

# GETTING YOUR THESIS OFF TO a good start

GUIDE 2014

GUIDE FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

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**Editorial Committee:** Carine Carvalho, Helene Fügen, Muriel Besson

**Editor:** Corinne Dallera

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**Editorial Committee:** Helene Fügen, Brigitte Mantilleri

**English translation:** Margaret Howett

**Coordination:** PLATES-BANDES communication

**Illustrations:** Annick Baehler

**Graphic design:** Joëlle Proz

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GUIDE FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

# CONTENTS

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<b>Destination : doctorate !</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Men and women in Swiss universities</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Why do a thesis ?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The thesis</b>	<b>12</b>
Before you start	12
Conditions of acceptance for doctoral studies	12
Financing your doctorate	14
What makes a good thesis subject ?	17
Choice of thesis supervisor	18
The relationship with the thesis supervisor	20
Training, supervision and informal exchanges	23
Timescale for the thesis	24
The final stages of the thesis	25
Preparing your professional future	26
<b>Being visible</b>	<b>28</b>
Where to publish and which conferences to attend ?	28
What is the purpose of colloquiums ?	31
<b>A stay abroad</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Assistantships</b>	<b>35</b>
Finding a job	35
Terms and conditions of appointment	36
Assistantship and thesis work : a balance sometimes difficult to achieve	37
Part-time work : a good solution ?	38
Work organisation	39
Settling into your workplace and defending your rights	39
<b>Professional activity, thesis and private life</b>	<b>41</b>
Thesis and professional activity	41
Writing your thesis at home	42
Thesis and private life	43
Thesis and children	44
<b>The difficulties : stress, overwork</b>	<b>45</b>

<b>What to do in the event of conflict, psychological or sexual harassment ?</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>After the thesis</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>The academic career path : the main stages</b>	<b>53</b>
The main academic career positions	53
University recruitment criteria	55
Finding a job at a Latin university or EPFL	58
<b>Other useful information</b>	<b>60</b>
Swiss universities (HEU)	60
Universities of Applied Sciences (HES) and Universities of Teacher Education (HEP)	61
The « Who's who » of research policy and funding	62
How Swiss universities work	64
Where to find the main regulations concerning academic staff	65
<b>Assistance</b>	<b>66</b>
Doctoral programmes	66
Mentoring	67
RCFE workshops	68
Peer support	68
Intermediary staff associations	69
<b>Useful addresses</b>	<b>70</b>
Equal opportunities offices at universities	70
Equal opportunities in Switzerland	71
Associations and networks of women in the field of science and research	71
Gender studies in French-speaking Swiss universities	72
Career Guidance	72
Intellectual property, research promotion and transfer	73
Sexual harassment, mobbing, mediation	74



in details



find out more



useful addresses



key advice



personal comments



focus on « equality »

# DESTINATION: DOCTORATE!

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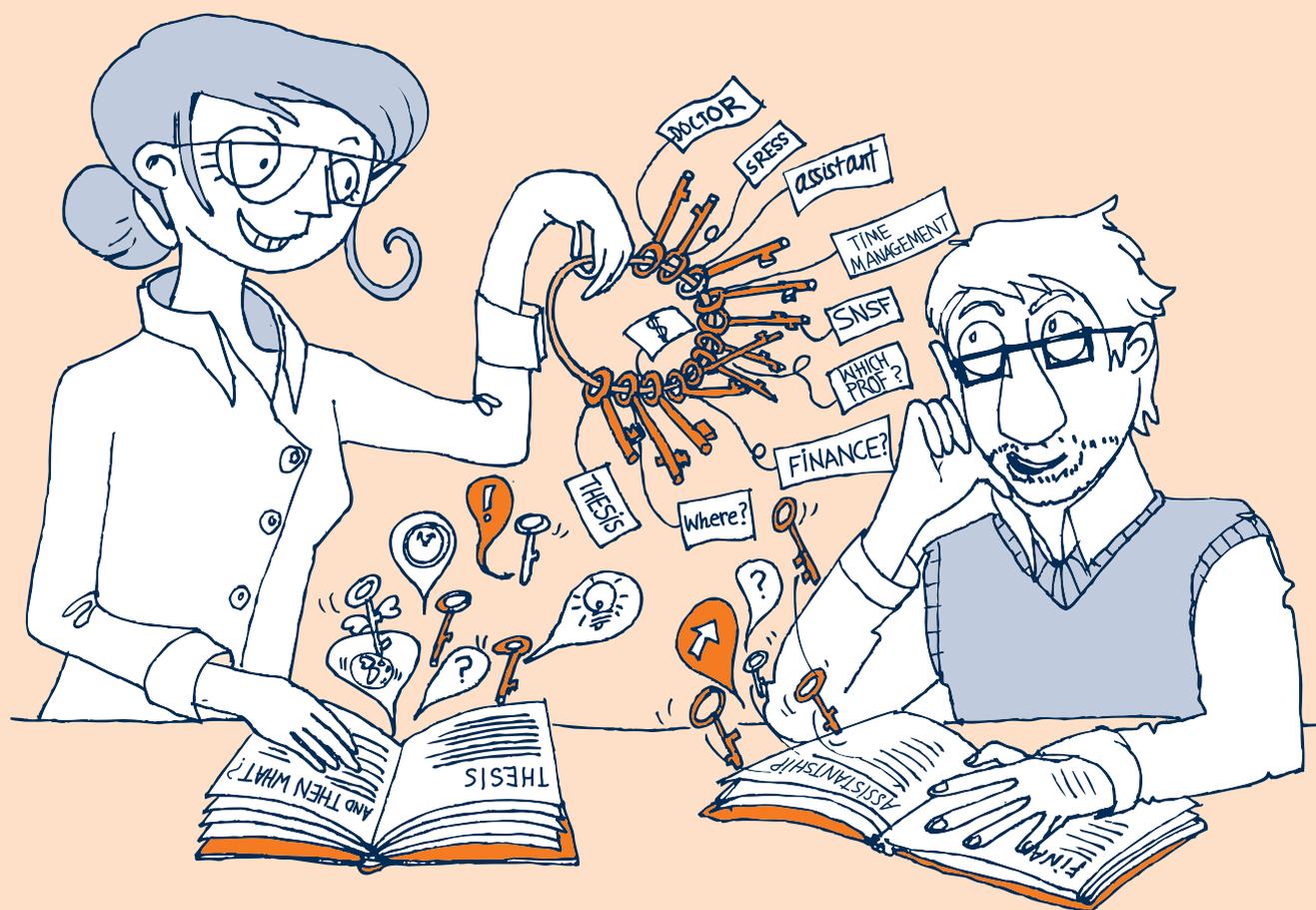
**Real academic expedition, the doctorate is a unique experience. To ensure that the journey goes as smoothly as possible, it is advisable to make careful preparations, ensure you take all the necessary steps and be ready to encounter surprises. This guide will accompany you every step of the way.**

A vital stage in the academic career, the doctorate opens up numerous personal and professional opportunities. A doctorate is an essential condition for carrying out research activities and pursuing a university career. Outside university, it can prove a deciding factor in obtaining an executive-level position. From a personal point of view, undertaking a doctorate is a unique experience that enables you to delve deeper into your particular field of research in a motivating environment. The doctoral period is also an opportunity to develop your professional network in Switzerland and abroad. The thesis is however a long-term and often quite solitary adventure, involving challenges of not only an intellectual nature.

In the academic world, the doctoral phase is regarded as a period of transition between study and independent research activities. Doctoral students are no longer looked upon as students, but are expected to expand their knowledge of the subject and develop their independence before gaining recognition as senior researchers. They must also learn the customs and practices of the academic world. Doctoral students are particularly expected to participate in the life of the institution and that of their research group, publish their work in journals and become integrated into scientific networks.

The purpose of this guide is to advise doctoral students on how to successfully negotiate the rites of passage as a PhD student and help them find their way in the academic world. It is also intended for those who are still unsure about embarking on a doctorate. Here they will find information to help them make their decision.

The starting point of this guide is the experience acquired in the context of a mentoring programme for women embarking on a thesis : StartingDoc. This programme explores the structural aspects you must be acquainted with to ensure the successful completion of your thesis, such as the various stages of the academic career, organising work between research and teaching, researchers' rights, creating networks, colloquiums and publications, balancing professional and private life, etc. This guide deals with all the questions discussed at the StartingDoc meetings.



# MEN AND WOMEN IN SWISS UNIVERSITIES

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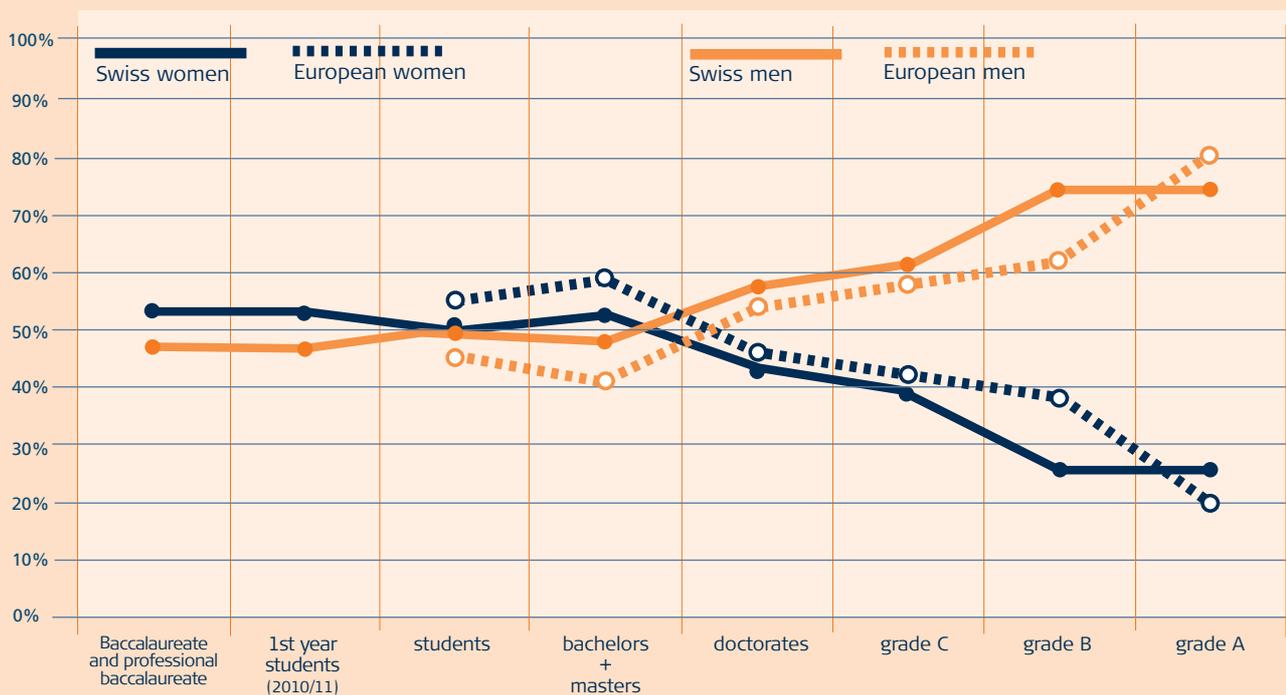
**The increase in the number of female students at Swiss universities has been a highlight for the last three decades. For the last ten years, parity has practically been attained with regard to Swiss university students overall. This situation is accompanied however by two phenomena of persisting gender inequality: horizontal segregation and vertical segregation (leaky pipeline).**

Horizontal segregation describes the phenomenon of the concentration of men and women in certain disciplines. The metaphor of the leaky pipeline illustrates the declining participation of women as the rungs of the academic career ladder are climbed, and therefore the lower proportion of women who reach the highest positions in the academic career.

Thus, in all types of Swiss universities (including Universities of Applied Sciences (HES) and Universities of Teacher Education (HEP)), in 2010 only 26 % of professorial posts were occupied by women. In universities, this proportion was barely 18 % in 2011 (SFSO/SHIS, 2011).

