EPFL – Internships
Materials Sciences and Engineering

- General context
- Administrative procedures
- Pep-talk and statistics
- Info on X-Grants

Sebastian Gautsch
Coordinateur des stages STI
STI Internship Coordination

CDM
Frequency of students
85 Ma3 students

SV
Material Sciences
45 Ma1 students
38 Ma3 students

ENAC
Mechanical Engineering
94 Ma1 students
123 Ma3 students

STI
Electrical Engineering
51 Ma1 students
56 Ma3 students

SB
Basic Sciences

I&C
Informatics et Communication

CDH
College of Humanities

Microengineering
111 Ma1 students

Material Sciences
45 Ma1 students
38 Ma3 students

Mechanical Engineering
94 Ma1 students
123 Ma3 students

Electrical Engineering
51 Ma1 students
56 Ma3 students
The Internship in industry is a mandatory step of the Master degree.

Possible formats to validate this obligation:

- STAP: Detached internship but credited with the master’s project
- PDME: Master project in industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Periods</th>
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<td>Min. 8 weeks</td>
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</table>
Mandatory Internship or Master Project in Industry

- **Internship**
  - Immersion into industry
  - Familiarize with company processes
  - Acquire specific competences
  - Apply transversal skills
  - Minimum duration of 2 months, up to 6 months
  - Evaluated report by student and industrial supervisor

- **Master project in industry**
  - A research project in the company
  - Student applies the competences acquired during his master
  - Supervised by a Professor from an EPFL research lab
  - Written report and oral defense
  - 25 week duration (+1 week vacation)
When to place your internship / Master thesis?

- **Summer**
  - Master cycle
    - 60 credits

- **Fall**
  - Minor/spec
    - 30 credits

- **Spring**
  - Internship 8 weeks
  - PDM in academia
    - 17 to 25 weeks
    - 30 credits

- **Summer**
  - Minor/spec
    - 30 credits

- **Fall**
  - Master project in Industry
    - 25 weeks
    - 30 credits

- **Spring**
  - PDM in academia
    - 17 to 25 weeks
    - 30 credits
When to place your internship / Master thesis?

- **Summer**: Master cycle (60 credits)

- **Fall**: Minor/spec (30 credits)

- **Spring**: Internship 8 weeks

- **Summer**: Master project in Industry (25 weeks, 30 credits)

- **Fall**: PDM in academia 17 to 25 weeks (30 credits)

- **Spring**: Minor/spec (30 credits)

- **Summer**: PDM in academia 17 to 25 weeks (30 credits)
When to place your internship / Master thesis?

- **Summer**: Master cycle (60 credits)
- **Fall**: Minor/spec (30 credits)
- **Spring**: Master project in Industry (25 weeks, 30 credits)
- **Summer**: Internship 8 weeks
- **Fall**: PDM in academia (17 to 25 weeks, 30 credits)
- **Spring**: Internship 6 months
- **Summer**: PDM in academia (17 to 25 weeks, 30 credits)

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**Note:**
- **Internship** duration varies.
- **PDM in academia** duration ranges from 17 to 25 weeks.

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**Source:** EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne)
When to place your internship / Master thesis?

- **Summer**
  - Master cycle: 60 credits
  - Internship: 8 weeks

- **Fall**
  - Master cycle: 60 credits
  - Minor/spec: 30 credits

- **Spring**
  - Master project in Industry: 25 weeks
    - 30 credits
  - Internship: 8 weeks
  - PDM in academia: 17 to 25 weeks
    - 30 credits
  - Internship: 6 months

- **Summer**
  - Master project in Industry: 25 weeks
  - 30 credits

- **Fall**
  - Master cycle: 60 credits
  - Minor/spec: 30 credits
  - PDM in academia: 17 to 25 weeks
    - 30 credits
The master thesis in Industry

- Electrical Engineering: Less students for EPFL research projects
- Microengineering: Questionable academic quality of a portion of industrial master thesis
- Materials Sciences: Good professional insertion
- LifeSciences: Limited international outreach
- Mechanical Engineering: Potential increase of industry-academia collaborations
Context of the master thesis in industry

