination.</li> <li>Exmatriculation is followed by either withdrawal from ETH or a change of function. A doctoral employment contract is no longer possible.</li> </ul> | <p>Directives clause 4</p> <p><sup>3</sup> An extension of less than a year and of reasonable length, generally at least three (3) months, is possible in the phase just preceding the doctoral examination. Extensions of less than a year must be justified in writing to Human Resources, and doctoral students must also be informed in writing.</p> <p>Directives clause 6</p> <p><sup>1</sup> Any additional work required after the doctoral examination must be appropriately remunerated, especially if it relates to the doctoral project, e.g. involves the preparation of agreed publications or teaching services.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Part-time employment after the doctoral examination is generally possible within the statutory maximum employment period of six (6) years.</p> |
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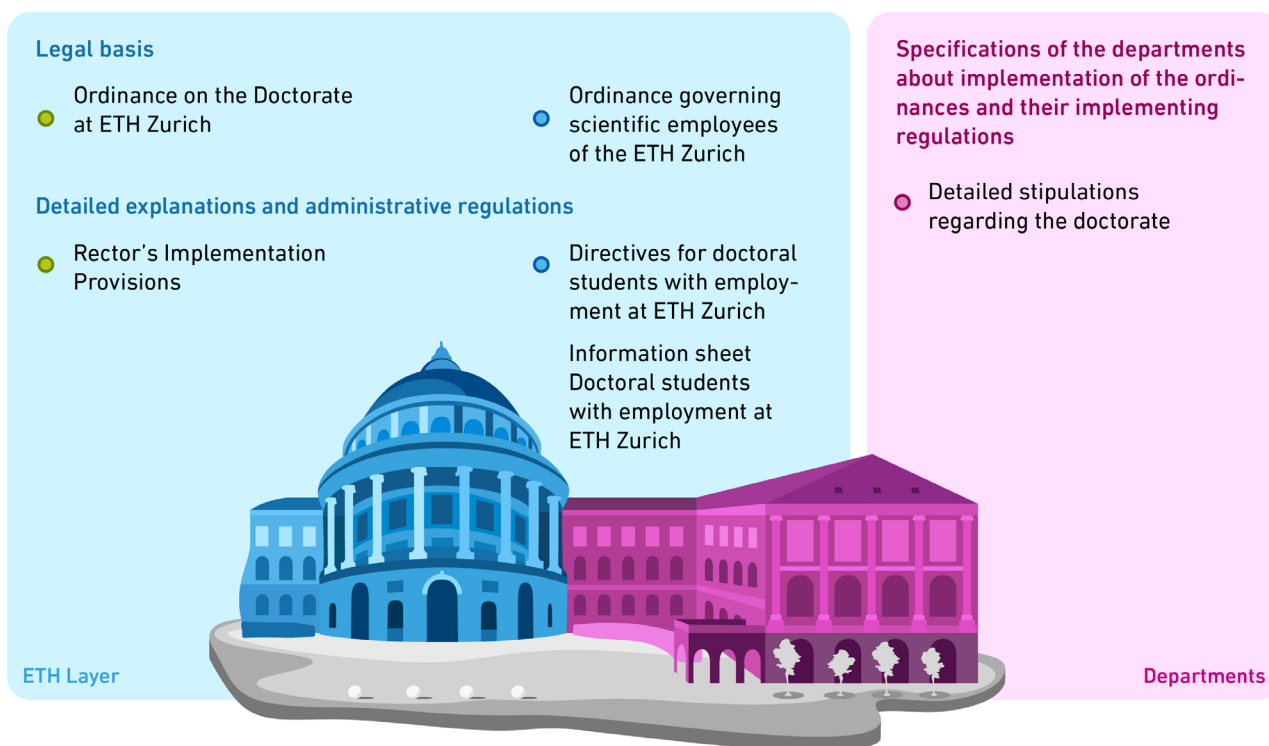


Figure: Overview of legal basis

**Legal bases:**

- [Directives for Doctoral Students Employed at ETH Zurich \(RSETHZ 622en\)](#)
- [Ordinance Governing Scientific Employees of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich \(RSETHZ 516.1en\)](#)
- [Ordinance on the Doctorate at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich \(RSETHZ340.31en\)](#)
- [Rector's implementation provision \(RSETHZ 340.311en\)](#)

**Further information:**

For information on doctoral students at ETH Zurich see:

- [Young researchers doctoral students | ETH Zurich](#)
- [Information on employment and salary | ETH Zurich](#)
- [Entering Switzerland - Welcome Center | ETH Zurich](#)
- [Administration Doctorate | ETH Zurich](#)
- [Detailed stipulations regarding the doctorate | ETH Zurich](#)

ETH Zurich  
 Vice Presidency Personnel Development and Leadership  
 Binzmühlestrasse 130  
 8092 Zurich  
[www.hr.ethz.ch](http://www.hr.ethz.ch)