At 42 %, the proportion of women among PhD holders in Switzerland is lower than the European average. The doctoral phase and then the postdoctoral qualification are two important stages for improving equality of opportunity in the academic career. It is also at this level that universities and the SNSF have implemented measures to encourage female careers and increase support programmes for young researchers.

## THE LEAKY PIPELINE IN SWISS UNIVERSITIES 2010 (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2013)



### Definition of levels:

Grade A = Highest level in the academic career, usually a professorial post at a university.

Grade B = Advanced-level researchers, who have not yet reached the highest level but are more advanced than the first level attained by PhD holders.

Grade C = First level of appointment obtained by those who have just received their doctorate.

- +
 • Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2013). *En Suisse, les femmes restent peu présentes dans les milieux de la science et de la technologie*. Press release 11.04.2013.
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- Nature Special (2013). « Women in science ». *Nature*, 495 (7439): 5-134.  
[www.nature.com/women](http://www.nature.com/women).

# WHY DO A THESIS ?

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The doctorate is the first step on the academic career path. However doing a doctorate does not just involve acquiring advanced scientific knowledge in a particular field, but also offers the possibility of developing methodological and social skills that can be transferred to other fields.

## DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

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Doing a doctorate means particularly developing :

- Your analytical and deductive skills ;
- Your ability to communicate ;
- Your ability to process complex data ;
- Your time management ;
- Your ability to adapt to new situations ;
- Your creativity, ability to propose innovative solutions ;
- Your independence ;
- etc.

All these are valuable skills sought after in the non-academic job market. In some sectors, a PhD may even prove a deciding factor in obtaining a position of responsibility in the R&D divisions of large companies or public administration.

## SEIZING UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

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From a personal point of view, the doctorate offers opportunities that few of us are fortunate enough to encounter in our career. Firstly, it offers a chance to delve deeper into a subject of your own choice. The doctorate also enables you to work in

an intellectually stimulating environment and offers many possibilities to gain experience abroad thanks to grants from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) or participation in colloquiums, etc. It also allows great flexibility in work management, both time-wise and geographically.

## AN ENDURANCE ADVENTURE

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However, writing a thesis means committing yourself to a long-term experience that requires great self-discipline, the ability to work alone for long periods and to bounce back if you hit a rough patch. An academic career also involves living in a state of financial insecurity for several years. Therefore, above all, it is on the basis of your personal and intellectual motivations that the decision to embark on a thesis must be made.



### ENJOY WHAT YOU DO //////////////////////////////////////

Beyond any career considerations, your work fascinates you. The thesis represents a long-term commitment and only your passionate involvement can help you keep going for as long as it takes.



*« I thought of giving up at least three times, but I held on and now I'm proud of what I achieved ! » a*

Gaëlle

# THE THESIS

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## BEFORE YOU START

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Even if you are sure of your reasons, it is advisable to take the time to ask other doctoral students, intermediary staff members and professors about :

- thesis work and its specific characteristics ;
- the style of supervision and scientific interests of the prospective thesis supervisor ;
- working conditions in the unit to which you will be attached ;
- options for financing the doctorate ;
- average time taken to complete a thesis in your field ;
- conditions of acceptance for doctoral studies and requirements for obtaining the PhD ;
- training programmes available in your field.

## CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES

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Each faculty in each institution has its own regulations regarding doctorates.

In all the regulations, the first condition for admission to doctoral studies is that the candidate must hold a degree, a Master's degree or equivalent qualification.

- Generally this qualification must be obtained in the same scientific field as the thesis, although some faculties offer a certain amount of flexibility.
- Regarding the equivalence of qualifications from another Swiss or foreign university, the general rule is to admit candidates who would be admitted to their original university.

Sometimes a second condition is stipulated, namely a minimum mark for all marks obtained.

A third condition generally stipulated is the prior agreement of a thesis supervisor.

Other conditions may apply, such as the preparation of a thesis plan, letters of recommendation, knowledge of languages, etc.

Requirements other than those concerning the thesis itself can vary greatly. The obligation to attend a doctoral school, the acquisition of a certain number of credits or the submission of pre-doctoral research work is compulsory in certain faculties and at EPFL.

You are recommended to obtain all the necessary information concerning administrative procedures from faculty secretariats and/or study advisers well in advance.



## SPECIAL CONDITIONS

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### Minimum mark

The requirement of a minimum mark concerns essentially the law faculties of the Universities of Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel and the University of Fribourg (except in sciences), as well as the economics faculty of the *Università della Svizzera italiana* (USI).

### EPFL

Letters of recommendation are required. Furthermore, unlike the Latin universities, EPFL has a recruitment procedure that includes a «doctoral committee».

### Medicine

Doctors who have obtained a Master's degree in medicine can go on to do two types of doctoral training:

- Doctorate in medicine (MD): the doctorate consists of fundamental or clinical research work lasting approximately one year. The thesis can take the form of one or several original publications. The main condition of admission is the degree in medicine.
- Doctorate in medicine and life sciences (MD-PhD): the doctorate consists of long-term experimental research work (three years). Candidate selection is generally based on examination results, certificates and an interview. At the UNIL, preparatory training is required.

## FINANCING YOUR DOCTORATE

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The smooth progress of a doctorate, and especially its duration, are closely linked to the way in which a doctoral student finances their doctorate and how they support themselves and, if applicable, their family.

The doctorate can be financed within the framework of an assistantship by the university or by subsidies and/or grants. On the other hand, some doctoral students choose to work outside the academic institution to cover their everyday living expenses.

### A UNIVERSITY JOB

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Universities (HEU) offer various employment possibilities to doctoral students, presenting a number of advantages :

- possibilities of creating synergies with the doctorate and therefore saving time ;
- integration in a scientific environment ;
- an environment favourable to completion of the doctorate, particularly by providing doctoral students with an optimal infrastructure.

The following academic jobs allow students to be remunerated for their doctoral work :

- assistants paid by the university and part of whose activity is reserved for thesis work ;
- doctoral students whose doctorate is financed by external funds, particularly the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

Other jobs exist, particularly at the University of Geneva (see [www.unige.ch/memento](http://www.unige.ch/memento) > *Ressources humaines* > *Règlement sur le personnel*).

The conditions of employment (salary, duration, tasks, etc.) of these jobs vary.



### SNSF DOCTORAL STUDENTS

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Unlike assistants, doctoral students financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) can in principle devote all their working time to their thesis. However, the SNSF salary scales that determine their remuneration are far lower than those of assistants funded directly by universities. The term of employment may also be shorter.

Universities have room for manoeuvre, and each is responsible for managing the engagement and salaries of doctoral students financed by SNSF funds. In some cases, SNSF doctoral posts are supplemented by government assistant posts and in others an allowance is paid in return for teaching and research activities.

Unless explicitly mentioned in the regulations and directives of the appointing university, the employment contracts of SNSF doctoral students are governed by the Code of Obligations (CO). The CO is less advantageous, particularly in terms of social security and time off (holidays, maternity leave, parental leave, etc.) than cantonal and university regulations regarding assistants.

This diversity of situations can be disconcerting. Indeed, it is not always easy when signing an employment contract with an institution for the first time to realise the direct implications for thesis work of the conditions of employment stipulated by the contract.

In addition to human resources departments that can provide information on particular aspects of a contract, intermediary staff associations of each university are well aware of the impact these differences can have on thesis work and you should therefore not hesitate to contract them. They also provide important information on negotiating job descriptions to your best advantage (See chapter *Assistance* page 66).

## GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES

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Different grants and subsidies are awarded by universities, private foundations and the Swiss National Science Foundation.

The Swiss National Science Foundation awards particularly :

### > SUBSIDIES FOR PROJECTS :

Subsidies for research projects are awarded in fields of the human and social sciences, mathematics, natural sciences and engineering sciences. Projects must be submitted by a senior researcher working for a research institution recognised in Switzerland. The applicant can then take on another employee, often a doctoral student, to work on the project.

[www.snf.ch](http://www.snf.ch) > Funding > Projects

### > SUBSIDIES FOR PERSONS (CAREERS) :

#### **For all disciplines**

- mobility grants and subsidies for doctoral students (Doc.Mobility), junior (Early Postdoc.Mobility) and advanced (Advanced Postdoc.Mobility) postdoctoral

- researchers, which allow young scientists starting out on their career to spend a period of time at a foreign research institute.
- Marie Heim-Vögtlin (MHV) grants for researchers who have had to interrupt or reduce their research activities due to family obligations (children) or changes of residence as a result of their partner's career.

### In human and social sciences

- Doc.CH, grants for 2 to 4 years for doctoral students in human and social sciences.
- subsidies for summer courses and doctoral training programmes.

### In biology and medicine

- grants awarded within the framework of the MD-PhD programme, in biology and medicine.

[www.snf.ch](http://www.snf.ch) > Funding > Careers



## ENCOURAGING THE NEXT GENERATION OF WOMEN ACADEMICS

In addition to Marie Heim-Vögtlin grants from the SNSF, various funds seek to encourage young female academics.

Equal opportunities offices at the different universities can advise female doctoral students. More information can also be found on their websites (details at the end of this guide).

The search for third-party funds is a topic dealt with by the mentoring programmes. These programmes provide a better understanding of the criteria regarding the principal funds and can increase your chances of success when submitting a project.

For more information about funding sources available at the institution at which you are enrolled :



## FUNDING

### EPFL

Grants Office  
Research Commission

<http://grantsoffice.epfl.ch>;  
<http://epfl.ch> > About EPFL  
> Research Commission

### University of Fribourg

Research Promotion Service

[www.unifr.ch/recherche/en](http://www.unifr.ch/recherche/en)

### University of Geneva

Research Sector

[www.unige.ch](http://www.unige.ch) > Professor / Researcher > Research Funding

## University of Lausanne

Research

[www.unil.ch/researcher](http://www.unil.ch/researcher)

Grants Office

[www.unil.ch/researcher](http://www.unil.ch/researcher) > Financing

## University of Neuchâtel

Research Committee

[www.unine.ch/curs](http://www.unine.ch/curs)

## Università della Svizzera italiana

Research Service

[www.ticinoricerca.ch](http://www.ticinoricerca.ch)

The SNSF and universities also award subsidies for the publication of theses.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD THESIS SUBJECT?

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In principle, there is no good or bad subject for a thesis. However, it is important that the subject fulfils at least two conditions :

- the subject must constitute a feasible project, in other words it must be possible to deal with it scientifically ;
- the thesis must make a contribution to the relevant scientific field.

Preliminary research and discussion with the thesis supervisor are critical stages for defining a subject that fulfils these two conditions.

Choosing a subject that is also of interest to your thesis supervisor offers many advantages where supervision is concerned. The existence of a National Research Programme (NRP)\* in the subject area can also be a bonus in terms of the possibility of making effective use of the results.

But, above all, it is essential that the thesis subject really interests - even captivates - its author, who will be identified for years to come as the person who works or has worked on this topic.

\* National Research Programmes (NRPs) provide scientifically based contributions to help resolve urgent problems of national importance. Their topics are defined by the Federal Council. NRPs last from four to five years.



## CHOICE OF THESIS SUPERVISOR

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As far as thesis supervision in Switzerland is concerned, the traditional model of the thesis supervisor prevails, although other forms of supervision are gradually being developed. The regulations give priority to full, associate and extraordinary professors. Senior lecturers are frequently accepted as thesis supervisors and sometimes *privat-docents* and tenured professors.

Whatever the chosen form of supervision, you should plan to contact in good time those persons who are likely to play a part in supervising your doctorate. As well as making formal contact, colloquiums and conferences are good opportunities to approach a professor. One last piece of advice: before deciding on a supervisor, talk to their doctoral students and attend an oral examination held under their supervision.



### OTHER SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS

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**Co-supervision** provides for two thesis supervisors: one from the original university and the other from a different university in Switzerland or abroad or from another faculty of the same university. The doctoral student is supervised by both these professors (who will be jury members) but only the original university/faculty awards the final qualification.