- Companies get in touch with research labs to propose master thesis topics
- Companies can accept students for internship proposals and accept the format change to master thesis projects
- Students contact professors of their section to ask for existing industrial projects
- Students can apply for internships and have it validated as master thesis projects by the supervising professor
- Professors and teachers propose master thesis projects with known partner companies
- Professors and teachers evaluate the academic content of proposals from companies before accepting it as master thesis projects
- Professors and teachers evaluate the academic content of proposals from students before accepting it as master thesis projects
Company has an idea for a master thesis project

Company discusses the project with a Professor

Company submits the proposal on the EPFL portal

Project starts under co-supervision by company and professor

Student applies for the project through the portal and gets accepted by the company

Ideal Scenario for Master Projects in industry
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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<th>Localisation du stage</th>
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<th>Juil-Sept (P3)</th>
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<th>Places</th>
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</table>
Master thesis in industry, some advice for students

- Give priority to Master thesis proposals from laboratories of your section and proposals posted on the IS-A portal with confirmed academic supervisor.

If you can’t find a suitable topic this way, then proceed like this:

- Contact potential academic supervisors to inform them on your intentions.
- Apply for positions and inform companies on your objective to do a master thesis (in motivation letter, during e-mails exchanges and interviews, …).
- Organize a meeting between the teacher and the company to discuss the content and workplan of the project and settle administrative issues. Suggest the signature of the EPFL master thesis agreement (to settle IP and confidentiality).
- Insure a coordinated supervision and regular meetings between the company and the teacher during the project.
What is considered «Industry»?

- Every company or start-up offering a workplace outside of an EPFL laboratory (EPFL’s Innovation Parc included)
- Every Research Organisation not delivering academic credits
- Affiliation of independent research labs with academic institutions can lead to a specific decision by the section
How much salary?

- There is no official regulation in Switzerland to pay a monthly salary for an internship.
- Salaries are mostly ruled by offer and demand
- Often the salary is dependent of the company’s size and status
  - Typical salary in large companies: ~3’000 SFr
  - Typical salary in start-ups and SMEs: 1’500 SFr
  - Typical salary in the European Union: 600 - 900 Euros
- EPFL recommends a typical monthly salary between 1’500-2’500 SFr. However, there is no obligation of the company to comply with this.

- In Case of a Master Project in Industry, remuneration can be handled more freely (no monthly salary, compensations, bonus at the end, ...)

Internships done during the bachelor degree are not accepted for validation. Exceptions can be granted in the following cases:

- Internships done after your bachelor degree
  - The internship must be accepted by the section deputy
  - The internship duration must be at least 8 weeks
  - The ending should not be further than 1 year apart from your master beginning date.
  - An evaluation report or a work certificate has to be presented to the section deputy.

- Industrial experiences of at least 1 year related to the field of the future master studies can be accepted for validation
  - A valid work certificate has to be presented to the section deputy.
Administrative aspects and Procedures
Work authorization
(not required for Master Projects with no monthly remuneration)

- The federal council allows foreign students of Swiss academic institution to perform a mandatory internship during their studies: [https://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/20070993/index.html#a39](https://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/20070993/index.html#a39)

- Students with Non-EU/EFTA passports require a valid work authorization to do their internship or Master project with monthly salary in Switzerland or EU countries.

- EU students performing a 3-6 month internship have to be announced at the cantonal office.

- It is the company’s responsibility to request this authorization at the proper working office of their canton/country.

- It requires up to 8 weeks to obtain this authorization from the cantonal offices.

- It is recommended that students from non-EU/EFTA countries inform the companies in their motivation letter of these regulations.

*Example:* “As I’m a non-EU/EFTA resident, your company is required to ask for a temporary work authorization. Please be advised that The federal council allows foreign students of Swiss academic institution to perform a mandatory internship during their studies: [https://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/20070993/index.html#a39](https://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/20070993/index.html#a39). As I will stay registered at EPFL during this internship, and since this internship is a mandatory part of my Master education, the delivery of this document does not fall into the quota limitation of each canton and is therefore straightforward.”
How can you find an internship?

