TOWARDS NEW CHALLENGES
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François-René de Chateaubriand, in *Memoirs from Beyond the Grave*, concerning the events of March 30, 1814, in the Battle of Paris.

L’X, like France, is old, and at the same time, it is brand new. Polytechnique, like France, remains itself amidst all changes. I must seize this opportunity to pay tribute to all that has been achieved here and all that École Polytechnique has embodied since its inception. It fills me with respect, with emotion. The state wanted École Polytechnique to provide its students with a high scientific culture and to prepare them to become the leaders of the nation. And, indeed, that is what happened. For this reason I would like to salute this academic success…


**MAJOR DATES OF ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE**

1794
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École Polytechnique becomes a member of Paris-Saclay University.
The strategic planning of École Polytechnique is based on an ambition: for l’X to make its mark on the 21st century and meet the scientific, economic and moral challenges facing France and the entire world. Its motto “Pour la Patrie, les Sciences et la Gloire” (For the Nation, for Sciences, and for Glory) is as pertinent as ever, even if the meanings of its three components have evolved over time:

- **For the Nation** signifies enhancing the sense of common good.
- **For Sciences**, in the plural sense, reminds us that the advancement of multidisciplinary science and technology remains the source of prosperity.
- **For Glory** embodies École Polytechnique’s standing among the global academic elites, the recognition it receives from employers on an international level, and the respect it garners from the public for the intellectual integrity and proficiency of Polytechnician students and graduates.

As a founding member with a leading role in the new Paris-Saclay University, École Polytechnique is fully committed to international competitiveness in higher education and research. To better meet the challenges of the 21st century, it is currently undergoing an ambitious transformation by renewing its academic programs, augmenting its research strategy, encouraging start-up creation, and actively reinforcing its connections with academic and corporate partners, both in France and abroad.

Internationally, where competition is fierce among the top academic establishments, École Polytechnique must distinguish itself in order to place higher in international university rankings such as the Shanghai Ranking. Its established and endorsed link with Paris-Saclay University will provide the additional benefits of increased legitimacy and international visibility.

Above all else, École Polytechnique’s reputation is nourished through the mobilization of the knowledge, energy, and strength of all its resources - students and researchers, professors and faculty members, support staff - and by the recognition it is given by all of its stakeholders - academic, political, and economic figures, the press and media, and the general public. Recognition of its scientific excellence, recognition of its commitment to the community and to society, recognition of the powerful growth dynamic which drives it ever-forward.

The new visual identity of École Polytechnique will be the vehicle for a renewed, contemporary, and forward-thinking image. The consistency of the three logos - École Polytechnique, the École Polytechnique Foundation, and the École Polytechnique Alumni Association - will even further promote the unity and renown of the Polytechnician community.

With its power to change public perceptions and portrayals, with its impact on both the collective and individual imaginations, our new iconic logo will be a symbol and driving force for our transformation.

Jacques Biot,
President of École Polytechnique
220 years of history and identity

1794-1804: revolution and Napoleonic period
École Polytechnique was founded in 1794, when scholarly members of the National Convention proposed the establishment of École centrale des travaux publics (Central School of Public Works), to alleviate the dearth of engineers and highly skilled leaders in France. Renamed École Polytechnique in 1795, its mission was to give students a well-rounded scientific education with a strong emphasis in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, and to prepare them upon graduation to enter the national institutes of public works, such as École d’application de l’artillerie et du Génie (School of Artillery and Engineering Applications), École des Mines, or École nationale des ponts et chaussées (National School of Bridges and Roadways). 1804 marked a decisive turning point in École Polytechnique’s history, when Napoleon granted it military status and decided to “garrison” the students on the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève campus in Paris, where it remained until 1976. Napoleon also gave the school its flag and its motto: “Pour la Patrie, les Sciences et la Gloire” (For the Nation, for Sciences, and for Glory). Henceforth, École Polytechnique has always been visually recognized by its uniform, flag, motto, and insignia.

19th century: thrust into the upheaval of the times
The history of École Polytechnique is closely tied to the periods of political, economic, and social upheaval of the 19th century. Thus Polytechnicians participated valiantly in the Battle...
of Paris in 1814 and in the French Revolutions of 1830 and 1848. In 1830, the École Polytechnique insignia began to be engraved on the buttons of the students’ uniforms, with its prominent military features: the helmet, armor, crossed cannons, and nautical anchor. These elements have been the symbols of École Polytechnique for over 150 years. The name of École Polytechnique has been adapted through the course of the country’s various political regimes, becoming “École Imperiale Polytechnique” (during the First and Second Empires), “École Royale Polytechnique” (after the Bourbon Restoration and July Monarchy), and simply “Polytechnique” (during the various Republics). Also during the 19th century, École Polytechnique started to be called “l’X”, first by its students, then by the general public.

20th century: wars lead to new orientations

After 1870, the Army reinforced its position as the Polytechnicians’ principal employer, but scientific studies were not abandoned. Polytechnicians still contributed to the rise of France: developing railways, creating new industries, and modernizing cities… After the torment of the two World Wars which had taken a heavy toll, École Polytechnique finally resumed its original academic mission. The relocation of École Polytechnique in 1976 to the city of Palaiseau, just south of Paris on the Saclay plateau, marked the beginning of a new era, oriented towards research and international development. For many years, the insignia itself was the École Polytechnique logo, with the drawing changing over time and new features being added or modified. The school motto was integrated into the insignia at the end of the 19th century. The wings, representing the Air Force branch of the military, also appeared in 1965. Thus the insignia and the École Polytechnique logo have never stopped evolving. The first veritable logo of École Polytechnique was created for the school’s bicentennial celebration in 1994. The color blue appears for the first time, paired with yellow and red, the colors traditionally attributed to each graduating class: yellow for odd-numbered years and red for even years. In 1994, the wings and the motto vanished from the modernized and streamlined logo.
École Polytechnique is a higher education and research establishment, proudly governed under the authority of the Ministry of Defense. Unique in its ambition and values, École Polytechnique aspires to instill in its students of all nationalities three virtues which are inexorably linked: a sense of the common good, a multidisciplinary scientific expertise of the highest level, and the spirit of civic responsibility.