**Cotutelle** provides for two thesis supervisors. The thesis forms the subject of a single oral examination but the awarding of two degrees, one from the original university and the other from the partner institution (each making reference to the *cotutelle*). It is based on an agreement between the two universities.

These solutions provide more extensive supervision and allow integration into a broader scientific network. In addition, they avoid dependency on one single person in the event of conflict.

However, they require that the responsibilities be clearly established between the different parties. It is also advisable to ensure that there are no major theoretical and methodological disagreements between those involved in supervision of the thesis so that the doctoral student is not faced with conflicts of loyalty.

Note that the administrative procedures can take time!



### PROFF... ESSORS ?!

There is a centralised database of professors working in Switzerland:  
[www.proff.ch](http://www.proff.ch)



## THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE THESIS SUPERVISOR

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The existence of a good relationship between doctoral student and thesis supervisor is fundamental for the progress of the work and integration of the doctoral candidate into the scientific community.

Before approaching a professor or accepting their proposal, it may be useful to step back in order to clarify your own expectations regarding thesis supervision and ensure that they are compatible with the personality, supervision style and working methods of the prospective supervisor.

It is also advisable to consider the role played by the thesis supervisor regarding the professional future of doctoral students, which generally extends well beyond the thesis defence. The scientific status of the thesis supervisor contributes to the impact of the results of your work (seminars, colloquiums, publications, research networks, etc.).

Finally it is also a good idea to take into account the time that the thesis supervisor can devote to doctoral students as a result of their workload. Indeed, the supervision and support given by a professor starting out on their career with small, dynamic research teams can often prove just as reliable and valuable (if not more so) as those provided by an internationally renowned professor with an overloaded schedule who is already supervising dozens of doctoral students.

Statements collected during a survey conducted in 2008\* show that doctoral students generally find the supervision given by their thesis supervisor to be inadequate. Women doctoral students in particular state that they often receive less support than their male counterparts. For their part, the thesis supervisors interviewed emphasised the sense of initiative and independence that they expect from doctoral students.

“

*« It is apparent that more often than not contradictory tacit expectations exist between doctoral students and thesis supervisor. »*

Novelle report

As in all learning situations, the relationship between doctoral student and thesis supervisor is an unequal one, even more so when the doctoral student is also the supervisor's assistant. The supervisor's position gives them the power to specify among other things the type of input expected of doctoral students, the help they are prepared to provide and the form and style of communication established in the relationship.

\* Commission de l'égalité de la Faculté des sciences économiques et sociales (2008), *Objectif thèse*. Report by Anne Dafflon Novelle, Geneva: University of Geneva.

However, doctoral students are entitled to expect their supervisors to be effective and offer encouragement and support. Doctoral students must be able to approach them regularly to request meetings and advice.

Therefore, to ensure a productive relationship, both parties should clarify their respective expectations from the start regarding:

- the way of working ;
- objectives ;
- deadlines ;
- publications ;
- projects to be developed ;
- posts to aim for ;
- etc.

If the supervisor does not raise these questions, doctoral students are advised to take the initiative to discuss them and negotiate with their supervisor a way of interacting and working that suits them.

Besides supervision of the thesis in the strict sense, it is also the supervisor's role to encourage doctoral students to publish and take part in colloquiums. They can also help students to define a career plan, whether university-oriented or outside academia.

Many professors are prepared to organise or support colloquiums or study days relating to the thesis subjects of their doctoral students, or to co-publish an article with them. Such opportunities should not be missed. These proposals are sometimes time-consuming, but, provided they are linked to the thesis, they set an interim deadline that often allows you to progress with your work. What's more, colloquiums and publications are opportunities to make yourself known in the scientific community (see also the chapter *Being visible*).

A sense of initiative and independence are two essential qualities that thesis supervisors expect from their doctoral students. So do not hesitate to make suggestions, for example to invite a speaker who is working on a topic closely related to your own research interests. Suggestions of this nature are generally welcomed and supported by professors.

Doctoral assistants have rights and obligations linked to their position as assistant and some doctoral schools have also established their own regulations on this subject. However, the different regulations at Swiss universities relating to doctorates remain very discreet in terms of each party's actual rights and obligations.

Keeping a « thesis booklet » is a way of providing more formal support and supervision. The doctoral candidate and thesis supervisor use it to record the dates of meetings, topics discussed, advice, criticisms and decision made. This thesis booklet also makes each party's commitments more explicit.



## **ASK FOR A WRITTEN CONFIRMATION** //////////////////////////////////////

At the end of an oral negotiation, asking for a confirmation by email makes it easier for you to defend your position if necessary and avoids unpleasant surprises.



### **THESIS CHARTER**

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In France there is a standard thesis charter that explicitly sets out the rights and obligations of each party.

**According to this charter, the doctoral student has the right to:**

- receive information on academic and non-academic career openings in their field;
- be informed as to the number of theses being supervised by the prospective thesis supervisor;
- receive personal supervision from the thesis supervisor.

**In return, he or she undertakes to:**

- show initiative in the conducting of their research;
- inform the thesis supervisor regarding any difficulties encountered and the progress of their thesis;
- submit to their thesis supervisor as many progress notes as their subject requires and present their work in laboratory seminars.

**For their part, the thesis supervisor undertakes to:**

- help the doctoral student to highlight the innovative nature of their thesis in the scientific context and ensure its topicality;
- ensure that the doctoral student adopts an innovative approach;
- define and assemble the means required for the work to be carried out;
- devote a significant part of their time to the doctoral student;
- monitor the progress of work regularly and discuss its direction;
- inform the doctoral student of positive assessments or objections and criticisms that their work may elicit, particularly during the oral examination.

The charter also defines the student's rights as author.

The charter concludes with information concerning the mediation procedure in the event of conflict.

*Ministère de l'éducation nationale (1998), Bulletin Officiel de l'Education Nationale, n° 36, 1<sup>st</sup> october.*

## TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND INFORMAL EXCHANGES

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In Switzerland, the thesis supervisor plays a dominant role in the supervision of doctoral students. However, training courses are available, such as compulsory doctoral schools in some disciplines and at EPFL or optional doctoral programmes, for example those offered by the University Conference of Western Switzerland (CUSO). There is also a wide range of courses, workshops and seminars on specific topics that are offered specially to doctoral students. In addition, in parallel with the thesis supervisor, other scientists often take part officially or informally in the supervision of doctoral students, particularly through mentoring programmes offered by equal opportunities offices.

The most recent findings of the *Système d'information universitaire suisse et de l'enquête 2007 auprès des personnes nouvellement diplômées* (SFSO, 2010) show that communication and social skills are enhanced by attending one or more training courses. Supervision by several professors, exchanges of information between doctoral students and participation in meetings with scientific experts also strengthen the ability to present research findings in public as well as the ability to communicate complex ideas in more than one language.

These are decisive skills in the context of an academic career and significant assets in the professional world outside academia.

To maximise your chances, it is therefore better not to rely solely on the support of the thesis supervisor during your doctorate, but to seize all available opportunities right from the start, whether formal (doctoral programmes, courses, workshops, mentoring) or informal (exchanges between peers and colleagues).

The chapter *Assistance* gives further details concerning the possibilities offered to doctoral students at Latin universities.

## TIMESCALE FOR THE THESIS

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*«The path followed by the thesis will encounter seemingly endless monotonous plateaus, dangerous twists and turns, fortunate new developments and occasionally permanent interruptions.»*

Herzlich Claudine (2002), *Réussir sa thèse en sciences sociales*, Paris: Nathan, p. 56.

A thesis consists of different phases or stages to be completed prior to submitting the manuscript: formulation of the thesis statement, reading and compilation of the bibliography, data collection and analysis, writing, proofreading and corrections, formatting and printing of the manuscript.

Generally, these different stages overlap and the duration and development of each stage varies according to the field, discipline and approach/school in which the thesis is situated, as well as the nature of the subject.

However, regardless of specific aspects related to discipline, every doctoral student must manage the timescale of the thesis, i.e. the need to make progress despite any stumbling blocks or discouragement. The longer a thesis takes to write, the greater the risk of not completing it.

It is during difficult times when pitfalls and stagnation are encountered that thesis supervisors have a role to play in helping the doctoral student to stay on course.

Today the trend is for theses to be short. Even though there is concern in the human and social sciences regarding what is considered to be the imposition of a model specific to the exact sciences, measures designed to shorten theses are being introduced in all disciplines. Some faculties have introduced a maximum word limit for example.



**DARE THAT FINAL FULL STOP //////////////////////////////////////**

The thesis is only a first stage. You are not writing your life's work. Bear in mind that your career as a researcher lies before you.

## THE FINAL STAGES OF THE THESIS

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Each institution and faculty has its own procedures and deadlines concerning the different stages of the administrative procedure leading to the oral examination :

- appointment of members of the jury (proposal and approval) ;
- submission of the different manuscripts (number, where, deadline) ;
- thesis conference ;
- oral examination (thesis defence) ;
- obtaining of the doctoral title.

The time lapse between these different stages can be considerable. It is therefore advisable to become acquainted with the regulations well in advance, prepare an end-of-thesis schedule and in particular contact external jury members sufficiently well in advance to establish their availability.

The first people whom the thesis is sent to may vary from one institution to another. The composition of the jury also varies according to the faculty. The requirement of a jury member external to the faculty or university is however common practice at universities in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland.

Regarding the conference and oral examination, Latin universities usually hold them at the same time, but each faculty and institute has its own tradition.

The best way to prepare for them is to :

- ask more advanced researchers about their experience regarding the conference ;
- attend the oral examinations of your peers ;
- discuss it with your thesis supervisor.

Doctoral schools, mentoring programmes, REGARD, FormEv at the University of Geneva and *le dicastère de la Relève académique* at the University of Lausanne offer workshops to prepare for the conference and oral examination (see chapter *Assistance* page 66).



**The conference** is a discussion conducted behind closed doors lasting several hours between the doctoral candidate, members of the jury and thesis supervisors. It allows in-depth discussion of all aspects relating to the thesis. Generally the candidate is asked to make certain changes at the end of the conference.

**The oral examination** is organised some time after the conference, when the candidate has made the corrections requested at the conference. Thus, the oral examination should not give rise to major differences between the candidate and the thesis jury. The oral examination is a public event, intended to allow the candidate to expound their work.

## PREPARING YOUR PROFESSIONAL FUTURE

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The final year of the thesis (or even a longer period) is also generally devoted to preparing for « life-after-the-thesis » :

- making contact with those in charge of research projects ;
- preparing a postdoc grant application. Note : in the case of the SNSF, they must be submitted long in advance ! ;
- looking for a job outside academia ;
- making enquiries as to how best to enhance the visibility of your thesis (publication in extenso or of extracts, online or offline, in the form of articles, etc.) and taking the first steps.

The publication *Beyond the doctorate. Guide for advanced doctoral and postdoctoral students* offers a great deal of advice on preparing for « life-after-the-thesis ».



- \* ACIDE (2008), *Practical Guide for PhD Candidates at EPFL*, Lausanne: EPFL.
- \* Baschung Lukas (2008), *Inventaire des standards minimaux relatifs au doctorat. Rapport final à l'intention de la Conférence des recteurs des universités suisses (CRUS)*, Lausanne: University of Lausanne, Observatoire science, politique et société (OSPS).
- \* Bureaux de l'égalité des hautes écoles universitaires de la Suisse latine (2013), *Au-delà du doctorat. Guide for advanced doctoral and postdoctoral students*, Lausanne: BuLa.
- \* Commission de l'égalité de la Faculté des sciences économiques et sociales (2008), *Objectif thèse*. Report by Anne Dafflon Nouvelle. Geneva: University of Geneva.
- \* Guilde des doctorants (2003), *Le Guide du doctorant*, <http://guilde.jeunes-chercheurs.org>.
- \* Herzlich Claudine (2002), *Réussir sa thèse en sciences sociales*, Paris: Nathan.
- \* Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2010), *La formation et la situation professionnelle des titulaires d'un doctorat. Résultats issus des données du Système d'information universitaire suisse et de l'enquête 2007 auprès des personnes nouvellement diplômées*, Neuchâtel: SFSO.
- \* Secrétariat général de la CRUS (2009), *Rapport sur le doctorat 2008. Vue d'ensemble du doctorat en Suisse*, Bern: CRUS.