- It is the student’s responsibility to find an appropriate internship to validate his Master degree.
- No responsibility can be taken from EPFL side if no internship has been found by the student.
- The student can find an internship position by himself, but the subject needs to be approved by the section deputy.
- EPFL offers an internship portal on which the student can find an alternative to his personal quest for finding an internship.
- Access to the EPFL portal is given through the student’s IS-Academia account.
Other opportunities for finding an internship

- Personal contacts, family, friends
- Topic related agencies and organizations
- International platforms
- Company websites
- EPFL Professors, especially for master projects in Industry

Every Internship found by these alternative ways needs to be approved by your section. Please contact the section deputy as soon as you have found an opportunity.
EPFL Alumni network

- EPFL students have access to the Alumni network
  - Website: alumni.epfl.ch
  - Pocketcampus app
Start working with Linked’In
Find an Internship during EPFL’s Forum

RETRouvEZ LE FORUM EPFL
DU 9 AU 13 OCTOBRE 2017
AU SWISSTECH CONVENTION CENTER

Forum.epfl.ch
How does the internship portal work?

- Browse through the internship offers of your Master program
- Apply for a position by uploading 2 mandatory documents:
  - CV
  - Motivation letter
- Applications are sent on a weekly basis to the companies (every Monday 14h00)
- Wait for the company to make its selection process (up to several weeks)
- If no response after 2 months, contact your internship coordinator
- You will be contacted by the company if your application was successful (Most selection processes involve an interview and several e-mail exchanges)
- You MUST accept only one offer and reject all the others within the next 3 working days.
- Once you have accepted the offer
  - No withdrawal from the accepted position!
  - Kindly notify all other companies you had privileged contact with
End of January: Mailing to Industry

Mid-February

June: End of Spring Semester

August 1st: Possible 1st starting date

Internship 2-6 Months

1st student applications sent to Industry

Following student applications sent to Industry every Monday 2:00 PM

PDMe 25 weeks

August 1st - September 30th

Attribution process in the spring semester
Attribution process in the fall semester

- **Sept. 1st**: Mailing to Industry
- **End of September**: Following student applications sent to Industry every Monday 2:00 PM
- **December**: End of Fall Semester
- **Beginning of Spring Semester**: Possible 1st starting date
- **February – March 1st**: PDMe 25 weeks

1st student applications sent to Industry
Internship attribution, possible scenarii

<table>
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<td>in progress Cancel</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</table>

Within 3 days

- **Accept**
- **Refuse**
Register internships found by your own

- Submit a description of your internship to your section’s deputy
- Once you have signed the tripartite internship agreement, enter your project details on the internship portal by creating a new internship proposal, and upload a pdf copy of the agreement.

### Internships - Showroom (stu)

You found a work placement, which was not proposed in IS-Academia. Please, do register it clicking HERE.

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<th>Context</th>
<th>All criteria/words should be contained</th>
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<tr>
<td>Search by keywords</td>
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<th>Juil-Fév (P2)</th>
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Some advice to prepare your application documents

- **2 important documents**
  - Motivation letter
  - Curriculum vitae (CV)

The criteria for interview selection by the company is mostly based in these documents. Reference letters can be added as well. Your motivation letter should specifically address the company and the proposed subject.

- **Language**: you should use the language of the offer

- **To be avoided**:  
  - No motivation letter  
  - Copy-paste errors  
  - Wrong addressing
Interview

Most companies would like to meet the students for an interview prior to making their final choice

- Be prepared for the interview and demonstrate a professional attitude
- Non EU/EFTA students: Inform the company about the required work authorization
- If the living allowance is mentioned in the description, do not bargain. If not mentioned, inquire for it.
- Follow up: After the interview, write a short e-mail as feedback of your interview to the company and Cc to the section administrator and internship coordinator.

For Master projects: Do not accept a position without having confirmed the eligibility of the project and settled the details with the academic supervisor.
Prepare your internship campaign!