École Polytechnique is simultaneously a high-level scientific academic establishment, a world-renowned research center, an engineering school supported by military values, and an institute born of the Enlightenment, taking a progressive and humanist view towards science.

The true value of École Polytechnique, which makes it today even more unique and irreplaceable than ever, lies within its original purpose: to provide an exceptional education with a strong emphasis in science, preparing bright young men and women to excel in high-level key positions, manage the most complex and ambitious projects, and produce the best results, all while maintaining a keen sense of their civic and social responsibilities.

Such is the true character of the education offered by École Polytechnique: to dedicate all of its being to the famous quote from the French Renaissance humanist, writer, and doctor Rabelais, according to which, “science without conscience is but the ruin of the soul”. It educates elites whose scientific, moral, and philosophic cultures are so solid that they may successfully direct the highest-performing companies and leading sophisticated organizations, while humanely and tactfully considering the complexity of their challenges, whether they be environmental, social, economic, medical, or even logistic or organizational.
THE BRAND ESSENCE
OF ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE

In a world where the life cycle of technology from innovation to obsolescence continues to accelerate, where transdisciplinarity opens ever-wider fields of exploration, new uses of the Internet and portable information have profoundly changed our relationship with knowledge. Thus we now expect universities to impart not only knowledge, but also compassion, in other words the values and ethics which will elucidate and guide the choices of the world’s future leaders.

École Polytechnique not only trains scientists, it trains critical and creative minds that dare to take the leaps necessary for creating a business, for innovating, and for inventing. École Polytechnique not only prepares its students to assume responsibilities, it gives them a sense of responsibility.

In short, the motto of l’X is more alive than ever.

THE FEMININE SIDE OF ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE

When it was established, admission to École Polytechnique was reserved exclusively for men. This led the young mathematician Sophie Germain to disguise herself as a man at the beginning of the 19th century in order to attend courses at École Polytechnique. She borrowed the identity of one of its alumni, Antoine Auguste Le Blanc, and sent her remarks to Joseph-Louis Lagrange, who became her friend and mentor after discovering the deception upon summoning her to discuss her brilliant responses. However, young women still had to wait until 1972 to be allowed to participate in the entrance exam and enroll officially.
Two strong iconic symbols

The new visual identity revolves around two essential iconic symbols which are integral to the heritage and brand of École Polytechnique.

The letter “X” has been another name for École Polytechnique since the mid-19th century, originating from the crossed cannons in its insignia. It is also said that the X is a symbol for the school’s scientific education, stemming from the ubiquitous x variable used in scientific and mathematic equations.

The insignia of École Polytechnique, a historical coat of arms which features the motto bestowed by Napoleon “Pour la Patrie, les Sciences et la Gloire”, is the symbol which represents the values of the school as well as its military character.

In the new logo, the letter X is formed by two intersecting lines drawn dynamically and confidently as if by a master calligrapher, appearing as firm as the military steel used in the crossed blades of two “Tangents” – the sword worn by Polytechnicians. Slightly asymmetrical, this X is not a perfect mathematical symbol but rather the powerful and modern expression of two lines of force.

Supported by the X, the insignia once again resembles a traditional engraving whose style is faithful to references from the Napoleonic era and with redesigned wings which lend further elegance and strength, while remaining consistent with the form of the X.

THE TANGENT / Unlike other French military schools, whose uniforms include either a saber or long dagger, École Polytechnique students wear an épée, a type of sword used for fencing. Its name “Tangent” stems from the fact that, when worn correctly, the sword falls tangentially to the red stripes down the pant legs of the uniform. The Tangent is conferred to each student by his or her mentor during a special ceremony, followed by a festive meal where traditionally the Tangent is the only eating utensil permitted.
Additional iconography

A lowercase “l” with an apostrophe allows the logo to work as an icon or to be read, reinforcing the secondary name of École Polytechnique, l’X (pronounced “lix”). A linguistic feature of the French language, the “l” emphasizes the singularity of École Polytechnique while celebrating its French heritage.

The classical cursive handwriting creates a break with the modern X, thus expressing the dual facets of the school: contemporary academics imbued with traditional values.

The name École Polytechnique is written in a modern sans-serif font, an indispensable complement to the classicism of the insignia and “l”. The font Avant-Garde was chosen for its rounded geometric lines and high legibility, with certain letters specifically reworked for additional emphasis and clarity. The use of all capital letters reaffirms the prestige of École Polytechnique.

With the inclusion of Paris-Saclay University in its logo, École Polytechnique positions itself as one of the leading institutes of higher education and research worldwide. This accentuates its desire to improve its international visibility and attractiveness, while maintaining its status as a top engineering school.

The logo is now a monochromatic blue, of the same hue as in the previous logo designed for the bicentennial in 1994. This blue strengthens the long-standing recognition of École Polytechnique.
The Alumni Association and Foundation of École Polytechnique

The new visual identity is ingrained in an overarching brand universe that applies to all of École Polytechnique’s communication tools and media.

The École Polytechnique Alumni Association (AX) and the École Polytechnique Foundation (FX) have also adapted their own logos to maintain consistency with the brand. The two visual cornerstones of the logo which are the insignia and the X are also iconic elements which fall within their graphical territory.
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François-René de Chateaubriand, in *Memoirs from Beyond the Grave*, concerning the events of March 30, 1814, in the Battle of Paris.

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