IMPRS-MCB Guidelines

2016

Please note that these guidelines might be subject to change. Any modifications will be communicated by the IMPRS office in a timely manner.

Last update: March 2016

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1. PROGRAM OUTLINE AND CHECKPOINTS

The International Max Planck Research School for Molecular and Cellular Biology was established in 2006 as a joint initiative of scientists from the University of Freiburg and the MPI-IE. It is our goal to provide talented students with excellent training opportunities in the fields of Molecular and Cellular Biology, Epigenetics and Immunobiology, thereby supporting their development into promising young researchers.

IMPRS-MCB is committed to scientific excellence and thus, the performance of all students is monitored on a regular basis. In particular, there are two major **checkpoints** for IMPRS students during the course of their PhD: finding a laboratory after their rotations and passing the first TAC meeting. Depending on the outcome of these checkpoints, a student may no longer qualify for enrolment with IMPRS (for details see sections 2.3. and 4.3.).

IMPRS-MCB students conduct their PhD thesis under the guidance of their direct supervisor and with the support of their thesis advisory committees. In addition, each student is required to participate in the IMPRS-MCB curriculum, which complements the laboratory training. This additional training program covers three major aspects - advanced scientific training, transferable/soft skills and networking.

The diagram on the next page depicts an average PhD at IMPRS-MCB and summarizes important information on requirements of the University of Freiburg and the structure of the IMPRS curriculum. Please note that the actual timing of training measures may vary depending on availability of courses.

2. PRE-PHD PHASE

There are two possible entry points to the program, in September (fall term) and in April (spring term). The frequency of recruitment rounds depends on the availability of PhD positions.

2.1. Introductory weeks

During the first two weeks all IMPRS students attend an introductory course to learn about safety regulations, the available scientific infrastructure (FACS, Imaging, Proteomics, Deep-Sequencing, Bioinformatics) and animal facilities (mouse house, transgenic services, fish facility, fly facility) at the MPI-IE. Classes are taught by the heads of the respective facilities.

There is also time available to get settled in Freiburg (e.g. city hall registration, opening a bank account, starting the apartment search etc.) and to prepare for the upcoming rotations.

2.2. Rotations – 3 x 1 month in different laboratories

One of the distinctive aspects of our program is a rotation period. Students spend one month each in three different laboratories before starting their PhD project. This is an important step towards identifying a suitable laboratory for their PhD thesis, as it allows them to experience three distinct lab environments and provides further insight into particular research topics. The rotations are also a chance for group leaders to ascertain which student will be the best fit for their groups. Finally, this rotation phase enhances communication and networking within the Institute.