# BEING VISIBLE

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The quality of the thesis is not the only criterion taken into account in the academic world when judging the skills of a researcher. Doctoral students are also required to be visible.

Thus current practice requires that the doctoral period should also be devoted to publishing articles and participating in colloquiums. However, knowing where and how to present your research is not always that simple, particularly as practices vary from one discipline to another and one journal to another.

## WHERE TO PUBLISH AND WHICH SCIENTIFIC EVENTS TO ATTEND?

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Journals and colloquiums are not all « rated » in the same way. In all disciplines, peer-reviewed journals are more highly regarded than others. In some disciplines, despite the criticism it arouses, the impact factor, which measures the importance of a journal according to quantitative criteria, establishes a hierarchy among journals.

Strictly from the point of view of the academic career, it is advisable to target the best « rated » journals or colloquiums in your discipline, bearing in mind that some of these dissemination channels operate on the basis of co-option and that unsolicited contributions are only rarely accepted. Communicating your research findings to a non-academic audience by publishing in association or scientific popularisation journals and taking part in public debates can be a source of personal gratification, even though these channels have a lesser standing in the eyes of the academic community. This can also help to broaden your network outside the walls of academia and open up career opportunities for those not wishing to pursue an academic career.

In most disciplines, doctoral students are encouraged to take part in international conferences or congresses before they complete their doctoral studies. Such conferences generally include discussion forums particularly intended for doctoral students. It is worth finding out about current practices in your field as soon as you begin your doctorate.

In addition, thesis supervisors often suggest to their doctoral students that they should co-publish an article. Such opportunities should not be missed, as they are a good way of getting known.

Thesis supervisors and more experienced colleagues are very good sources of information regarding ways of making your work more visible. They also know the weight carried by journals and colloquiums/seminars that are likely to accept contributions from doctoral students. However, since professors are not always in precisely the same field as their doctoral students and are thus not necessarily aware of all the networks that may be of interest, you should not hesitate to contact other people to obtain information. It is also useful to subscribe to distribution lists that regularly feature calls for contributions in a particular field or discipline.



### **SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES** //////////////////////////////////////

The doctorate is a chance to make yourself known in the academic world, but also in the professional environment. Take advantage of this period to travel, meet people and present your work.



## SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE TO A PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL FOR THE FIRST TIME

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Each journal has its own particular style, and sometimes a specific field and orientation. It is advisable to check with more experienced colleagues or your thesis supervisor whether the article falls within the field of interest of the journal you are thinking of submitting it to and if it is likely to be accepted.

Every journal has editorial guidelines that must be adhered to and specific procedures for submitting an article and this information can generally be found on the journal's website. To avoid wasting time, it is better to format the article accordingly right from the start.

The thesis supervisor is responsible for assisting doctoral students with the preparation of their first article(s). Advice from colleagues can also be useful.

In the case of peer-reviewed journals, one or more persons are asked to evaluate the submitted contribution. There are then three possible outcomes :

- the article is accepted;
- the article is accepted subject to corrections;
- the article is refused.

The request for corrections is the most frequent outcome. If the article is refused, it is very useful to analyse the readers' report, if possible with the help of your thesis supervisor or colleagues. It may be that the article was not submitted to the right journal. With the necessary corrections, it could probably be submitted elsewhere.



Guilde des doctorants (2003), *Le Guide du doctorant*,  
<http://guilde.jeunes-chercheurs.org>

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF COLLOQUIUMS?

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Colloquiums serve several purposes :

- make your work known ;
- discover the work of others ;
- advance with your work through formal and informal exchanges ;
- expand your scientific dossier ;
- gain experience.

But also (and above all) :

- build and develop your network.

Colloquiums have a scientific dimension and a « social » dimension that should not be neglected as it is often during scheduled intervals (coffee breaks, aperitifs, meals, entertainment) that initial contacts are made with members of a scientific network. For young researchers, it is also a good place to introduce yourself to people you would like to work with at a later date or whom you would like to be a member of your thesis jury. It is actually much easier to approach someone when you can mention a previous meeting.



### PREPARING AN ORAL PRESENTATION FOR THE FIRST TIME

---

There are three key points to bear in mind when preparing a scientific presentation :

- audience ;
- duration ;
- language.

It is important to identify the audience you will be addressing and to adapt the terminology and degree of methodological precision of your presentation accordingly. Experts do not have the same expectations as the « general public » or an interdisciplinary audience.

It is wise to find out from the conference organisers the sequence of events : length of the presentation, any time allocated for a moderator and/or questions or comments from the audience. It is best if you plan to speak for slightly less than the allotted time, particularly when giving a talk in a foreign language.

For a first conference, you must allow sufficient time to prepare your presentation and the increasingly essential back-up material. It is strongly advisable to carefully check the content and graphic layout of presentation aids, to practise stopwatch in hand, and to make your presentation to other researchers before D-day.

 \* *Communiquer à l'aide de présentation orale*, fiche pratique du CSE de l'UNIL, [www.unil.ch/cse](http://www.unil.ch/cse) > ressources et liens

\* Presentation technique for researchers, «Bringing research to the front: Convincing and Meaningful Presentations», [www.snf.ch](http://www.snf.ch) > Services for researchers > Researchers & communication > Presentation technique



## PRESENTING A POSTER, A WAY FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS TO GET KNOWN

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Presenting a poster at a colloquium is a way of making a name for yourself in the scientific community, particularly when your research cannot be communicated orally (innovative or highly specialised research or in-depth investigation of well-known issues). Before the conference, a list of posters and their résumés (or the posters themselves) are published on the website. This allows those attending the conference to select in advance the researchers they would like to make contact with.

Sometimes, there is an introductory session for posters in which each author can very briefly present their own. Time is occasionally set aside to view the posters displayed.



\* *Communiquer à l'aide d'affiches (posters)*, fiche pratique du CSE de l'UNIL, [www.unil.ch/cse](http://www.unil.ch/cse) > ressources et liens

\* Stainier Nadine (2006), *ABC de la communication par poster*, EPFL: Centre de recherche et d'appui pour la formation et ses technologies. <http://craft.epfl.ch> > Teachers > ABC Pedagogy > L'ABC de la communication par poster

OLIVIER AIR  
THESIS PROJECT

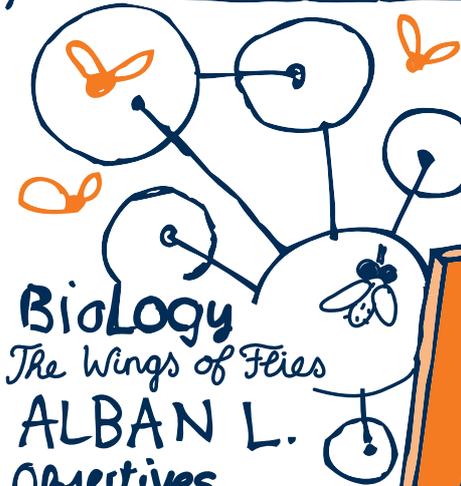
1 ECOLOGY ON ITS WAY UP

2 DEVELOP? YES, BUT!



FRANÇOISE D  
PhD candidate in arts  
Jean-Paul and Simone

OBJECTIVE: RESEARCH:



Biology  
The Wings of Flies  
ALBAN L.  
Objectives

In the Air Flight



archeo

fabulous fossils

CAROLINE B.

UNIL.....

- 1) [lines]
- 2) [lines]
- 3) [lines]

logic

- 4) [lines]
  - 5) [lines]
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# A STAY ABROAD

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**Nowadays it is possible to spend time abroad as part of your doctorate, particularly thanks to an SNSF grant. So why not make the most of this opportunity?**

As well as the personal benefits offered by this experience, it is also an advantage from a professional point of view. If an academic career is planned, mobility is very favourably looked upon. Furthermore, it is an excellent way to forge contacts internationally and thus extend your scientific network. A stay abroad is also a strong point on a CV when applying for a position on the non-academic job market.

To derive maximum benefit from this stay, you should however choose your destination carefully. It is therefore a good idea to seek information beforehand from your thesis supervisor as well as other professors, senior lecturers and lecturers who can also act as intermediaries and facilitate your integration into the new team.

To avoid any unpleasant surprises, you should check your health and accident insurance cover, particularly for stays in the United States or Japan. In addition, SNSF subsidies involve special stipulations concerning tax and social security. Grants for prospective and advanced researchers are non-taxable subsidies. They do not include social security contributions. These special features have important repercussions on your return, particularly regarding taxation and entitlement to unemployment benefit. It is therefore essential to make enquiries before your departure.

# ASSISTANTSHIPS

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## FINDING A JOB

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Announcements of assistantship vacancies are not necessarily communicated on a large scale. Generally vacancies are always published on the universities' websites. However, it may happen that a post is only announced within the faculty concerned.

The internet and word of mouth are therefore excellent sources of information. It is also advisable to discuss the situation without delay with professors and intermediary staff members.



Telejob, the electronic job fair created by the intermediary staff association of the EPFZ (AVETH) and EPFL (ACIDE) publishes advertisements particularly for assistantships:  
**telejob.ch**

Assistantship contracts generally run from August to July and appointments are frequently already decided at the beginning of the year. Research teams are often formed before projects are submitted for funding. Furthermore, in parallel with public advertisements, recruitment also takes place informally in order to hire a particular person. This is especially the case for assistantships where someone who has done a master thesis under the supervision of the professor is recruited.

That is why it is very important, before the end of your studies, to inform professors working in your field of interest, and particularly your master thesis supervisor, that you are interested in an assistantship.

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

The role of assistant comprises service activities, i.e. participation in the teaching and research of the unit to which you are attached, and training activities, in particular the writing of a thesis.

The temporary nature of an assistantship and the obligation to complete a doctoral thesis are characteristics common to all institutions.



### WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

Assistants are required to submit a thesis project within a specified time limit, generally one year.  
Assistantships last for a limited period.

The terms and conditions of appointment vary from one institution to another however.

To give you some idea, the table below summarises the different conditions of employment for assistantships at Latin universities and EPFL when this guide was written. Since this information is subject to rapid change, you should refer to the specific regulations of each university.

University	Duration of employment contract (in years)*	Maximum duration of employment (in years)*		Minimum time assistant can devote to their thesis (pro rata according to the level of activity)
			Minimum level of occupation	
Fribourg	1+2 à 4 (+1)	5 (+1)	100% in principle	50%
Geneva	1+2+2 (+1)	5 (+1)	70% (possible exception first year: 50%)	40%
Lausanne	1 +2 +2 (+1)	5 (+1)	60%	50%
Neuchâtel	1+1 +1+1 (+1)	4 (+1)	50%	50%
USI	1+1+1+1+1	6	60-75%	
EPFL	1 +1 +1 +1	6		

\* The number in brackets indicates the maximum duration of a possible extension. Note that extensions are generally granted on request, under exceptional circumstances and under certain conditions.

Main source of data in table: General Secretariat of the CRUS (2009), *Rapport sur le doctorat 2008. Vue d'ensemble du doctorat en Suisse*, Bern: CRUS. The complete table can be consulted at [releve-academique.ch](http://releve-academique.ch)

Some universities set an age limit for the recruitment of assistants. Enquiries should be made before applying.

## ASSISTANTSHIP AND THESIS WORK: A DELICATE BALANCE

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According to the time of year, thesis work and assistant work can vary in intensity: during the semester, more working time is devoted to the assistantship, whereas between semesters and during the summer more time can be devoted to the thesis.

The terms and conditions are very important insofar as they clarify the rights and obligations of assistants and in particular the time allocation between service activities and thesis preparation.

