

Scientific Staff at D-GESS:

Standard types of employment and guide for supervision

This brochure summarizes the guidelines for the employment of scientific staff at D-GESS according to *Appendix 2 of the Ordinance on Scientific Staff at ETH Zurich* ([SR 172.220.113](#); [subsequently Ordinance on Scientific Staff](#))¹ as well as for the supervision of scientific staff at D-GESS. Should uncertainties arise, scientific staff is asked to contact either the staff manager at D-GESS or the Association of Scientific Staff at D-GESS (ASST: <http://www.asst.ethz.ch>).

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¹ www.rechtssammlung.ethz.ch

Standard types of employment for doctoral candidates

(Department Conference decisions from 11.11.2013, 16.12.2014 and 24.02.2015)

Level of employment

From 01.01.2015, members of staff with the function „Scientific Assistant I“ aiming at a doctorate (irrespective of whether they have already been registered as a doctoral student) must generally receive a full-time position (Art. 7 Par. 1 Ordinance of Scientific Staff).

Part-time contracts are possible in duly substantiated cases, especially due to parenthood or engagements with other employers. Substantiated requests are to be presented to the Department Coordinator for the attention of the Department Committee.

Classification

D-GESS aims at a transparent and uniform classification of Scientific Assistants I in the new wage system according to Art. 8 Par. 1 lit. a and Art. 8 Par. 3 of the Ordinance of Scientific Staff.

Scientific Assistants I aiming at a doctorate are assigned to Level 1 (“Standard”) in accordance with Art. 8 Par. 1 lit. a in combination with Appendix 2 of the Ordinance of Scientific Staff (however, assignments to a higher level are possible). The full-time position on Level 1 includes one day of work for the professorship (20%) (e.g. for teaching or general services). The remaining hours are reserved for work on the doctoral thesis, whereby the expectations in regard to the doctoral thesis must be specified in the research plan (cf. Information Sheet on Doctorate at D-GESS, as of February 2014). A higher level must be assigned if the work for the professorship exceeds 20%.¹ For every 10% of additional work (incl. teaching) a rise of one level is to be assigned (Art. 8 Par. 3 Ordinance of Scientific Staff). This rise is temporary and is cancelled after the additional work is completed. The adjustments must be made by the Secretariats by 1. January for the spring semester and 1. July for the autumn semester. The work for the professorship must be defined in the functional specifications, which are compiled and then verified annually by the professor in cooperation with the doctoral candidate and adjusted if necessary (see Guidelines for Supervision in this brochure).

For Scientific Assistants I according to Art. 12 Par. 2 of the Ordinance of Scientific Staff not aiming at a doctorate, the supervisor assigns the level of employment and, in consultation with the staff manager, the wage category according to Appendix 1 and Appendix 3 of the Ordinance of Scientific Staff.

Compulsory Presence

The Scientific Assistants are explicitly informed of the extent of expected presence at the ETH work place.

Secondary Occupations

For secondary occupations of Scientific Assistants I and doctoral students respectively (engagements outside of ETH) Art. 56 PVO-ETH (Ordinance of Staff ETH) applies, as for all other employees of ETH.² The employees inform their superior (professor) about the aspired external employment in advance. The secondary occupations requires written approval if

- a. a conflict with the interests of ETH or the other research institution could occur;
- b. an impairment of the fulfillment of the tasks could occur;
- c. the reputation of ETH or the other research institution could be at risk;
- d. they would like to utilize the infrastructure of ETH or the other research institution;
- e. they would like to accept an administrative board mandate.

Secondary occupations of more than 10% or an administrative board mandate must be communicated by the professor to the staff manager responsible for the department. If there is no conflict of interest according to Art. 56 Par. 2 PVO-ETH, the ETH contract of employment is reduced in case of secondary occupations with a level of employment of more than 10% (part-time employment, e.g. 90%).

¹ General guidelines of ETH: no more than 30% of work may be for the professorship (cf. Art. 10 Ordinance on Scientific Staff).

² www.rechtssammlung.ch

Standard types of employment for post-doctoral candidates and senior assistants

(Department Conference decision from 11.05.2013)

Profile

There are three profiles for post-doctoral candidates and senior assistants:

1. Post-doctorate as a temporary phase to get the doctoral thesis ready for publication and to complete ongoing research projects. Serves further qualification before an intended exit from science
2. Profile development focusing on teaching, support and supervision (aim: Senior Scientist or Leading Scientific Staff)
3. Career track aiming at a professorship (academic career)

Employment parameters

The promotion to a post-doctoral position after the doctorate must take place within 6 months after the doctoral examination.