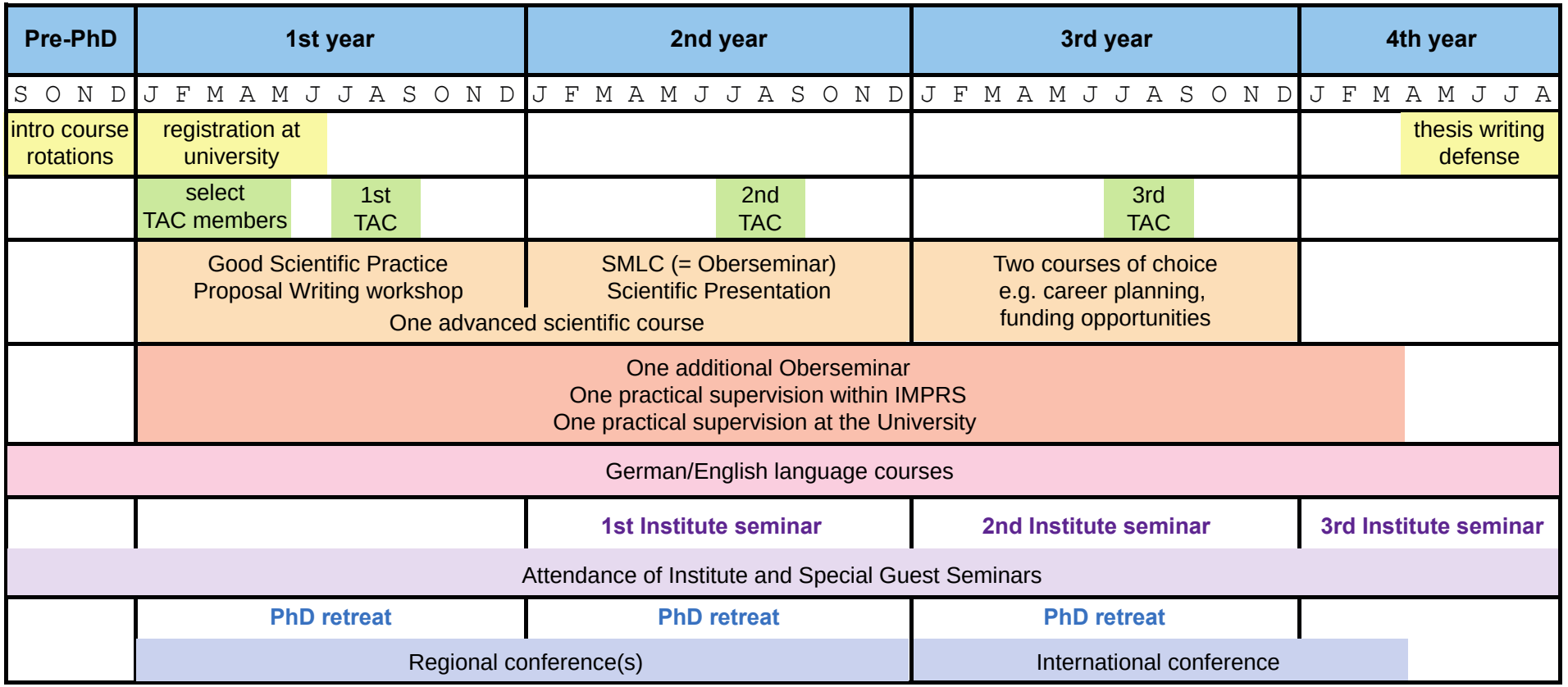

Figure 1: A schematic overview for your PhD at IMPRS-MCB

yellow: Pre-PhD phase and formal interactions with the University of Freiburg; *green*: TAC meetings; orange: mandatory IMPRS requirements; *light red*: additional mandatory University requirements; *pink*: language classes; *purple*: mandatory seminars; *blue:* conference

Most students rotate with the three laboratories that offered them rotations during the interviews. If students receive more than three rotation offers they need to choose the three laboratories they want to rotate in by the time they accept the IMPRS-MCB offer.

Students are advised to contact group leaders in time to discuss their rotation project. Furthermore, it is recommended to actively interact with the group members and the PIs during the rotations.

Group leaders will evaluate students based on their performance during the rotation. They will inform the IMPRS coordinator whether they would principally consider the student as PhD candidate. The final decision then depends on the preference list of students and the number of open positions (see below).

2.3. Checkpoint: Finding a PhD lab after the rotations

After the rotation period the students need to find a match with one of the group leaders they rotated with in order to start their PhD work.

Seven days before the end of the third rotation the students should provide the IMPRS Coordinator with their list of preferences. The Coordinator will contact the preferred group leaders and check if the group leader is willing to accept the student. If there is no match, the IMPRS Coordinator will, in agreement with the student, contact the next group leader on the list. On rare occasions, students do not find a match with any of the rotation laboratories. In this case, a fourth rotation can be considered. However, if there is no match after the fourth rotation, the student no longer qualifies for enrolment with IMPRS.

2.4. Direct Take

Occasionally, there is a student who receives an offer to directly join a group during the interviews. If the student accepts such a “direct take”, he/she will start in the chosen laboratory after the introductory course.

Please note that IMPRS-MCB encourages students to do rotations and thus, direct takes should remain an exception.

3. UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

All IMPRS students are enrolled as doctoral students with the University of Freiburg and thus, it is also the University of Freiburg that awards the doctor title (the German Dr. rer. nat. which corresponds to an American PhD). The graduation criteria of the University of Freiburg as laid down in the *Promotionsordnung Biologie* are therefore applied to their full extent.

3.1. Official supervisor for PhD

IMPRS students require an official supervisor for their PhD. All senior PIs and most of the junior group leaders have “Promotionsrecht” at the Faculty of Biology and thus, are eligible to supervise their own PhD students. If this is not the case, the IMPRS office will discuss alternative options with the respective students.

3.2. Selection of Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) members

Students have to select three TAC members within the first **5 months** of starting the PhD project. Please note that TAC members need to be determined before registration with the Faculty of Biology (see registration form below). More details can be found in section 4.2.

3.3. Registration as PhD student with the Faculty of Biology

You must register as a PhD student at the Faculty of Biology within **6 months** after joining the thesis laboratory. The application for registration has to be handed in to the doctoral studies program office:

Ms Renate Kendlinger, Promotionssekretariat, Fakultät für Biologie
Raum A 310, Schänzlestraße 1, 79104 Freiburg
Phone: 0761 203 2806
Office hours: Monday – Thursday 10 am to 2 pm

The application has to include the following documents:

(1) **Completed form "Registration for doctoral study"**
The Form can be downloaded from:
http://www.bio.uni-freiburg.de/studies/doctorate/promotion-im-fachbereich-biologie_en?set_language=en)
Fill out the form on the computer and send one unsigned copy by e-mail to Renate Kendlinger (renate.kendlinger@biologie.uni-freiburg.de) and take two signed printouts to the graduate studies program office.

(2) The **original** of your **school-leaving certificate** granting entry to institutions of higher education (the necessary copy will be prepared at no cost by Ms Kendlinger). If the certificate is not in German or English, an official translation has to be provided.

(3) **Resumé** (curriculum vitae) including all data on previous courses attended (course certificates and/or transcripts) and the exams successfully passed.

(4) The **original** of your **Bachelor and Master degree certificates** or **diploma** (the necessary copy will be prepared at no cost by Ms Kendlinger). If the degree is not in German or English, an official translation has to be provided.
(5) If your degree has been awarded from a non-EU University, confirmation that the degree is considered equivalent to a German masters' degree (available from the IMPRS office).

(6) Recent **good conduct certificate** available at the Freiburg city council, Amt für öffentliche Ordnung, Basler Strasse 2, 79100 Freiburg (http://www.freiburg.de/pb/,Lde/205332.html?vbid=104368&vbmid=0)

The IMPRS office offers support and further information if needed.

3.4. Matriculation or Registration with the University of Freiburg

Once you have been officially accepted as doctoral student by the Faculty of Biology, you need to either matriculate or register with the University of Freiburg at the Student Registration Office (for German students) or at the International Admissions and Services (for international students).

Registration is for free and will provide you with an UniAccount with all IT services and the possibility to participate in the course program of the International Graduate Academy (IGA).

Matriculation offers several additional advantages but includes a social and administrative fee of currently 142 Euros per semester. You will receive a UniCard, which has the following functions:

- student identity card
- identity card for the SemesterTicket
- cashless payment at cafeterias and copy machines
- library card for the University Library; also for cashless payment of small fees
- cashless deposit to the advance payment account for using telephones at the Student Village dormitories
- key card for accessing buildings and rooms

More information on matriculation and registration can be found on the respective webpages and can be downloaded from the IMPRS website.

3.5. Important requirements by the Faculty of Biology

To obtain the PhD degree from the Faculty of Biology at the University of Freiburg, IMPRS students have to fulfill the following Faculty requirements in addition to the IMPRS program requirements:

(1) **Two Advanced Literature Seminars** in the field of Biology (called Oberseminar)
The mandatory SMLC counts as one Oberseminar.

(2) **Two practical supervisions**
One of these has to be performed in the framework of the Faculty of Biology, the second one can be carried out with IMPRS-MCB or any other Faculty.