EPFL proposes 5 modules of 1h30:

This fall semester
1. Understanding recruiters (November ‘16)
2. Reviewing the CV
3. The motivation letter

Next spring semester
4. The Job interview
5. Communication and organization at work

Each course will be given 2x in English and 5x in French
Information and mandatory registration here: https://bookwhen.com/stages
Anticipate

- A change of residence or relocation might be necessary
- Setting up a Master thesis in industry takes several weeks/Months

- Time consuming formalities might be required:
  - Confirm an internship
  - Visa, Work authorization and Residence permit (typically 4-8 weeks)
  - Collection of the signatures of the internship agreement
  - New validation of your passport

- It is your responsibility to settle these formalities prior to the Internship beginning
Update your FRAC

In case your internship is done during an academic semester, make sure to update your FRAC according to your status:

- In case of a credited internship (only EE students):
  - Semester (choose the right one: MA1; MA2; MA3)
  - Status: Internship (authorized by the section)
  - Mention in the comments « Credited internship during master course (SCS) »

- In case of a long internship without credits
  - Semester: (choose the right one: MA1; MA2; MA3)
  - Status: Internship (authorized by the section)
  - Mention in the comments « Detached internship but credited with master Project (STAP) »
Announce your stay abroad to EPFL Safety domain

http://securite.epfl.ch/voyages
Internship or master project agreements

- The internship agreement specifies the commitments and responsibilities of EPFL, the company and the internship student. This agreement must be signed for all engineering internships.
- No other tripartite agreement involving EPFL will be signed by the section.
- Alternative contract proposed by the company and signed only by the student are acceptable in rare cases, but the students must carefully read and comply with the content (IP issues, confidentiality, and especially non-competition clauses).
- In case of master projects, a specific agreement between the EPFL Research lab and the company can be signed.
During and after the internship

- In case of problems (accident, personal problems, conflict with supervisors), contact urgently the Section deputy and the STI Internships coordinator.

- No written report of the student is requested by EPFL (except for credited internships in EE), but can be requested by the company.

- To validate your internship, an evaluation report has to be filled out by the student and the supervisor in the company (sent out 2 weeks prior to ending).
Mandatory Steps for a 2-6 month internship

1. Find an internship position and in case you have found it without using the IS-A portal, have the subject validated by your section deputy.

2. Inform the STI coordinator that you have found your internship.

3. Cancel all ongoing applications by gently notifying the companies. This step is extremely important to keep a good relationship with future employers.

4. Transmit the EPFL internship agreement to the employer and have it filled out and signed by the employer and the section deputy. The signing of the agreement is mandatory.

5. If you are a non-swiss/EU citizen, ask the company to request a work authorization for the duration of the internship. More information here.

6. Once all the details of your internship have been settled, enter or edit the details of your internship on the IS-A internship portal. Upload a copy of the signed internship agreement.

7. In case your internship is during a semester, make sure to update your FRAC according to the following table.

8. At the end of the internship, fill out the evaluation report that will be sent to you by e-mail. The evaluation procedure starts 2 weeks prior to the official ending of the internship. Both the student and the supervisor will fill out an evaluation report.
Mandatory Steps for a Master project in Industry

1. Find a master project in industry by contacting the professors of your section.

2. A master subject can also be found through the IS-A Internship portal. In this case, it is mandatory to find a professor willing to supervise you before you accept the offer from the company. The STI Initiative on Coordinated Master Projects is promoting offers through the portal.

3. Official starting dates for master projects in industry are as follows:
   - Beginning of spring semester - registration deadline for spring semester courses (2 weeks after)
   - August 1st - registration deadline for fall semester courses (end of September)
Other starting dates can be obtained on special request to your section.

4. All administrative details of your master project in industry have to be settled between the employer and the professor supervising your work. On request from the professor or the company, the EPFL master project agreement can be signed.

5. Once all the details of your Master project in Industry have been settled, enter the details of your PDMe in your study plan

6. Make sure to update your FRAC according to the following table
Section webpage: http://sti.epfl.ch/smx/internships

EPFL webpage: http://internships.epfl.ch
Important remarks

- As an EPFL student doing an internship in industry, you act as an EPFL Ambassador. Thanks to your work and positive attitude, you will leave an important impression to the company.