Experience shows that it is not always easy to separate these activities and that assistants are often obliged to defend the time set aside for the thesis. Assistants must:

- ensure without fail that the supervision of students and tasks assigned by their immediate superior do not impinge on the time allocated for thesis preparation;
- talk to the professor in charge and negotiate terms and conditions if these are not clear.

The chapter *Work, thesis and private life* (page 41) offers more specific advice on how to organise your time.

## PART-TIME WORK: A GOOD SOLUTION?

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Part-time work can offer advantages, such as the possibility of accepting assignments outside the university or maintaining a presence in the non-academic world of work, culture and associations. Such experience is very useful in various ways if you are ultimately looking for a job outside academia.

While part-time work can seem a good idea to leave you time to pursue other activities such as family and domestic commitments, it is however frequently synonymous with precarious working conditions and obstacles to a professional career.

Part-time work has many disadvantages if you are employed as an assistant :

- Because the salary level for assistantships is relatively low, part-time work does not always allow you to manage financially.
- Due to the level of professional commitment required of university researchers, it is very difficult not to exceed your official number of working hours. Working extra hours is standard practice in academic circles. For part-time employees, this ultimately amounts to being underpaid for full-time work.
- Part-time assistants are less visible, have a more limited scientific network and on average publish less than their full-time colleagues. All these factors place them at a disadvantage in terms of an academic career.



Young women hoping to pursue an academic career, and particularly female assistants, occupy part-time posts more frequently than men (SFSO, 2010). From the equal opportunity point of view, units and professors that employ assistants have a role to play in ensuring that full-time posts are not more frequently offered to men, leaving women in the majority when it comes to part-time positions.

## WORK ORGANISATION

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Every university unit or department has its own methods of organisation and generally there are tacit rules governing how things work. The circulation of information among newly recruited assistants is often informal and based on the goodwill of established employees and the fact that the members of a unit are acquainted with these rules and adhere to them greatly affects the working atmosphere. Generally, respect for each individual's rights and obligations is based on trust and if a member of the unit does not fulfil their obligations, this creates additional work for the others.

It is advisable for assistants to :

- tell others which days of the week they are working outside the university ;
- clearly indicate reception hours and adhere to them ;
- adapt their holidays to the academic calendar ;
- ask questions and attend the unit's formal and informal meetings.

Units and professors responsible for recruitment can also help to improve the way in which work is organised :

- by ensuring that information circulates as transparently as possible ;
- by adopting the fairest possible distribution of tasks between assistants.

## SETTLING INTO YOUR WORKPLACE AND DEFENDING YOUR RIGHTS

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Members of the scientific community are expected to play an active part in the life of the university that employs them. When you are a young researcher, it is very important not to underestimate the links that can be forged in the context of activities organised by colleagues, during meetings of your institute, in more informal settings or in faculty committees. People encountered in these frameworks can often facilitate at some point the progress of an academic career.

Furthermore, university policy, research, teaching and the working conditions of academic staff are defined by different bodies. Joining intermediary staff associations (at faculty and university level) is the best way of defending your rights and your point of view with regard to research and teaching in your field. Contact details concerning intermediary staff associations at university level are given in the chapter Assistance.

Many associations and discussion groups are active on the various campuses and also offer debate forums.



## FORGE LINKS //////////////////////////////////////

Associations and contacts between doctoral students provide essential support not only during the writing of the thesis, but also afterwards. Indeed they often facilitate professional integration at the end of the doctorate.

The chapter *Other useful information* (page 60) offers a brief outline of the main bodies of Latin universities and how they work.



\* ACIDUL (2009), *Rapport du Groupe de travail sur les fonctions et statuts à l'Université de Lausanne*.

\* Bureau de l'égalité des chances entre femmes et hommes (2004), *Objectif professeure. Guide pour les femmes tentées par une carrière académique*, Lausanne: UNIL.

\* Commission de l'égalité de la Faculté des sciences économiques et sociales (2008), *Objectif thèse*, Report by Anne Dafflon Nouvelle, Geneva: University of Geneva.

\* Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2010). *Personnel des hautes écoles universitaires 2008*. Neuchâtel: SFSO.

\* Fassa Farinaz, Kradofer Sabine et Paroz Sophie (2008), *Enquête au royaume de Matilda. La relève académique à l'Université de Lausanne*, Lausanne, Genève: PAVIE Working Papers.

# PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY, THESIS AND PRIVATE LIFE

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Reconciling the thesis with professional activity and private life is a major concern for doctoral students and the difficulties are even greater when there are family responsibilities. Some doctoral programmes are for example compulsory and allow little flexibility. Moreover, the obstacles encountered are not the same if you are an assistant, if you are working outside academia, or if you receive a grant.

## THESIS AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

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One of the greatest difficulties encountered by assistants is that of ensuring that student supervision and tasks delegated by their immediate superior do not impinge on the time they are entitled to for thesis work.



### PRACTICAL TIPS

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- prepare a work schedule with your superior that includes certain fixed days of the week devoted solely to the thesis;
- establish specific times when students can call on you in your capacity as assistant and adhere to them;
- do not delay in (re)negotiating terms and conditions that are not respected or are unrealistic;
- at critical times in the thesis, make sure you remain focused and concentrate your attention on activities (colloquiums, publications) that are closely linked to the thesis and enable your work to advance;
- try to work on your thesis away from your workplace as assistant to avoid being interrupted by students, professors, colleagues and telephones.

For those who are financing their doctorate with part-time employment outside academia, reconciling the thesis and professional activity also requires a great deal of organisation and tremendous personal discipline.

It is advisable where possible :

- to establish a rigorous schedule and stick to it ;
- to plan days devoted solely to thesis work ;
- to ensure that you maintain as many links as possible with the institute at which your thesis supervisor is based ;
- to negotiate a degree of flexibility with your employer so that you can take part in colloquiums and attend conferences in your field.

## WRITING YOUR THESIS AT HOME

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Some doctoral students are not dependent, or only partially dependent, on a university. Those working part-time generally write their thesis at home, on days of the week when they are not working.

Time management then becomes crucially important insofar as it is the sole responsibility of the doctoral student. Indeed, while they have more autonomy compared to assistants to plan their working time as they see fit, not being tied to the working hours of a laboratory or section means finding a personal working rhythm that can be maintained over the long term.



### SOME TIPS FOR FINDING YOUR RHYTHM

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- Some doctoral students adopt rituals that allow them to structure their day (meals and coffee breaks at set times, activity X at a certain time of the day, etc.).
- For some people, following « office hours » has proved to be a solution. But trying to stick to such a schedule at all costs can be counterproductive.
- However, being out of phase with the rest of society in the long term can be very depressing. It is therefore a good idea to plan a work schedule that allows you to pursue the social activities you enjoy (meals with friends, community, cultural and leisure activities, etc.).

## THESIS AND PRIVATE LIFE

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It is difficult to refuse to help a friend move house or to cut short an impromptu visit from your grandparents on the pretext that this is the day you planned to work on your thesis. Friends and family often find it hard to imagine the constraints of the doctorate and doctoral students must learn to defend time periods set aside for the thesis as a working period that cannot be encroached upon by other activities.

Doctoral students must ensure that they are not landed with all the family obligations and/or household chores by their spouse, family members or flatmate under the pretext that they « have the time » or « can organise their time as they like ». Due to the traditional one-sided division of labour between couples and more generally within families, and also the social representations concerning this division, it is often more difficult for women than men to safeguard thesis time in the face of conflicting demands.

While the time you devote to your doctoral studies must be strenuously protected, it is on the other hand very important not to let the thesis completely take over your life. Giving up certain things (leisure, holidays, outings, reading) is a trap that any doctoral student is likely to fall into, particularly during the most stressful phases of the thesis. It is however better to give yourself time to recharge your batteries both for the sake of your health and also to avoid getting too bogged down in your thesis.



### STRIKE A BALANCE //////////////////////////////////////

When confronted with requests from your family and friends, it is important to defend the time you devote to your thesis. On the other hand, the thesis must not impinge on leisure time !

## THESIS AND CHILDREN

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Doctoral students who are about to become parents or have dependents have certain rights if they are contracted to a university.

Equal opportunities offices and human resources departments can provide information on maternity, parental or paternity leave and maternity rights.

Every university generally operates a day nursery, although places are still in short supply and you have to book them well in advance. There are other facilities offered, as well as the possibility of subsidies for families with modest incomes, on which equal opportunities offices at universities can provide information.

“

*« I discussed it a lot with my companion. He understood that a thesis is a full-time job, even if I often work at home. We organised things so that we shared the domestic chores, and we made sure that the obligations are fairly distributed! »*

Maria



### CHILDCARE AT LATIN UNIVERSITIES AND EPFL

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**EPFL and the UNIL** have three day nurseries and a nursery school operated on a joint basis.

[egalite.epfl.ch](http://egalite.epfl.ch) > Reconcile family life and professional activity

[www.unil.ch/egalite](http://www.unil.ch/egalite) > Maternité / Paternité > Accueil de l'enfance

#### **EVE childcare facilities for the Geneva university sector**

The EVE facilities for the university sector are childcare centres based on three sites and managed by an association.

<http://eve.unige.ch>

#### **Day nursery at the University of Fribourg**

The day nursery caters to children from the age of four months to nursery school age. 40 places are available.

[www.crecheuni.ch](http://www.crecheuni.ch)

#### **Crèche Vanille-Fraise at the University of Neuchâtel**

A childcare centre for babies and children of up to five years of age.

[www.unine.ch](http://www.unine.ch) > Crèche Vanille-Fraise

**The USI does not have its own day nursery**, but does have places reserved in cantonal day nurseries.

[www.gender.usi.ch](http://www.gender.usi.ch) > Attività > Conciliazione famiglia-lavoro > Asili nido e cura dei bambini all'USI

# THE DIFFICULTIES : STRESS, OVERWORK

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According to *Le Guide du doctorant* of the *Guilde des jeunes chercheurs*, three situations can result in stress and possible burn-out during the doctorate :

## CONFLICTING PRIORITIES

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This occurs when someone has multiple activities that seem irreconcilable and they are unable to establish priorities (for example between supervising students and writing the thesis).

## LACK OF A CLEARLY DEFINED ROLE

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This occurs when a person feels that they are receiving insufficient supervision and cannot see what is expected of them. In time, a loss of self-confidence can result (for example, when the expectations of the thesis supervisor are unclear).

## OVERWORK

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This occurs when a person is increasingly in demand and cannot say no. They eventually collapse under the strain of overwork (for example when there is too much pressure to publish, too much student supervision).

## MANAGEMENT OF THE SITUATION

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Everyone has different ways of coping with stress. However, there are stress management techniques that anyone can learn.

To manage a stressful situation, the first thing to do is step back in order to :

- target objectives ;
- seek information ;
- establish a plan of action ;
- seek support and advice.

## PREPARING FOR THE SITUATION

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Any doctoral student or person at the start of their career practises this technique «without knowing it», and this is particularly the case when explaining the results of your research to your colleagues, teaching, preparing communications, etc. Stress generally diminishes with practice and communication.

## TAKE A BREAK FROM THE STRESSFUL SITUATION

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You need to know when to take a break and maintain your network of relationships with family and friends, which can often provide just the breath of fresh air you need when in a stressful situation.

Sometimes, stress persists. Health specialists emphasise that you should not underestimate certain symptoms such as insomnia, anxiety, etc. and blame yourself. It is better to talk things through frankly with your supervisor and colleagues and take some time out. If the situation persists, do not hesitate to consult a doctor or therapist.



### TAKE BREAKS //

Setting your thesis aside for a while enables you to take your mind off it and return to it with renewed energy. Take time for activities not related to the thesis in order to keep motivated!