(3) **Affiliation on publications**
The University of Freiburg has to be used as second affiliation (University of Freiburg, Faculty of Biology, Freiburg, Germany) on any publication resulting from the thesis project.

For more details on these requirements, see section 5.4.

3.6. Thesis Writing and Defense

Guidelines on the preparation of the thesis and format of the defense can be found on the website of the Faculty of Biology and on the IMPRS website. It is recommended to calculate two months for the time between thesis submission and defense date. Further details can be found in sections 7.1 and 7.2.

4. SUPERVISION AND THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Each student is directly supervised by one group leader and a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of two additional experts in the field. The TAC has a very important mentoring function. The committee members support both student and supervisor to successfully complete the PhD project, i.e. graduation and publication. The regular meetings (at least once a year) are platforms to discuss general and methodological aspects of the project, to evaluate the progress of the project and the student's development, to provide additional guidance and suggestions as well as to identify potential problems. In accordance with the new guidelines by the Max Planck Society, supervision agreements that stipulate the student's and PI's rights and responsibilities have been implemented starting with the Class of 2015.

4.1. Supervision Agreement

The supervision agreement stipulates the rights and responsibilities of the student and the PI in accordance with the Guidelines of IMPRS-MCB. Within the first **3 months** in the chosen PhD lab, the student, PI and IMPRS coordinator meet to go over the supervision agreement. At the end of this meeting both the student and the PI sign the document.

4.2. Selecting TAC members

Within **5 months** after the start of the PhD project students select three TAC members in consultation with their supervisors. If there are difficulties in TAC assembly, the IMPRS coordinator can also give advice. It is important that the students actively participate in the selection of the committee members and feel confident to ask for advice or to approach them in a problematic situation. The student can contact TAC members in between the official meetings if he/she needs their help in any aspect of the PhD.

The student is expected to officially invite the selected TAC members and explain their responsibilities. He/She also needs to inform the IMPRS office about the final TAC composition. Committee members will sign the official acceptance form (IMPRS PhD registration form available from the IMPRS office) during the first TAC meeting.

Please consider the following rules for TAC assembly:

(1) the direct supervisor

(2) an expert on a similar topic from a different institution in Freiburg, i.e. the University for MPI-IE students or the MPI-IE for university students. If there is no specialist in Freiburg, this TAC member can also be from another institution.

(3) an IMPRS faculty member ideally from the same institution as the direct supervisor, working on a related but not identical field. He/she needs to be independent from the direct supervisor.

For students who are supervised by junior group leaders, one member of the TAC has to be a Professor from the Faculty of Biology at the University. A list of possible options is available online: http://www.bio.uni-freiburg.de/studies/doctorate/promotion-im-fachbereich-biologie_en?set_language=en

Please note that it is also possible to invite an additional guest to the TAC meetings, e.g. the direct lab supervisor or an internal / external collaborator.

4.3. Checkpoint: 1st TAC meeting

The first TAC meeting must take place within **6-9 months** after the start of the PhD project. The main goal of this meeting is to assess the quality of the project proposal, the intellectual capacity of the student, the feasibility of the project and the supervision by the group leader. It is mandatory that the TAC approves the continuation of the student at this point. If the TAC raises concerns regarding any of the above-mentioned points, there are the following options:

(1) In extreme cases the TAC can immediately recommend that the student should change the project, join another laboratory within IMPRS or leave the IMPRS program.

(2) If the TAC feels there is the potential for improvement, a three months extension can be granted and specific measures should be outlined. In the next TAC meeting, the situation will be evaluated again and a final recommendation will be made.

If the TAC recommends that the student should change laboratories or leave the program, the case will be discussed by the IMPRS steering committee, which will make the final decision. Only the IMPRS steering committee has the right to exclude a student from the program.

4.4. Further TAC meetings

The second meeting should take place within **12 months** after the first TAC meeting (or at a date decided during the first meeting). The main goal of the meeting is to monitor the project progress and get strategic and technical input from the TAC members. In addition, university requirements and the student's participation in the IMPRS curriculum are discussed.

