SMA Master Project

DIRECTIVES intended for students, EPFL professors and companies/universities, which host students for their master project.

Goal of the master project

The master project is a student achievement, which involves a work of analysis, conception and implementation, aiming to prove the scientific capacities of the student. It can be performed in a chair of mathematics or in exchange at a hosting university. The master project takes place after the Master cycle during the period mentioned in the academic calendar.

Project director (EPFL Professor or MER)
The director commits himself to ensure that the student performs a work of sufficient analysis and conception. The director evaluates the student’s capacities. In particular:

- Officially supervises the project and chairs the jury during the evaluation.
- Checks the level of the project and follows regularly the work progress.
- Instructs the partner (if any) on the requirements of the EPFL.
- Intervenes in case of problems.

External project supervisor
In the case of a master project outside the EPFL, the external supervisor commits himself to ensure that the student performs a work of sufficient analysis and conception to allow the EPFL director to evaluate the student’s scientific capacities.

Framework
The EPFL master project must be supervised by an SMA professor or a professor affiliated to the CSE program (Project director). He is responsible for the follow up and evaluation of the project. In the external institution, a person (External project supervisor) is responsible for the supervision of the student and will also be the preferred contact of the director.

Project selection
The master project subject can be proposed by:

- A chair of the SMA or affiliated to the CSE program
- The student

The director of the project has to approve the subject and the goals of the master project, as well as the host institution if the project does not take place in his laboratory.
Student
- Can freely choose the project director with whom she/he wishes to work for her/his master project as long as there are enough places available.
  This project director is a Professor or MER attached to the SMA section or affiliated to CSE if the student is in the CSE program
- Contacts the project director and defines precisely the project’s goals
- Registers, officially, on IS-Academia, asks the director to sign the registration form and hands it in to the SMA.

Project director
- Chooses the project subjects in a discipline linked to the section and in which his expertise allows him to judge the abilities of the student to perform research work
- Assesses the propositions of external master projects and validates the topics he wishes to supervise.

Length of the Project
In SMA, the Master project lasts 17 weeks when it's achieved at EPFL. The length can be extended to 25 weeks, depending on the cases, if:

- the projects is achieved out of EPFL
- the SMA Section approves the request

Extension requests made during the Master project will not be considered.

During the Project
Student
During his master project, the student remains registered as an EPFL student and is subject to the rules of the host laboratory or host company: schedule, absence, confidentiality, seminar, etc.

Project director or external supervisor
- Welcomes the student on the first day of the project and gives him the directives
- Guides the candidate

Project director
- Guides the candidate
- In order to evaluate the capacities of the student and the project’s direction, asks the student for an intermediate report/oral presentation
- Reserves the right to re-aim the work
- Chooses an external expert to evaluate the master project. In case of a project outside EPFL, the expert is often the External Project supervisor
- Plans and organizes the oral evaluation of the master project

Expenses
Expenditure incurred by the master project (such as software, travels, conferences, printing of the report) is assumed by the hosting laboratory.
The student will write a report, which will contain:
- The title
- The student’s name
- The name of the EPFL laboratory or the host institution
- The name of the EPFL professor in charge
- The name of the person in charge in the host company
- The name of a co-supervisor, if any
- The results of the work with a summary in French and in English
This report should be representative of the work done in order to enable to judge
the capacities of the student.

End of the project

Compulsory:
Three printed copies of the report must be given to the section within the deadline. The SMA
gives two copies to the director of the project who then sends a copy to the expert.

Only if requested by the director and by the expert:
A pdf version must be sent to the project director and to the expert.

Presentation
- The student prepares an oral presentation for his master project. The duration is decided
  by the director, usually 45 minutes: (20 min) presentation, (20min) questions, (5min)
deliberation.
- He makes a poster with the principal results of the master project and give it to the
  section. It will then be displayed during the Master projects exhibition in October.

Project director
- Assesses the work with the external expert with regards to:
  a) the quality of the work,
  b) the quality of the report,
  c) the quality of the oral presentation
- Submits the grade directly to the SAC.

Confidentiality
During the master project, some data used can be confidential. If so, the host institution must
send a written request to the SMA section to establish a confidentiality contract between the
different parts. In this case, the master project report can be classified as “confidential” and be
returned to the institution after evaluation of the project.