*«I don't take anything home with me in the evening: no articles, no analyses of results, nothing. I relax, go out with friends, I don't think about the lab at all!»*

Anne-Catherine



## TO OBTAIN SUPPORT

### **EPFL**

Psychotherapeutic consultation  
[sae.epfl.ch/psy](http://sae.epfl.ch/psy)

### **University of Fribourg**

Psychological advice  
[www.unifr.ch/cpe](http://www.unifr.ch/cpe)

### **University of Geneva**

Psychological advice centre  
[www.unige.ch](http://www.unige.ch) > Services aux étudiants > Conseil psychologique

### **University of Lausanne**

Psychotherapeutic consultation  
[www.unil.ch/sasc](http://www.unil.ch/sasc) > Soutien psychothérapique

### **University of Neuchâtel**

*Guichet psychologique*  
[www.unine.ch](http://www.unine.ch) > Pour les étudiants > A votre service > Guichet psychologique

### **Università della Svizzera italiana**

Various support services  
[www.usi.ch](http://www.usi.ch) > Ateneo > Servizi



Guilde des doctorants (2003), *Le Guide du doctorant*,  
<http://guilde.jeunes-chercheurs.org>

# WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF CONFLICT, PSYCHOLOGICAL OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT ?

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**Sexual harassment** in the workplace is a form of discrimination based on gender. Sexual harassment is imposed behaviour resulting from a power-based relationship. It is therefore not to be confused with relationships based on seduction, which involve reciprocity.

*« Discriminatory behaviour means any importunate behaviour of a sexual character or any other behaviour based on sexual appropriation which undermines personal dignity at the place of work, particularly making threats, promising advantages, imposing constraints or exerting pressure of any kind on a person with a view to obtaining from them favours of a sexual nature. »*

Federal law on gender equality, article 4.

**Psychological harassment or mobbing** is characterised by different forms of hostile behaviour exhibited by one or more individuals seeking to undermine an employee or make them feel inferior consistently or repeatedly over a period of several months.

Even though its manifestations can be different, psychological harassment nearly always has at its root an unresolved conflict. This **conflict** may stem from a divergence of views, rivalry, an endeavour to influence, power struggles, etc. That is why, in the event of conflict, action must be taken quickly. Indeed, the longer it goes on, the more the working atmosphere deteriorates and the more difficult it is to re-establish a situation of trust.

If you feel you are being psychologically harassed (mobbed), sexually harassed or are experiencing a conflict situation with no resolution in sight, it is essential to keep a careful record of all incidents of victimisation, noting the person responsible, date, time, place, facts, what was said, and witnesses if any.

It is advisable to try and explain your feelings clearly, without being aggressive, to the person whose actions you perceive as hostile. However, it is not always possible to do this and it may be that the person does not listen or want to listen. In every

Latin university, there are authorities than can be contacted in cases of conflict, mobbing, psychological or sexual harassment and that can provide information concerning possible action and support. Trade unions and staff associations can also provide information and assistance in such procedures.



**TALK ABOUT IT** //////////////////////////////////////  
Talking about your situation enables you to obtain advice, support or even concrete opportunities. Likewise, by listening to your peers, you will be better equipped to deal with any future difficulties.



**EPFL**  
Mediation  
(HELP)  
<http://help.epfl.ch>

**University of Fribourg**  
Office for Gender Equality  
[www.unifr.ch/fem](http://www.unifr.ch/fem)  
*Service social*  
[www.unifr.ch/social](http://www.unifr.ch/social)

**University of Geneva**  
Human Resources Division  
[www.unige.ch](http://www.unige.ch) > Enseignants et collaborateurs  
> Ressources Humaines  
> Politique de gestion des conflits

**University of Lausanne**  
DialogUNIL  
[www.unil.ch/dialog](http://www.unil.ch/dialog)

**University of Neuchâtel**  
Internal contact group  
and external mediator  
[www.unine.ch/conflits](http://www.unine.ch/conflits)

**Università della Svizzera italiana**  
Equal Opportunities Service  
[gender.usi.ch](http://gender.usi.ch)



\* « *Harcèlement sexuel et harcèlement psychologique (mobbing)* », *Guide social romand*, fiche 106, [www.guidesocial.ch/fr/fiche/106](http://www.guidesocial.ch/fr/fiche/106).

\* State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (2005), *Mobbing. Description et aspects légaux*, Bern: SECO.

\* Federal Office for Gender Equality and State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (2007), *Harcèlement sexuel sur le lieu de travail. Conseils destinés aux employées et employés*, Bern: BFEG & SECO.

\* Hirigoyen Marie-France (2001), *Malaise dans le travail, harcèlement moral: démêler le vrai du faux*, Paris: Ed. de La Découverte et Syros.

\* [www.non-c-non.ch](http://www.non-c-non.ch): information website on sexual harassment in the workplace.

# AFTER THE THESIS

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Only a minority of PhD holders go on to pursue an academic career. Therefore, since the Bologna reforms, the question of the employability of university graduates and PhD holders has become a key political issue.

Transversal or transferable skills lie at the heart of the debate. These are skills acquired during doctoral training that are useful both for an academic career and employment on the non-academic job market.

 **PLAN LIFE AFTER THE THESIS** //////////////////////////////////////  
It is advisable not to wait until your thesis is finished to reflect on what you will do afterwards, but to gather information, even attend a course or workshop with a view to acquiring new skills depending on your career plans. If you opt for an academic career, a postdoctoral position also requires lengthy preparation.

 **TO HELP YOU**

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Today there is a range of services to help doctoral students to:

- «choose» between an academic career and the non-academic job market (skills assessment, career guidance interviews, etc.);
- highlight the value of skills acquired during the doctorate on the job market, but also in the context of a future academic career;
- acquire new transversal skills such as project management, communication skills, etc. that are useful on both the academic and non-academic job markets.

For more information about these services, see the chapter *Assistance*. (page 66).

Telejob, the electronic job fair created by the intermediary staff association of the EPFZ (AVETH) and EPFL (ACIDE) publishes advertisements of particular interest to graduates in all fields: [telejob.ch](http://telejob.ch)



\* *Bureaux de l'égalité des hautes écoles universitaires de la Suisse latine (2013), Beyond the doctorate. Guide for advanced doctoral and postdoctoral students, , Lausanne: BuLa.*

\* Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2010), *La formation et la situation professionnelle des titulaires d'un doctorat. Résultats issus des données du Système d'information universitaire suisse et de l'enquête 2007 auprès des personnes nouvellement diplômées*, Neuchâtel: OFS.

\* *Portal for young academics, with forum available:*

**[www.young-academics.ch](http://www.young-academics.ch)**  
**[forum.young-academics.ch](http://forum.young-academics.ch)**

\* The CUSO *programme transversal de développement des compétences génériques* offers workshops for developing skills and preparing your integration into the professional world:

**[competences.cuso.ch](http://competences.cuso.ch)**

# THE ACADEMIC CAREER PATH: THE MAIN STAGES

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Working for a living at a university is a project envisaged by many doctoral students. However, posts available on the academic job market are thin on the ground and recruitment processes demanding. To maximise your chances, it is useful to know the different stages of the academic career as well as the main recruitment criteria of universities.

## THE MAIN ACADEMIC POSITIONS

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Even though atypical careers do exist, the ideal academic career is conceived as a series of university appointments that lead from an assistantship to higher intermediary staff posts, and then to professorships.

Positions between the assistantship and professorship take the form of a multitude of hierarchical functions. The nomenclature may vary from one institution to another and posts less well known than those mentioned below exist, particularly at the University of Geneva. The best way of getting a clear idea of the situation is to visit different university websites.

**INTERMEDIARY STAFF** includes the following main positions:

- assistant
- junior lecturer, doctoral assistant or postdoctoral researcher
- lecturer
- senior lecturer

Except for senior lecturer posts, these positions are offered on a fixed-term basis and options to renew them are limited. Appointment criteria and working conditions differ from one institution to another.

**PROFESSORSHIPS** include the following main positions:

- SNSF professor
- assistant professor
- associate professor
- full professor

The posts of full professor and associate professor are permanent. Contracts reaching expiry are generally renewed after evaluation of the post holder's activity.

Assistant professor posts are fixed-term posts and cannot be renewed beyond a certain time limit that varies in accordance with the institution.

Assistant professor posts can be offered on a tenure-track basis. Tenure track gives an assistant professor the chance to obtain a stable professorship after a certain number of years provided that their scientific dossier receives a positive evaluation.

In addition to these positions, other research-related posts exist at universities and EPFL. These include for example SNSF junior or senior researchers and external scientific staff. These posts are often financed by funds outside universities or EPFL (the SNSF for example) and the conditions and rules of the funding source apply. As a result, there may be different employment terms for two similar academic posts.

Not all of these different positions, in which conditions and length of appointment, remuneration, working conditions and possibilities of advancement in the academic career differ according to institution, offer the same possibilities for fulfilling the formal and informal criteria that enable individuals to climb the professorial ladder. Those pursuing an academic career are therefore advised to carefully evaluate the conditions offered by each post: balance between research, teaching and administrative tasks, length of the appointment, possibility and terms of contract renewal, etc. The level of activity (full-time, part-time) also plays a very important role.

## UNIVERSITY RECRUITMENT CRITERIA

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Candidates for professorial posts and higher intermediary staff positions are evaluated on the basis of their scientific dossier and a certain number of criteria commonly recognised in academic circles as being those of « scientific excellence ». To meet the criteria of excellence, researchers must develop their scientific dossiers throughout their career by undertaking activities in the following fields :

### RESEARCH

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Research lies at the heart of the scientific dossier. Publications play a central role in the evaluation of a candidate's research activities. The quantity of publications is important. However, it is above all the prestige of the journals in which candidates have published that is taken into account in the assessment (peer-reviewed journals, national or international journals).



### EVALUATION OF THE PUBLICATION

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Despite the criticism they arouse, bibliometric and scientometric instruments are increasingly used to measure the importance of a journal. There are different classifications of journals according to the fields. The best known of these instruments is the impact factor. Calculated by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), a private company, it measures the average frequency with which all articles in a journal are cited over a given period of time. This quantitative indicator serves as a reference in several disciplines. Because of the virtual US monopoly of such instruments, Anglo-Saxon journals are generally the most highly rated. Therefore, publishing and presenting your research results in English has become a prime condition for pursuing an academic career.

In addition, single-track scientific dossiers are increasingly frowned upon. Open-mindedness regarding related topics and interdisciplinarity are assets.

### TEACHING

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When applying for professorial posts, teaching is evaluated on the basis of a trial lesson before an audience of peers and students, and a dossier showing details of all university courses taught. The ability to certify university teaching activities is a real plus when applying for a professorial post. It is therefore advisable to take every opportunity to give courses or conduct a seminar during the doctoral period and to build up a teaching dossier.

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

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The existence of a large scientific network through which candidates can raise the profile of their research beyond the institution in which they are applying for a post is a crucial criterion. Therefore, even if it is not always mentioned explicitly, much store is set by geographical mobility. Candidates must generally show that they have spent time at another university, if possible a well-known one, which has resulted in postdoctoral research leading to publications.

## INTEGRATION WITHIN THE FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY AND THE ABILITY TO MANAGE AND ACQUIRE THIRD-PARTY FUNDS

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Involvement in faculty life, the ability to assume team management and administrative responsibilities and to collaborate with other members of the university community are other qualities expected of candidates. Success in obtaining external funding is a decisive criterion for obtaining a post.



### SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE: A NEUTRAL CONCEPT ?

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Three studies have analysed the criteria of scientific excellence from the perspective of equal opportunities between men and women\*. On the basis of different domains, they show that scientific excellence criteria also reflect a tacit expectation, namely that of demonstrating commitment to «a true vocation». For doctoral students, this means having to comply with certain standards but also being subjected to a whole series of symbolic practices that display their desire and ability to become researchers with a scientific future. Thus, a promising researcher must show that they are prepared to move, if necessary to the other side of the world, become involved in committees and councils, and work weekends to build up their scientific dossier.

Within the frame of reference of the academic world, family life and involvement in associations or cultural activities are still perceived as potential obstacles to a promising career, particularly for women. Indeed, while being a parent is never seen as something that could interfere with the scientific commitment of a man, it is still often the case for women researchers, regardless of whether or not this features in their plans. The consequences of this «virtual danger» are however only too real. Even today, women are put under more pressure and receive less support than men in their careers.