The third meeting should take place within **12 months** after the second TAC meeting (or at a date decided during the second meeting). Depending on the project's progress, the committee will decide whether this is the final TAC meeting (and indicate in the report that you are ready for graduation) or whether one more meeting should take place (within 12 months or earlier). During this TAC meeting the committee should discuss if and for how long the contract of the student needs to be extended. It should also be made clear that students should start to think about their career development. In particular, the committee should mention that students cannot assume that they can continue as postdoc in the PI's lab per default.

If needed, the fourth TAC meeting should be scheduled according to project progress however ideally not later than by the end of the 4th year. The committee decides if the student is ready for thesis submission and graduation.

In the last meeting a clear timeline regarding thesis writing and defense has to be compiled. In addition, the next career steps of the students should also be discussed.

4.5. Preparing a TAC meeting

In preparation of a TAC meeting the student has the following responsibilities:

(1) set a date with the TAC members and the IMPRS coordinator
It is recommended to do this well in advance (at least 6 weeks), as many group leaders have a very busy schedule.

(2) book a seminar room for 2 hours

(3) prepare the project proposal (1st meeting) or progress report (other meetings)
The proposal/report has to be sent to the TAC members and the IMPRS coordinator at least one week before the meeting.

(4) prepare a presentation of your PhD project (1st meeting) or new data (other meetings)
Presentations should not exceed 25 minutes.

(5) print the TAC forms sent by the IMPRS office and bring them to the meeting

4.6. Guidelines for the preparation the project proposal (1st TAC meeting)

In this proposal the student should present the main aims of his/her proposed PhD project. It is important that the student logically exposes the questions and presents an experimental plan on how to approach them. The proposal should be between **3-5 pages** long. Starting with the Class of 2015, IMPRS-MCB will organize a proposal workshop prior to the 1st TAC meeting.

All project proposals should contain the following sections:

- Introduction: Explains the background and significance of the proposed research.
- Aims of the PhD project: Contains the rationale/hypothesis and raises the specific objectives of the project.
- Project outline: Summarizes the experimental approaches used to address the specific aims.
- Preliminary results: Contains the preliminary results and experiments undertaken to date.
- Outlook: Outlines the experiments planned for the next 12 months and the rationale for these experiments.

4.7. Guidelines for the preparation a progress report (other TAC meetings)

For all following TAC meetings the student has to write a short progress report (**3-5 pages**), covering the following aspects:

- Brief introduction to the project
- Summary of the main question(s) and milestones set at the last meeting
- Summary of experiments undertaken and their results
- Experimental plan for the next 12 months

4.8. General outline of a TAC meeting

The TAC meeting usually takes 1.5 hours and should not exceed 2 hours.

The IMPRS Coordinator chairs the meetings. The coordinator should ideally be present at all meetings but has to attend the first and the last TAC meetings. If the coordinator is not present, one of the TAC members but not the direct supervisor will chair the meeting. The chair moderates the meeting, fills in the protocol and summarizes the meeting at the end.

There are three major parts in each TAC meeting:

(1) Presentation by the student
It should include all issues for which the committee's feedback is desirable. Thus, it can be more technical or detailed than the usual institute seminars. If work of other people in the laboratory is presented, it should be made clear that this is not the student's own data. The presentation should not exceed **25 mins**.

(2) Discussion of the data
The TAC makes comments, raises questions and provides suggestions. This results in specifying the milestone experiments for the next year.

(3) Individual conversations with student and supervisor
These meetings are the opportunity for both student and supervisor to discuss confidential issues (e.g. problems with the student/supervisor). Any critical points need to be documented in the confidential part of the protocol.

Afterwards formal issues can be discussed if necessary (e.g. university requirements, contract extensions…). Finally, the protocol is signed by all TAC members and the chairperson summarizes and closes the meeting. A copy of the non-confidential part of the protocol will be sent to all TAC members for their records. If the coordinator is not present at the meeting, the committee report needs to be handed to the IMPRS office no later than **1 week** after the meeting.