The promotion from a post-doctoral position to a senior assistant position (cf. Types of Function Appendix 1 Ordinance of Scientific Staff) must take place at the latest after the expiry of the maximum admissible temporary employment duration of 6 years. Corresponding communication with the employee must be initiated ahead of time (6 months before the expiry of the admissible temporary employment).

People who did not receive their doctorate from ETH and were employed as post-doctoral candidates after their doctorate should be promoted to a senior assistant position after a maximum of 3-4 years. If there is no change of function, the contract of employment may not be extended.

Level of employment

Members of staff on the career track aiming at a professorship must generally receive full-time employment. In well-founded cases, exceptions are possible. A case is well-founded if (1) the employee wishes a reduced level of employment due to other (family or professional) responsibilities and the supervising professor gives their consent or (2) a reduced level of employment is necessary in order to temporarily tide over a financial squeeze of the professorship (in general, no more than one year). Exceptions must be communicated to the Department Coordinator and approved by the Department Committee before the employment.

The amount of teaching responsibilities and other tasks for the professorship must be added to the function specifications (see guidelines for supervision) and should not exceed 10-20% of working hours.

Limitation

Contracts are made for at least 24 months (incl. probation period) or until the agreed date/project completion in accordance with the maximum duration of legally admissible temporary employments of 6 years each (Doctorate + Post-doctorate = 6 years, Senior Assistant = 6 years).

Wage

Post-docs are paid according to the fixed wage system for scientific staff at ETH Zurich (cf. Appendix 3 Ordinance of Scientific Staff). Senior assistants are assigned to level 9 or 10 (Senior Assistant I and 2 or Scientific Staff I and II) of the wage system (cf. Appendix 1 Ordinance of Scientific Staff). An additional salary for teaching activities is not permitted.

Guidelines for supervision

(according to «Best Practice Guide for the supervision of scientific staff at D-GESS»; Department
Conference decision from 23.09.2014)

Conditions of employment

General conditions: Despite the fact that every professorship is subject to specific conditions, digressions from general regulations of ETH and the Department should be avoided in order to provide employees of all groups with fairly uniform conditions.

Wage: Upon commencement of work, clear arrangements about financing (PA-funds and/or third-party funding) and expectations regarding the procurement of third-party funding (starting date, amount) must be made.

Limitation: Upon commencement of work, clear arrangements about length of project and intended length of employment as well as possible extensions must be made.

Support: Upon commencement of work, clear and transparent regulations about the conditions for and funding of participation in conferences, summer schools, research travels etc. must be made.

Continuing education: Employees are encouraged to take part in skill and soft skill courses and if necessary, receive financial support.

Research plan: In the research plan the scientific work to be carried out by the doctoral candidate in the context of his or her dissertation must be described.

Function specifications

In the function specifications, type and amount of work to be supplied for the professorship (teaching and other services) must be precisely defined (for doctorate on level 1: 20% of working hours) (cf. ETH document „Job description”: <https://www.ethz.ch/intranet/en/employment-and-work/downloads.html>). The accuracy of these specifications is verified annually in a personnel talk.

Career planning and development

The support of career planning and development is an essential responsibility of the supervisor. In addition to the discussion of career development and perspective, contacts with former members of the group should be maintained. At least one meeting with the main supervisor takes place every year. In this meeting, at least the following aspects should be discussed:

- Quality of work and achievement of goals
- Goals for the following year (content, scope etc.)
- Aspects of career development (possibilities, opportunities and future perspectives)

Coaching

The professor's supervision is focused on fundamental questions such as the development of innovative theses, adequate research designs and the opportunity to present results to renowned peer-reviewed journals or publishers or at conferences etc. However, coaching and practical support should also be provided by members of the group and research colleagues outside of it. Nevertheless, employees themselves are also required to strive for good supervision.

Practical execution of coaching

During the first year of the doctoral studies, particularly intensive supervision is necessary. This includes fixed monthly meetings (if necessary, in even shorter intervals). Additionally, 1-2 group-internal workshops and retreats should take place every year. These should provide doctoral candidates with the opportunity to present their work and receive feedback from the group. Furthermore, a doctoral seminar or colloquium should take place at least every alternate semester. This should be organized by the professorship or the section the professorship belongs to. Also, it should be examined whether additional modes of supervision may be added, e.g. research stays abroad, participation in research or PhD colloquia at competence centers or the early inclusion of the external reviewer of the examination committee.

About one year before the doctoral examination, a mandatory, formal meeting with the main supervisor takes place, in which further career opportunities after the doctorate is completed should be discussed.

Depending on disciplinary practice and if the doctoral candidate wishes it, the main supervisor functions as co-author of the first publication in order to ensure intensive supervision and to convey paper-writing skills.

Informal meetings between doctoral candidates are also organized by the Association of Scientific Staff at D-GESS (ASST).