EPFL Ph.D. Hiring Process Description

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LAMS - EPFL

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# Table of Contents

EPFL Ph.D. Hiring Process 3
  * Introduction 3
  * EPFL Doctoral School Organizational Structure 3
  * Actors 3
  * IT Systems 3
  * Key Documents 4
  * Process Description 4
  * Sequence Diagram 6

Appendix A 7
  1. Letter confirming the candidate’s admissibility 7
  2. Admission letter sent to candidate 8
  3. Contract 9
EPFL Ph.D. Hiring Process

Introduction
This is a real example coming from EPFL University. It is used in workshops in which we illustrate the importance of business and IT alignment as well as the importance of IT architecture.

EPFL Doctoral School Organizational Structure
EPFL has several doctoral schools that each offers one or more Doctoral Programs. There are 20 Doctoral Programs offered by 7 Schools. Every school has their own selection criteria, grants, etc. Even if the programs offered have different structure, the Doctoral Schools are managed by a common organization and the all share the same regulation.

Actors
We illustrate this process with an example:
• The applicant (Adelle) - a person interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in a specific doctoral school of EPFL.
• The lab director (Paul) – a professor who wishes to hire a Ph.D. applicant for his lab. He is interested to hire Adelle. The name of the lab is LAMS.
• The lab admin (Laurence) – a person who takes care of the lab’s administrative tasks. She communicates directly with the Doctoral School Assistant and the HR. She is the professor’s representative in this process.
• The director of the doctoral program (Dirk) in which Adelle applies. It is a professor who ultimately validates Adelle’s application and decides on her admissibility. His approval is needed before a professor can hire her. His goal is to get doctoral students that fit the values of the school (for example, who comes from the best school known in the field of research and who have an outstanding gpa).
• The doctoral program assistant (Dana). Dana takes care of the on-going communication with the applicant.
• The EPFL doctoral programs dean (Damocles). Damocles supervises all the doctoral schools at EPFL. His goal is to ensure that all schools follow the same process of hiring.

IT Systems
• IS-Academia application: manage the filing of the Ph.D. application records, it supports also the part of the process manages by Dirk (the director of the doctoral program) in which the candidate admissibility is checked. This application is managed by an organization called Academic Affairs.
• SAP-HR application: manage employee records, it supports the hiring of the employee. This application is managed by an organization called HR.
Key Documents

- Application record: submitted by Adelle in IS-Academia contains all information necessary to evaluate the application.
- Email with list of admissible applicants: Dana, the Doctoral School Administrative Assistant, informs all professor (with Paul being one of them) about which applicant is admissible.
- Email to admissible applicant: sent by email to the applicant to inform him that he is admissible (attachment). These two emails contain the same information but for different recipients.
- Admission letter: sent by regular postal mail to admissible applicants who got admitted by a professor. This is an official confirmation of EPFL that the applicant will be hired if he signs the contract (attachment).
- Contract proposal: sent by internal mail to inform the HR Responsible for the Doctoral School to prepare the contract (attachment).
- EPFL contract: sent by postal mail by the HR Responsible for Doctoral School to the applicants. Should be returned signed.

Process Description

The process can be understood as composed of three sub processes: Registration, Selection and Hiring.

Registration & doc school selection. The sub-process begins when an Applicant uses the Registration service from IS-Academia to fill out his application record and upload his documents. The purpose of this sub-process is to decide who is admissible (i.e. who has the required gpa grade to join EPFL); we do not show how this decision is made. This sub-process ends with the Doctoral School Assistant sending e-mail to the applicant whether he is admissible or not (Appendix A.1).

Prof selection. On receiving the e-mail on admissibility, the applicant prepares for his interview. The Professor organizes interview with applicant if he is interested. There is no existing IT application that supports the match between applicants and professors. The Professor and the Lab Admin use IS-Academia only to read Application Records and to insert some additional notes about Tom and other applicants they are interested in. The Professor selects Tom and informs the Lab Admin (e.g. by phone) about his choice. Then the Lab Admin informs the Doctoral School Assistant (e.g. by email) and requests the preparation of an Admission letter (Appendix A.2) confirming that the selected candidate will be hired by the Professor’s lab. This physical letter has to be signed by the Doctoral Program Director and the Professor hiring the Applicant. This is a key document in the actual hiring. The Lab Admin asks the Applicant (now a future PhD student) for a scan of the documents required for the contract preparation (CV, passport copy, etc.). Some of these documents are the same as the ones uploaded in
IS-Academia in the first part. Together with the Admission letter, the documents are sent to the HR responsible.