- This aspect is not only important for your future professional career, but also for the EPFL internship program which will benefit from this lasting impression.
STI Internship Program

- Pep talk for Students
- Some statistics
The internship: Excellent Opportunity !!!

- **Students**
  - A Great incentive to ask oneself the right questions!
  - Familiarize with working life
  - Immerse into Industry practice
  - Future Hiring opportunity

- **Companies**
  - Benefit from highly qualified students
  - A new insight on current issues, innovate!
  - Evaluate future employees

- **EPFL**
  - A direct link to industry
  - A new platform to start collaborations on the research level
  - Feedback from industry to improve the education of our students
Internship evaluations

Student auto-evaluation
(Years 2015-2017, 400 students)
Internship evaluations

Feedback on the host company by student (Years 2015-2017, 400 students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Sufficient</th>
<th>Insufficient</th>
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<td>Overall Evaluation</td>
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<td>Quality of supervision</td>
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**Internship evaluations**

Company evaluation of the student (Years 2015-2017, 400 students)

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<td>Ability to access sources of information and to evaluate them</td>
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<td>Ability to present and defend her/his own ideas</td>
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<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
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<td>Interpersonal skills and engagement, including in a multicultural context</td>
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<td>Written communication (clarity, clarity, coherence of reasoning)</td>
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<td><strong>Integration in the professional world</strong></td>
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<td>Quality of the work delivered</td>
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<td>Capacity to work in teams</td>
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<td><strong>Planning and management of work tasks</strong></td>
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<td>Work planning, monitoring of activities, and management of emergent issues</td>
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<td><strong>Application of scientific and technical knowledge</strong></td>
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EPFL links to Industry

Top-Down

- Vice Presidency for Innovation (and Valorisation):
  - Tech transfer
  - Innovation Park
  - Sponsored chairs
  - Special programs
  - Alliance

- Career Center
  - Alumni survey
  - Jobs for Brains Recruitment platform
  - Recruitment days
  - Round tables
  - Sponsorships
  - EPFL Forum

- EPFL Alumni
  - Network
  - Events
  - Magazine

- Section advisory boards
  - Meeting ~every 2 years

Bottom-up

- Research labs; industrial projects
- Master Thesis in Industry
- Internships in Master curriculum

1’000 EPFL students each year
Value chain from internships to industry funded research

- Internships
- Master projects
- Funded research
- EPFL academic rankings
- KTI/CTI
- Startups
- Professional insertion of students
- Innovation for Industry
Location of Master Project since 2004


In Industry: 62%
Other Universities: 38%
STI Internship offers since 2012

Since 2012:
580 companies
2,400 offers

Switzerland: 66%
France: 17%
Rest of Europe: 11%
USA/Asia: 6%

**In 2016:**
- Electrical Engineering: 497 offers (+10% vs 2015)
- Mechanical Engineering: 336 offers (+21% vs 2015)
- Microengineering: 416 offers (+25% vs 2015)
- Materials Sciences: 321 offers (+25% vs 2015)
### STI Internship offers by country

#### Table 1: STI Internship offers by country

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#### Table 2: STI Internship offers by country

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### Internship countries of STI students

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Information and contacts

- For further information, please visit the internship page of your section:
  - http://sti.epfl.ch/smx/stages

- Depending on your inquiry, you can contact the following persons:
  - Sebastian Gautsch
    STI
    Internship Coordinator
  - Homeira Sunderland
    SMX
    Deputy Head
  - Danièle Utz
    SMX
    Administrator
The x-grants are a new way to encourage bachelor and master students to develop their ideas while keeping as objective to create their own business. A grant of about CHF 10'000 is intended to support entrepreneurial projects. In order to expand their networks, the students will also have the opportunity to spend 1 to 2 months in the well-known Silicon Valley by taking advantage of a "desk" provided by the VPI at the offices of Swissnex San Francisco on Pier 17. Obviously, this opportunity is offered to a limited number of students through a selection process. Do not hesitate to contact us at xgrant@epfl.ch
Thank you for your attention 😊