

Handling the exchange year at the Max Planck Society for Centre for Learning Systems (CLS) doctoral fellows from ETH Zurich

Information sheet | May 2022

This information sheet provides information on how to handle the exchange year (usually 12 months) at the Max Planck Society for CLS¹ doctoral fellows employed at ETH, i.e. with home institution ETH Zurich. Usually, the destination for the exchange is the Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems in Tübingen or Stuttgart, Germany, hereafter referred to as the MPI.

The CLS has been successfully running its doctoral student programme for many years, however it is subject to national legislation in Switzerland and Germany. We have to work within the limits of institutional practices and policies at ETH Zurich and the Max-Planck Society. Below describes the process in its full complexity and it is important to follow these guidelines. The intention is this to be implementable without problems, given enough attention to procedure and deadlines.

1. Employment/Matriculation

The CLS doctoral fellow must agree the start date for their exchange year in discussion with their main advisor (ETH) and co-advisor (MPI). The CLS annual progress meeting presents a good opportunity for this. In addition, the doctoral fellow may undertake short visits (up to 4 weeks) to MPI, reimbursed through CLS, in order to carry out discussions and ground work for the exchange. The intended start date must be communicated to the CLS coordination team, who will initiate the next steps to be taken in parallel on the ETH and MPI side.

The employment with ETH will be terminated for the period of the exchange programme at MPI. The administrative support of the Professor group must initiate the administrative steps for the exit of ETH. The end date of employment with ETH for the exchange year must be before the start date of the contract with MPI (usually one day before). The MPI requires some time ahead (around 8 weeks) to administrate the assignment at MPI.

The doctoral student must remain matriculated at ETH Zurich during the time of the exchange year. To ensure this, it is the responsibility of the doctoral student to comply with the request for re-enrolment of the central ETH Doctoral Administration, and to observe any further deadlines connected with doctoral studies such as date of the Aptitude Colloquium, submission of written reports, etc.

It is recommended that the responsible Supervisor will issue a confirmation of re-entry to his/her group to the doctoral student (sample text in appendix).

2. Access to ETH during the exchange year at MPI

Following ETH accesses will be maintained for the entire duration of the stay at the MPI:

- ETH email address
- Access to specific software and cluster services as defined by the Professor group
- Access to ETH drives

The Supervisor's administrative support will organise these accesses accordingly through the Academic Services/Central Doctoral Administration of ETH.

Access to the following services will be interrupted during the exchange year:

- ETHIS
- ETH card for building access. In case of a visit to ETH during the employment at MPI, this has to be organised by the administrative support of the Professor group accordingly.
- Office keys have to be returned before leaving ETH to MPI

3. Return to ETH

The re-entry process to ETH should be started approx. 3 months before coming back to Zurich. The work permit application in Switzerland requires approx. 6-8 weeks. In conjunction with the CLS coordination team, the administrative support of the Professor group at ETH will initiate the re-entry process with an ETHIS workflow. The research period at MPI the time will be counted towards salary advancement (1st, 2nd, 3rd year).

4. Miscellaneous

- a) Maximum period of employment (1st 6 years of ETH for doctorate/ postdoctorate): The appropriate time of employment at MPI will not be credited to the ETH maximum period of employment. However, the period spent at the MPI is credited to the doctoral programme.
- b) Deregistration at place of residence is required. The ETH work permit will expire with the exit at ETH / new employment at MPI. A new permit will be needed to rejoin ETH.
- c) Insurance Coverage: due to leaving ETH, the insurance coverage in case of accident will be cancelled as well as the entitlement to continued salary payment in case of illness. The same applies for the pension fund. When giving up residence in Switzerland, the Swiss compulsory health insurance will end as well.

¹ Joint academic programme between Eidgenoessische Technische Hochschule (Zurich, Switzerland) and Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems (Stuttgart / Tuebingen, Germany).

² CLS Senior Fellows located at other Max Planck Institutes, such as the MPI for Biological Cybernetics or the MPI for Informatics, may in certain cases host the exchange year. The arrangements in this data sheet apply also in such cases.

Appendix: sample text for re-entry confirmation letter, to be issued by the supervising ETH professor

Confirmation of contract arrangements for exchange year in the Max Planck ETH Center for Learning Systems

Mr/Ms XX YY, date of birth DD.MM.YYYY has been a participant in the doctoral program of the Max Planck ETH Center for Learning Systems since DD.MM.YYYY.

The Max Planck ETH Center for Learning Systems (CLS) is a research cooperation between ETH Zurich in Switzerland and the Max Planck Society in Germany. CLS doctoral fellows are recruited through a highly competitive annual selection and are jointly supervised by researchers from both cooperation partners.

Mr/Ms XX YY has been employed as a doctoral student in my research group since DD.MM.YYYY and has been enrolled as an ETH doctoral candidate since the same date. From DD.MM.YYYY, the ETH contract will stop, and Mr/Ms XX YY will undertake an exchange year at the MPI for Intelligent Systems in Stuttgart/Tübingen, funded by a support contract of the Max Planck Society. Mr/MS XX YY remains matriculated as doctoral student at ETH Zurich for the entire duration of the exchange year.

On completion of the exchange, Mr/Ms XX YY will be reissued with an employment contract in my research group starting DD.MM.YYYY, with a planned duration until DD.MM.YYYY, with the possibility of further extension.