Given the risk posed by these symbolic barriers in terms of forcing female doctoral students to abandon their career plans, the support of the thesis supervisor is very important. Networks, both formal (for example mentoring programmes proposed by equal opportunities offices) and informal (exchanges between doctoral students, associations and groups active on the campus depending on your interests) are also important forms of support.

- \* Beaufaÿs Sandra et Kraiss Beate (2005), « Femmes dans les carrières scientifiques en Allemagne: les mécanismes cachés du pouvoir », *Travail, genre et sociétés*, n° 14, Paris, pp. 49-68.
- \* Fassa Farinaz, Kradolfer Sabine et Paroz Sophie (2008), *Enquête au royaume de Matilda. La relève académique à l'Université de Lausanne*, Lausanne, Genève: PAVIE Working Papers, n° 1.
- \* Leemann Regula Julia et Stutz Heidi (2008), *Geschlecht und Forschungsförderung (GEFO), Synthesebericht*, Bern: FNS.



- \* ACIDUL (2009), *Rapport du Groupe de travail sur les fonctions et statuts à l'Université de Lausanne*.
- \* Bureau de l'égalité des chances entre femmes et hommes (2004), *Objectif professeure. Guide pour les femmes tentées par une carrière académique*, Lausanne: UNIL.
- \* Marry Catherine et Jonas Irène (2005), « Chercheuses entre deux passions. L'exemple des biologistes ». *Travail, genre et sociétés*, n° 14, Paris, pp. 69-88.
- \* Servizio gender (2006), *Pari opportunità nei percorsi accademici. Risorse, possibilità, ostacoli e traguardi nella costruzione della carriera universitaria*, Lugano: USI.

## FINDING A JOB AT A LATIN UNIVERSITY OR EPFL

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Vacancies for professor, senior lecturer and lecturer posts are generally announced publicly. The advertisements appear on university websites.

The appointment procedure (stages, composition of appointments committees, appointing authority, etc.) varies according to posts, institutions and faculties.

### EPFL

Vacancies for scientific staff are published at : <http://emploi.epfl.ch/en>

Professorships and the regulations governing their appointment procedure can be found at :

<http://professeurs.epfl.ch>

### UNIFR

Vacancies are announced on each faculty's website.

The directives of 17 February 2003 concerning structural committees and the appointment of faculty members establish the framework of the appointment procedure: [www.unifr.ch](http://www.unifr.ch) > L'Université > Règlements – Bases légales > Membres de la communauté universitaire

### UNIGE

A list of vacancies and the main regulations concerning the appointment procedure are published by the Human Resources Division

[www.unige.ch](http://www.unige.ch) > Offres d'emploi

### UNIL

Posts available at the University of Lausanne are advertised at :

[www.unil.ch](http://www.unil.ch) > Une carrière à l'UNIL ?

The directives concerning appointment procedures are published at :

[www.unil.ch](http://www.unil.ch) > UNIL interne > Documents - Formulaires > Textes légaux

> Directives internes de l'UNIL

### UNINE

Vacancies for academic staff are announced on the websites of the faculties and/or institutes concerned.

A summary of the regulations concerning the appointment of professors is published at : [www.unine.ch](http://www.unine.ch) > Pour les collaborateurs > Ressources humaines

> Service des RH > Emplois

## USI

Vacancies are advertised at : [www.usi.ch](http://www.usi.ch) > Percorso > Personale accademico e staff > Concorsi e offerte di lavoro all'USI.

The appointment procedure is established by the « *Procedure e criteri per la promozione e l'immissione in ruolo* » : [www.usi.ch](http://www.usi.ch) > Percorso > Personale accademico e staff > Documenti Ufficiali > Leggi e regolamenti.



# OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

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Getting involved in the life of the scientific community calls for a good knowledge of the main university policy makers nationally, regionally and within the institution, and also of the different regulations governing university staff. This chapter is intended more specifically for doctoral students who have not studied in Switzerland and who would like a brief introduction to the Swiss academic landscape and the way in which universities work.

## SWISS UNIVERSITIES (HEU)

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Swiss universities comprise the TEN CANTONAL UNIVERSITIES and the TWO FEDERAL INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY (EPF). Their main tasks are teaching, research and service provision. They offer bachelor and master degree programmes in all disciplines and are the only higher education establishments entitled to award doctorates. Some institutions focus on flagship disciplines.

The universities have developed in a decentralised manner and are regulated at cantonal level. The two Federal Institutes of Technology are regulated by federal law. The cantons and the Confederation have nonetheless given the universities a great deal of academic, financial and organisational freedom as far as budget is concerned.

Despite the federalism and autonomy granted to universities, the Confederation plays an important role, firstly through subsidies granted to the cantonal universities and also in the joint management and coordination of higher education, a role formally conferred upon it by the new constitutional article on education accepted by popular vote in 2006.

## UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES (HES) AND UNIVERSITIES OF TEACHER EDUCATION (HEP)

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Universities of Applied Sciences (HES) and Universities of Teacher Education (HEP) are tertiary level practically oriented training and research establishments.

**SWITZERLAND'S SEVEN UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES** are organised on a cantonal or regional basis and are active in the following fields: engineering and information technology, architecture, construction and planning, economics and services, design, health, social work, music, stage and other arts, applied psychology, applied linguistics and sports. Their mission is practice-based teaching (to bachelor and in some subjects master level), applied research and development and continuing education. In addition, they are service providers and collaborate with teaching and research partners in Switzerland and abroad.

The fields of activity of the **FOURTEEN UNIVERSITIES OF TEACHER EDUCATION** are teacher training for pre-school, primary and secondary levels, as well as professions in the field of specialist teacher training. Their mission is degree and continuing education, research and development, and service provision.

## THE «WHO'S WHO» OF RESEARCH POLICY AND FUNDING

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### DECISION-MAKING BODIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

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THE STATE SECRETARIAT FOR EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND INNOVATION (SERI) is the competent authority of the Confederation for national and international matters concerning education in general, university training, research and the space industry. [www.sbf.admin.ch](http://www.sbf.admin.ch)

THE SWISS UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE (CUS) is the joint body of the Confederation and cantons for collaboration in the field of university policy.

[www.cus.ch](http://www.cus.ch)

THE RECTORS' CONFERENCE OF SWISS UNIVERSITIES (CRUS) represents all Swiss universities in dealings with political authorities, economic circles, social and cultural institutions and the public. [www.crus.ch](http://www.crus.ch)

The EPF Board (CEPF) is the strategic management and supervisory body for Federal Institutes of Technology. [www.ethrat.ch](http://www.ethrat.ch)

SWISSUNIVERSITIES is the joint body of the rector's conferences of the HEU, HES and HEP. [www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch)

### COORDINATION IN FRENCH-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND

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THE UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE OF WESTERN SWITZERLAND (CUSO) is the umbrella institution for Swiss French-speaking universities. Mandated by its members, the CUSO also acts directly by financing and organising joint teaching programmes, mainly at doctoral level. [www.cuso.ch](http://www.cuso.ch)

### THE MAIN ASSOCIATIVE BODIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

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THE SWISS NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS (UNES) represents the interests of students in Switzerland. It coordinates its members' claims and participates in national and international committees.

[www.vss-unes.ch](http://www.vss-unes.ch)

**ACTIONUNI** is the Swiss association of researchers, representing the next generation of scientists and intermediary staff associations at universities and Federal Institutes of Technology at Swiss and international levels.

[www.actionuni.ch](http://www.actionuni.ch)

**LA CONFÉRENCE DES DÉLÉGUÉ·E·S À L'ÉGALITÉ AUPRÈS DES UNIVERSITÉS ET HAUTES ÉCOLES SUISSES (CODEFUHES)** is charged with promoting equality of opportunity among men and women in the academic world. It has an authoritative voice in the realm of equality and education policy both nationally and internationally.

[www.kofrah-codefuhes.ch](http://www.kofrah-codefuhes.ch)

## THE MAIN RESEARCH FUNDING BODIES

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**THE SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (SNSF)** is the main institution that encourages scientific research in Switzerland.

Mandated by the Confederation, the SNSF, a private foundation, finances research projects and allocates grants and subsidies. The main activity of the SNSF is to assess the scientific quality of project applications submitted by researchers. Selected projects receive financial support from the SNSF.

[www.snf.ch](http://www.snf.ch)

## EACH UNIVERSITY OFFERS FINANCING POSSIBILITIES

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### UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG

[www.unifr.ch](http://www.unifr.ch) > Research

### UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

[www.unige.ch](http://www.unige.ch) > Professor / Researcher > Research

### UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE

[www.unil.ch/researcher](http://www.unil.ch/researcher)

Base de données Amarillo: [www.unil.ch/amarillo](http://www.unil.ch/amarillo)

### EPF LAUSANNE (EPFL)

<http://research-office.epfl.ch>

### UNIVERSITÀ DELLA SVIZZERA ITALIANA

[www.ticinoricerca.ch](http://www.ticinoricerca.ch)

## PRIVATE FUNDS AND FOUNDATIONS ALSO OFFER RESEARCH FUNDING:

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**DIRECTORY OF NON-PROFIT-MAKING FOUNDATIONS** placed under federal supervision :

<http://www.edi.admin.ch/esv> > Répertoire des fondations

**LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SWISS GRANT-MAKING FOUNDATIONS** (Swiss Foundations):

<http://www.swissfoundations.ch/> > Membres

**EUROPEAN UNION RESEARCH PROGRAMMES** enable Swiss researchers to participate in European projects and programmes. The Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013) will be followed by the new European programme « Horizon 2020 » (2014-2020).

<http://ec.europa.eu/research> > Funding & Careers

## HOW UNIVERSITIES WORK

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As a result of the federal system, the autonomy granted and the distribution of responsibilities between political authorities and universities vary according to canton.

University organisation is complex insofar as they are structured into faculties, which are subdivided into research and teaching units and administrative services. Administrative units are also attached to the management/rectorate. There are also various authorities and committees, some of which are independent.

University policy, research and teaching are therefore formulated by different bodies that do not have the same competences. Generally, the main trends of university policy and the functioning of universities are the responsibility of central bodies. Teaching and research are organised by the faculties, which must however adhere to the general framework established at central level. Some matters are also debated and decided at research unit level.

## THE MAIN BODIES AT CENTRAL AND FACULTY LEVELS

	CENTRAL BODIES	FACULTY BODIES
<b>EPFL</b>	Direction EPFL Assembly	School Direction School Council
<b>UNIFR</b>	Rectorate Senate Plenary Assembly of the Appeals Commission	Deanship Faculty Council
<b>UNIGE</b>	Rectorate Rectorate-Deanship Council University Assembly External Auditing Body	Deanship Consultative Council Council of Professors
<b>UNINE</b>	Rectorate University Council Senate	Deanship Faculty Council Council of Professors
<b>UNIL</b>	Rectorate University Council	Deanship Faculty Council
<b>USI</b>	Rectorate University Council	Deanship Faculty Board

The different members of the university community (professors, intermediary staff, students, administrative and technical staff) are represented in the deliberative bodies of the university and faculties.

## WHERE TO FIND THE MAIN REGULATIONS CONCERNING ACADEMIC STAFF

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**EPFL** Electronic compendium of EPFL laws, ordinances, regulations and directives  
<http://polylex.epfl.ch>

**UNIGE** *Memento administratif de l'Université de Genève*  
[www.unige.ch/memento](http://www.unige.ch/memento)

**UNIFR** [www.unifr.ch](http://www.unifr.ch) > L'Université > Rectorat > Bases légales > Règlements

**UNIL** [www.unil.ch](http://www.unil.ch) > UNIL interne > Documents - Formulaires > Textes légaux

**UNINE** [www.unine.ch](http://www.unine.ch) > Direction et services > Affaires juridiques  
> Lois et règlements de l'UniNE

**USI** [www.usi.ch](http://www.usi.ch) > Ateneo > Documenti ufficiali > Leggi e regolamenti  
dell'Università della Svizzera italiana

# ASSISTANCE

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## MAKE THE MOST OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES //////////////////////////////////////

Numerous programmes, workshops and associations, as well as equal opportunities offices, are available to doctoral students to facilitate their integration and support them in their thesis work. Don't hesitate to ask them for help!

## DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

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Many doctoral schools are organised within the framework of Latin universities and the CUSO. They offer supervision of doctoral students via a wide range of training courses such as methodological seminars or writing workshops. In some faculties and at EPFL, doctoral studies are based on doctoral programmes and attendance at a doctoral school is compulsory.

As well as the methodological training offered by doctoral schools, attendance also gives you an opportunity to meet your peers and report regularly on the progress of your work. « Informal » information is also circulated (grants, recruitment procedures, etc.).

## TO FIND A DOCTORAL SCHOOL

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### UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE OF WESTERN SWITZERLAND

[www.cuso.ch](http://www.cuso.ch) > Programmes doctoraux

**EPFL** <http://phd.epfl.ch>

**UNIFR** [www.unifr.ch](http://www.unifr.ch) > Organisation of studies > PHD Studies

**UNIGE** [www.unige.ch](http://www.unige.ch) > Enseignants et collaborateurs > Recherche > Formation doctorale

**UNIL** [www.unil.ch](http://www.unil.ch) > Researchers > PhD Students > During > Doctoral Programmes

**UNINE** [www.unine.ch](http://www.unine.ch) > Formation > Doctorat

**USI** [www.usi.ch](http://www.usi.ch) > Didattica > Dottorato



## THE CUSO DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

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Programmes supported by the CUSO are common to member universities. Organised by discipline or major field, they are automatically open to doctoral students studying in their respective fields. The activities they offer include scientific investigation and transferable methods and skills. Particular emphasis is placed on the socialisation of doctoral students and the formation of scientific communities. They do not offer grants or salaries but reimburse a large proportion of travel expenses, meal costs and possibly accommodation according to the activities proposed. The programme management committees include doctoral student representatives. Students enrol directly with those responsible for the chosen programme.



[www.cuso.ch](http://www.cuso.ch)

## MENTORING

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Equal opportunities offices at Latin universities offer several mentoring programmes free of charge for researchers at the universities concerned.

The StartingDoc programme is a group mentoring programme for women starting their PhD. It focuses on the key moment of starting a thesis project.

[www.unil.ch/mentoring](http://www.unil.ch/mentoring)

REGARD workshops for future women academics deal in particular with the thesis (methodology, oral examination), visibility of scientific work (publications, communication techniques, networking) as well as the preparation of job applications (portfolio, academic CV, appointment procedures).

[www.unifr.ch/regard](http://www.unifr.ch/regard)

The *Réseau romand de mentorat pour femmes* offers an individual mentoring programme for women, backed up by broad-based meetings designed to increase contacts and exchanges. It is targeted more towards women at an advanced stage of their doctorate.

[www.unifr.ch/f-mentoring](http://www.unifr.ch/f-mentoring)

Other mentoring programmes exist within universities – see equal opportunities office websites.

## RCFE WORKSHOPS

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The *Réseau romand de conseil, formation et évaluation pour l'enseignement universitaire* (RCFE) offers personalised advice and a programme of workshops for assistants.

[www.rcfe.ch](http://www.rcfe.ch)

Other possibilities include courses, seminars and colloquiums intended specifically for doctoral students or summer schools. These allow students to acquire specialist scientific knowledge, increase their methodological knowledge and extend their network. Distribution lists, associations and networks in your field are good sources of information regarding these options.

## PEER SUPPORT

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In addition to training courses and workshops proposed by institutions, informal contacts with other doctoral students are a valuable source of assistance.

The possibilities for discussion and work are many: creation of informal seminars based on a particular topic, reciprocal rereading of texts before they are shown to the thesis supervisor or of articles prior to submission to a journal, sharing of bibliographic searches between doctoral students in the same department, etc.

Experience shows that these informal links constitute essential forms of support throughout the thesis and for a long time afterwards. Indeed they are often at the origin of professional collaboration after the doctorate.

Young academics portal : [www.young-academics.ch](http://www.young-academics.ch) with discussion forum : [forum.young-academics.ch](http://forum.young-academics.ch)

“

*« I try not to isolate myself too much and to share my experiences with other colleagues doing their thesis. This helps me to move forward and not feel alone ! »*

Sophia

## INTERMEDIARY STAFF ASSOCIATIONS

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Lastly, intermediary staff associations in every university and/or faculty offer valuable resources and advice to their members, as well as help in ensuring that their rights are upheld.

### ACIDE

Intermediary staff association of EPFL  
[acide.epfl.ch](http://acide.epfl.ch)

### ACIDUL

Intermediary and doctoral staff association of the University of Lausanne  
[www.unil.ch/acidul](http://www.unil.ch/acidul)

### ACINE

Intermediary staff association of the University of Neuchâtel  
[www.unine.ch/acine](http://www.unine.ch/acine)

### APCINT

Intermediary staff association of the University of Geneva  
[www.apcint.ch](http://www.apcint.ch)

### CSWM

Scientific employees of the University of Fribourg  
[www.unifr.ch/csww](http://www.unifr.ch/csww)

The intermediary staff of the USI meet on a faculty basis only.



## USEFUL ADDRESSES

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### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OFFICES AT UNIVERSITIES

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#### **EPFL**

Equal Opportunities Office  
<http://egalite.epfl.ch>  
[farnaz.moser@epfl.ch](mailto:farnaz.moser@epfl.ch)

#### **UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA**

Equal Opportunities Office  
[www.unige.ch/egalite](http://www.unige.ch/egalite)  
[egalite@unige.ch](mailto:egalite@unige.ch)

#### **UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE**

DialogUNIL  
[www.unil.ch/dialog](http://www.unil.ch/dialog)  
Equal Opportunities Office  
[www.unil.ch/egalite](http://www.unil.ch/egalite)  
[egalite@unil.ch](mailto:egalite@unil.ch)

#### **UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG**

Equal Opportunities Office  
[www.unifr.ch/egalite](http://www.unifr.ch/egalite)  
[egalite@unifr.ch](mailto:egalite@unifr.ch)

#### **UNIVERSITY OF NEUCHÂTEL**

Equal Opportunities Office  
[www.unine.ch/egalite](http://www.unine.ch/egalite)  
[egalite.chance@unine.ch](mailto:egalite.chance@unine.ch)

#### **UNIVERSITÀ DELLA SVIZZERA ITALIANA**

Equal Opportunities Service  
[www.equality.usi.ch](http://www.equality.usi.ch)  
[equality@usi.ch](mailto:equality@usi.ch)

#### **CONFÉRENCE DES DÉLÉGUÉ·E·S À L'ÉGALITÉ AUPRÈS DES UNIVERSITÉS ET HAUTES ÉCOLES SUISSES KOFRAH-CODEFUHES**

[www.kofrah-codefuhes.ch](http://www.kofrah-codefuhes.ch)

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN SWITZERLAND**

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### **SWISS CONFERENCE OF GENDER EQUALITY DELEGATES**

This comprises the official services and offices responsible for promoting equal opportunities at Confederation, cantonal and city levels.

All useful addresses are published on its portal.

[www.equality.ch](http://www.equality.ch)

### **FEDERAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES (FCWI)**

This is the extra-parliamentary commission of the Confederation. It analyses the condition of women in Switzerland and works to promote gender equality.

[www.ekf.admin.ch](http://www.ekf.admin.ch)

## **ASSOCIATIONS AND NETWORKS OF WOMEN IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE AND RESEARCH**

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### **FEMDAT**

Swiss database for experts in different scientific and professional fields

[www.femdat.ch](http://www.femdat.ch)

### **GENDER CAMPUS**

Information and communication platform for gender and equal opportunities studies in universities and universities of applied sciences in Switzerland and the Gendercampus/LIEGE network

[www.gendercampus.ch](http://www.gendercampus.ch)

**ASSOCIATION SUISSE DES FEMMES DIPLÔMÉES DES UNIVERSITÉS**

[www.unifemmes.ch](http://www.unifemmes.ch)

**ASSOCIATION SUISSE FEMMES FÉMINISME RECHERCHE**

[www.femwiss.ch](http://www.femwiss.ch)

**SWISS ASSOCIATION FOR GENDER STUDIES SSEG**

[www.gendercampus.ch/en/sggf/about](http://www.gendercampus.ch/en/sggf/about)

**GENDER STUDIES IN FRENCH-SPEAKING  
SWISS UNIVERSITIES**

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**IHEID**

Programme on Gender and Global Change

[www.graduateinstitute.ch/genre](http://www.graduateinstitute.ch/genre)

**UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA**

*Unité interdisciplinaire en études genre*

[www.unige.ch/etudes-genre](http://www.unige.ch/etudes-genre)

**UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG**

*Coordination études genre*

[www.unifr.ch/gender](http://www.unifr.ch/gender)

**UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE**

*Centre en études genre LIEGE*

[www.unil.ch/liege](http://www.unil.ch/liege)

**UNIVERSITY OF NEUCHÂTEL**

*Maison d'analyse des processus sociaux*

[www.unine.ch/maps](http://www.unine.ch/maps)

**CAREER GUIDANCE**

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**EPFL**

Career Center

[career.epfl.ch](http://career.epfl.ch)

**UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG**

*Centre d'orientation universitaire*

[www.orientationfr.ch](http://www.orientationfr.ch)

**UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA**

*Uni-Emploi*

[uniemploi.unige.ch](http://uniemploi.unige.ch)

**UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE**

Guidance and Advisory Service

[www.unil.ch/soc](http://www.unil.ch/soc)

**UNIVERSITY OF NEUCHÂTEL**

Career Centre

[www.unine.ch/carriere](http://www.unine.ch/carriere)

**UNIVERSITÀ DELLA SVIZZERA ITALIANA**

*Servizio orientamento e promozione*

[www.usi.ch](http://www.usi.ch) > Ateneo > Servizi > Servizio orientamento

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY,  
RESEARCH PROMOTION AND TRANSFER**  
-----**EPFL**

Vice-Presidency for Innovation and Technology Transfer

[vpiv.epfl.ch](http://vpiv.epfl.ch)

**UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG**

Research Promotion Service

[www.unifr.ch](http://www.unifr.ch) > Recherche > services

**UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA**

Unitec

[www.unige.ch/unitec](http://www.unige.ch/unitec)

**UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE**

Pactt

[www.pactt.ch](http://www.pactt.ch)

**UNIVERSITY OF NEUCHÂTEL**

Technology Transfer Office (TT)

[www.unine.ch](http://www.unine.ch) > Recherche > Transfert de technologies

**UNIVERSITÀ DELLA SVIZZERA ITALIANA**

Ticinotransfer

[www.usi.ch](http://www.usi.ch) > Ateneo > Servizi > Ticinotransfer

**SWISS FEDERAL INSTITUTE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

[www.ige.ch](http://www.ige.ch)

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT, MOBBING, MEDIATION**  
-----**EPFL**

(HELP)

<http://help.epfl.ch>

**UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG**

Equal Opportunities Office

[www.unifr.ch/egalite](http://www.unifr.ch/egalite)

Social Service

[www.unifr.ch/social](http://www.unifr.ch/social)

**UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA**

Human Resources

[www.unige.ch](http://www.unige.ch) > Enseignement et collaborateurs > Ressources humaines

> Politique de gestion des conflits

**UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE**

DialogUNIL

[www.unil.ch/dialog](http://www.unil.ch/dialog)

**UNIVERSITY OF NEUCHÂTEL**

Internal contact group and external mediator

[www.unine.ch/conflits](http://www.unine.ch/conflits)

**UNIVERSITÀ DELLA SVIZZERA ITALIANA**

Equal Opportunities Service

[www.gender.usi.ch](http://www.gender.usi.ch)

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