**Hiring.** The HR responsible prepares the contract (Appendix A.3) and arranges for any visa application needs. Once the contract is ready, it is sent for signature to the future PhD student. At this time a new record in SAP is created for him. From this point on, the employment record of the PhD student is in SAP, and his academic record is in IS-Academia. In the meantime, the Lab Admin takes care of the student’s accreditation. The Doctoral School Assistant informs the Applicant about social events and language courses whereas the student prepares for his arrival in Switzerland: finds an apartment, registers for language courses, etc.
Sequence Diagram

Student Business organisation apply and validate request all applications
return all applications inform Doctoral School assistant about decision
inform student about admission decision update student's status

[status=rejected]
alt
[else]
inform about PhD student selection start find student applicants (search parameters)
loop
[interested professor]
return set of student applicants
ask to organize interview with selected candidate
arrange date, time of interview
do the interview and negotiate
inform about decision
update status to admitted

opt
[prof. decision=accept]
opt
[student decision=accept]
inform about decision
ask to prepare admission letter
prepare admission letter
send admission letter for signature
return signed
send admission letter for signature
return signed
send admission letter to student asking if accepts
send admission letter to lab admin
request documents (CV, passport…)
return documents

give documents and ask to prepare a contract
prepare contract
send contract for signature to student
return signed contract
start process with Swiss authorities
insert as new employee in SAP
change status to employee in ISA
prepare info mails about start of semester, social events, language courses etc.
send mail
see what special docs are needed
prepare documents
return documents

manage the accreditation loop
prepare info mails about start of semester, social events, language courses etc.
send mail

Appendix A

1. Letter confirming the candidate’s admissibility

Your application to

Subject: Your application to

From:

Date: 15.02.2012 15:22

To:

Dear

We thank you for your interest in the EPFL Doctoral Program in

We would like to inform you that your application has been accepted by the Admission Committee and that you are admissible to the program.

The next step for being admitted to the program is to be hired in a lab and to have a Thesis Director.

Your application is now available to the professors. You may be contacted directly by a professor for further discussion or for an interview invitation.

Should a professor be interested in your file, he/she will most likely contact you within the next two months.

Yours sincerely,

Professor

Program Director

21.06.2012 10:54
2. Admission letter sent to candidate

Lausanne, 12 April 2012

Dear [Candidate],

Congratulations! We are delighted to let you know that you have been accepted to the EPFL doctoral program in [Field]. You are also offered a research assistantship in the laboratory of Professor [Name]. Your annual salary for the first year (12 months) will be [Salary]. If you accept this offer, your studies at EPFL will be governed by the rules of the program [Link]. Your date of enrolment will be September 1, 2012. You can be hired in the lab at any time between now and September and the contract date is to be negotiated with Professor [Name].

Please inform us about your decision to join the doctoral program. You can convey your decision or direct any questions regarding our program, to [Contact Person].

We hope you will join EPFL for your doctoral studies.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
Director of the Doctoral Program

EPFL
## 3. Contract

**PROPOSITION D’ENGAGEMENT — personnel payé au mois**  
(a transmettre aux Ressources Humaines, qui définiront la fonction et le salaire)

### Centre financier

- Fonction: [ ] Scientifique  
  - Assistant-doctorant (salaire de base unique à 100%)
  - Collaboreur scientifique / Post-doctorant
  - Assistance scientifique

- Support: [ ]
  - Engagement du:
  - [ ] Administratif
  - [ ] Technique
  - [ ] IT
  - [ ] Conduite (état-major)

- Durée indéterminée (CDI)
- Durée déterminée (CDD) (période d’essai de 3 mois)

### Financement

- 100 % Dotation n°
- % Complément FN n°
- % Autres n°

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<tr>
<td>Adresse complète :</td>
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<td>Date de naissance :</td>
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- Lieu ou pays d’origine :  
- Profession :  
- Docteur : [ ] oui [ ] non  
- Date du diplôme : 09.2012
- Date du doctorat :  

- Taux d’occupation : [ ] 100 %  
- [ ] autre (préciser)  

### Pour les étrangers

- Permis de travail (joindre s.v.p. une copie) : [ ] B  
- [ ] C  
- [ ] aucun /  
- Travail de thèse probable ? [ ] oui [ ] non  
- Considéré(e) comme post-doctorant(e) ? [ ] oui [ ] non

**ATTENTION** : Les collaborateurs, ainsi que leur famille, provenant d’un pays soumis à visa sont priés de déposer une demande d’entrée en Suisse auprès de l’ambassade ou du consulat de Suisse le plus proche de leur domicile. 
Si conjoint(e) et/ou enfant(e) l’accompagne(nt) : merci de joindre copie des passeports, acte de mariage, acte(s) de naissance (indispensable pour effectuer des formalités)

### Observations

- Sous réserve de l’obtention du diplôme et acceptation au programme doctoral.

### Timbre de l’unité :  

Lausanne, le: 23.03.2012

**Annexe(s) :**  
- CV  
- [ ] Copie pièce identité  
- [ ] Cahier des charges  
- [ ] Copie permis de travail  
- [ ] Copie carte AVS

**Ne pas remplir cette partie réservée aux RH**

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<td>[ ] A4-adm. + techn./13/CDD</td>
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Salaires annuels brut :

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**Date début doctorant FN :**  

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### Centre financier

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