The student will also prepare a report after the meeting, which must be submitted to the IMPRS office within **1 week** of the meeting. At the same time, the student also has to submit an updated version of their "Overview: Curricular activities and other achievements" form.

5. IMPRS-MCB CURRICULUM

The PhD project constitutes the core of the scientific training. IMPRS-MCB students also participate in a broad curriculum that complements their laboratory training. This additional training program covers three major aspects - advanced scientific training, transferable/soft skills and career development & networking. The IMPRS curriculum includes mandatory and optional activities (see below). A summary of all curricular activities and other achievements will be added to the IMPRS PhD certificate.

5.1. Mandatory courses

All IMPRS students have to participate in the following course program:

Course	Duration	Trainer	Recommended time point
Introductory course	2 weeks	Heads of Facilities	Pre-PhD phase
Good Scientific Practice	2 days	Michael Gommel	1st year
Scientific Writing	2 days	Andrew Pospisilik or external trainer	before 1st TAC meeting or in 1st or 2nd year
Scientific Presentation	2 days	Rick Scavetta	before 1st Institute seminar
Scientific Methods and Logic Course (SMLC)	10 session a 2hrs	IMPRS faculty	2nd year
Advanced Scientific Methods (e.g. Galaxy, Statistics, Imaging, Animal Handling etc.)	NA	NA	1st or 2nd year
Two optional courses	NA	NA	NA
Proposal Writing Workshop	2 days	Andrew Pospisilik	before 1st TAC meeting

If students miss courses they have registered for without prior excuse, IMPRS-MCB will deduct the course fee from the students' travel fund. If students do not fulfill this mandatory program, IMPRS may not release their conference funds in the third year.

5.2. Additional training opportunities

In addition to the mandatory courses, the following optional courses are available:

Advanced Scientific Methods

Statistics for Biologists (2 days) *Martin Wolkewitz* (University)	once / semester
Bioinformatics/Galaxy Course (1 week) *Freiburg Galaxy Team* (MPI-IE/University)	2 – 3 times/year
Introduction to R (2 days) *Thomas Manke* (MPI-IE)	once a year
Advanced Imaging Course (1 week) *Dr. Roland Nitschke (University)* *(€750 per person; ½ price if the group leader is a member of SFB 850).*	several times/year
Advanced Animal Model Course (FELASA-B) organized in house by *Dr. Markus Josten (MPI-IE)* *This course is a requirement for students working with laboratory animals.*	twice a year

Transferable Skills/Career planning

Funding possibilities (1 day) *Patrice Wegener* (MPI Tübingen)	once a year
Career planning and preparing for the job interview (2 days) *External trainer*	once a year
Project Management *External trainer*	once a year
Paper Writing Workshop *Andrew Pospisilik* (MPI-IE)	once a year

Other courses can be attended at the **International Graduate Academy**, University of Freiburg. They are free of charge for registered PhD students. The current course program can be found here: https://iga.vm.uni-freiburg.de/iga/Default.asp?rq_Lang=en

5.3. Language classes

The MPI-IE offers free language classes in German and English. All IMPRS students are strongly encouraged to attend these classes, if needed. Please note that regular participation is a requirement. Should you miss the language courses frequently and unexcused, the course fee will be invoiced proportionately to you and you may not participate in the following courses.

5.4. Oberseminars and Practical Supervisions

The Faculty of Biology requires PhD students to conduct at least two advanced literature seminars ("Oberseminare") and two practical supervisions of laboratory classes.

"Oberseminars"

Students have to submit two Oberseminar certificates with their PhD thesis. The SMLC counts as one Oberseminar and thus, students have to attend one additional Oberseminar of their choice. Popular options are:

Galaxy Course
Winter and Summer Semester (organized by the Freiburg Galaxy Team)

Introductory lecture series on Epigenetics
Winter semester (organized by the SFB992 MEDEP)

Gene expression and proteomics of stem cells
Summer semester (organized by Gerhard Mittler)

Molecular Biology of Viruses
Summer semester (organized by Peter Stäheli)

The IMPRS office regularly provides you with a list of Oberseminars for the upcoming semester. Further information on Oberseminars can be found in the "Vorlesungsverzeichnis" of the University of Freiburg (currently only in German).

