

Information for Doctoral Candidates

Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich



An excellent investment in your scientific career

A doctoral degree is the preferred qualification for a career in academia, but also for many jobs in industry and the public sector. ETH Zurich offers ideal conditions for talented young scientists.

The doctorate at ETH Zurich

The doctorate represents an essential part of the scientific work at ETH Zurich. With 4000 doctoral students in a total student population of 20,000, ETH is one of the most research-intensive universities in Europe.

The basis for the doctorate is independent scientific research work supervised by a professor. A doctorate usually takes between three and four years to complete.

Structure of the doctorate

The most important component of the doctorate is a research project and the thesis, which is carried out under the supervision of a professor.

There is also a compulsory component of course work, the “doctoral studies”, which ensures that you receive continuing education in and beyond the subject area of your thesis and gain important skills for your future career.

As a doctoral student you also learn the craft of higher education teaching by contributing to the teaching at your department.

In some disciplines, the doctoral studies are integrated into doctoral programmes in collaboration with other universities.

The doctorate concludes with the doctoral thesis, which is subsequently defended during the doctoral exam. On successful completion, doctoral students are awarded the title “Doctor of Sciences (Dr. Sc. ETH Zurich)”.

Admission and funding

The admission requirements for a doctorate at ETH Zurich are a Master’s degree from a recognized university and excellent academic performance.

Since the doctorate is supervised by a professor, the first step in the application process is to find an ETH professor willing to act as your supervisor. Once you have reached an agreement with the supervisor, you apply to the Doctoral Administration. The supervisor must endorse the application.

Most doctoral students at ETH Zurich are employed as research assistants, but it is also possible to carry out a doctorate in an external organization or with your own funding. You can agree the employment details when discussing with your potential supervisor.

ETH Zurich does not charge tuition fees for doctoral studies.

There is a rolling admission policy for the doctorate: you can contact a potential supervisor and submit your application at any time. Some research groups advertise open doctoral student positions, but you can approach a professor in whose research work you are interested, even without a position being advertised.



Specialization areas for the doctorate at ETH Zurich

A doctorate can be carried out in all scientific disciplines of ETH Zurich's 16 departments: engineering sciences, mathematics and natural sciences, and management and social sciences.



Doctor of Sciences (Dr. Sc. ETH Zurich)	Department
Architecture	D-ARCH
Civil Engineering	D-BAUG
Environmental Engineering	D-BAUG
Geomatic Engineering	D-BAUG
Computer Science	D-INFK
Information Technology and Electrical Engineering	D-ITET
Materials Science	D-MATL
Mechanical and Process Engineering	D-MAVT
Mathematics	D-MATH
Computational Science and Engineering	D-MATH
Physics	D-PHYS
Chemistry	D-CHAB
Chemical Engineering	D-CHAB
Interdisciplinary Sciences	D-CHAB
Pharmaceutical Sciences	D-CHAB
Biology	D-BIOL
Biosystems Science and Engineering	D-BSSE
Earth Sciences	D-ERDW
Food Science	D-HEST
Health Sciences and Technology	D-HEST
Agricultural Science	D-USYS
Environmental Sciences	D-USYS
Management, Technology and Economics	D-MTEC
Humanities, Social and Political Sciences	D-GESS

Doctoral programmes

Life Sciences	Joint programmes with the University of Zurich
Mathematics	Joint programmes with the University of Zurich

Further information
www.phd.ethz.ch →

Excellence in the heart of Europe

ETH Zurich is one of the world's leading research universities in the engineering and natural sciences.

An excellent investment in your scientific career

A doctoral degree from ETH Zurich is an excellent investment. Whether it is a doctorate in engineering, natural sciences or in management and social sciences, a "Doctor of Sciences" degree from ETH Zurich opens doors to rewarding and challenging jobs in industry, academia or public administration.

Ideal conditions for creative individuals

ETH Zurich offers outstanding conditions for a doctorate: an innovative atmosphere and an environment that inspires young scientific talent to success. The infrastructure is excellent, with modern equipment, world-class laboratory facilities, outstanding library resources, and state-of-the-art computing infrastructure.

500 professors and more than 2000 scientific staff provide a stimulating intellectual environment, making sure that you get the supervision and guidance you need to carry out your research effectively. Close links to business, industry and civil society ensure that the research at ETH also matches social and industrial needs.

Worldwide networks

For over 160 years, ETH Zurich has been a global player in engineering and science research. The international outlook is evidenced by the fact that two-thirds of the professors and of the doctoral students have been recruited internationally.

ETH Zurich is consistently ranked as one of Europe's leading research universities. Its numerous collaborations with other renowned engineering and science institutions around the world offer valuable international opportunities for scientific and intellectual exchange.

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