

# AKADEMIE

## Knowledge hub

The Empa Academy, the institute's platform for knowledge transfer and public dialog, is turning 15. What can the Academy offer? What does the future hold? An interview with Academy Director Anja Pauling.

INTERVIEW: Rainer Klose / PICTURE: Empa

**Ms. Pauling, the Empa Academy is supposed to disseminate the knowledge garnered here at Empa. How do you achieve this?**

A central element is the academy building on the Dübendorf campus with its flexible event rooms and state-of-the-art infrastructure. This is where the majority of our meetings, conferences, courses and public events take place. It also provides space for exhibitions, which is being used frequently in the scientific arena, but also in the exchange with industry. This enables us to live up to our role as a "center for knowledge transfer".

**You offer courses and other training events for science, industry and society. Where do the ideas for them come from? Is the Empa Academy also open to external input? Which wishes can be fulfilled?**

The Empa Academy is a service for and by the scientists who work at Empa. Consequently, the topics are rooted in Empa's research areas, but absolutely from outside, too. If topics are "hot" or controversial – such as nano-technology or alternative energies at the moment – they surely will figure on our planning. However, new contents for courses also often spring from our events. We distribute questionnaires among our participants and frequently happen upon fresh themes.

**The Academy is also responsible for bringing Empa scientists into contact with industrial partners. How do you go about this?**

Empa is known for its applications-oriented research and collaborates intensively with external partners, especially from industry. What many people don't know: our range of topics is vast. For instance Empa investigates wa-

ter-resistant wood, new materials for wound healing or cutter blades made of ceramics and much more. Some-times not even all the companies involved in these very fields are aware of this. And that's where the Academy comes in: organizing suitable events for the exchange with industry such as the newly established series of "Technology Briefings".

**Can people still use the Empa Academy even if they don't have much to do with materials science?**

Actually, we have also been renting out the Academy to externals for a while now. This is particularly interesting for companies or associations that are involved in similar fields to Empa as we can "enrich" their events with lab visits, tours or talks, which always goes down really well. And the Dübendorf campus is easily reachable by plane, train, tram or car, too.

**You have been heading the Academy since last fall. What are your plans? What programs and activities can we expect in the future?**

Next year, the Empa Academy is celebrating its 15th anniversary. My predecessor, Anne Satir, put together a top-class program over the years. I intend to build on this and take it to the next level. I am currently hatching a couple of new ideas concerning event forms or the use of the premises in Dübendorf and St. Gallen to make Empa's activities even more visible. The realization of the lighthouse project NEST will enable us to expand our possibilities noticeably as we will also have seminar rooms in NEST – right next door to the Academy – that will be available to the public. I'm really looking forward to watching the Empa Academy develop further and hope that many EmpaNews readers will find their way to our events.

The Empa Academy's current program is available at [www.empa-akademie.ch](http://www.empa-akademie.ch)