Practical Supervisions

Students have to submit two certificates resulting from supervision of practical laboratory courses.

One of these supervisions has to be performed at a University laboratory course, which is an official "Lehrveranstaltung" of the **Faculty of Biology**. To find these practical courses, check the "Vorlesungsverzeichnis" for lab courses within the Bachelor or Master Programs. Once you have found an interesting course, contact the course organizer to ask whether you can be an assistant. You can also approach IMPRS faculty members from the university and ask whether they organize courses and need help.

Due to changes in university education, the number of practical courses is reduced. Therefore, one practical supervision can also be carried out within the framework of the IMPRS program, e.g. supervision of a master, rotation, summer or internship student.

6. SEMINARS AND CONFERENCE

We strongly encourage our students to build up a large scientific network and to communicate their findings to other scientists but also to the lay public. To foster student interactions and strengthen the IMPRS-MCB identity, our PhD students organize a yearly PhD retreat. Furthermore, each IMPRS student is encouraged and financially supported to attend regional/national and international conferences to make connections within the scientific community. In the past year, we have also intensified the participation of PhD students in outreach activities, such as the Freiburger Wissenschaftsmarkt or the lecture series Forschung Höchstpersönlich.

6.1. Tuesday Seminars

Students are obliged to attend the Tuesday Seminar Series at the MPI-IE and from the second year onwards they will present their PhD project once a year. Exceptions are only applicable to students who work at a University laboratory. In these cases, students can attend their respective Department seminars as an alternative but they will still present within the Tuesday Seminar Series.

6.2. Other Institute Seminars

Students are expected to attend other scientific seminars such as Lab and Department meetings, Journal Clubs, Special Guest Lectures and the Friday Science Afternoon presentations. For Special Guest Seminars, active and regular interactions with guest speakers are strongly advised.

6.3. PhD retreats

PhD retreats are organized by the PhD students and take place once a year in June or July. It is a great opportunity for students to get to know their peers and the projects they are working on. Usually, all students present data and get feedback from their fellow students. In addition, there are also lectures by invited speakers. The IMPRS program strongly recommends participating in the PhD retreats.

6.4. Regional conferences

During the first two years IMPRS encourages students to attend regional or national conferences, such as TriRhena Clubs, SFB symposia or the Max Planck Epigenetics Meeting. Most of these conferences will be free of charge or only have a very limited registration fee, which should be covered by the PI. However, under special circumstances, IMPRS may agree to release up to 100 Euros of the student's conference fund for such an event.

6.5. International conferences

Students are encouraged to attend an international conference in their research field to present their work and start/improve their professional network. Every student has a dedicated conference fund of 1000 Euros to support an international conference towards the end of the PhD. To access this fund you need to

- inform the coordinator about the conference you would like to attend
- present your data (poster or talk)
- get the permission of your supervisor (the corresponding form is available from the IMPRS office)
- get the OK that your supervisor will cover any costs over 1000 Euros

Please note that IMPRS reserves the right to not release this money, if the student did not fulfill the mandatory course requirements or has missed several courses unexcused.

7. THESIS WRITING AND DEFENSE

According to the Max Planck Society guidelines for support of doctoral students and the IMPRS-MCB policy, the PhD should be finished within three to four years after joining the program (including the rotations period). Under exceptional and justified circumstances, extensions are possible to a maximum of five years. The PhD is considered completed after the doctoral exam has been passed.

7.1. Thesis writing

Before a student starts writing the thesis, the TAC needs to grant the submission of the thesis in the final TAC meeting. Furthermore, a clear timeline for submission and defense has to be agreed upon in this meeting.

Generally speaking, each IMPRS- MCB fellow has the right to spend a maximum of 3 months of his/her working time on thesis writing and 6 weeks for the preparation of the PhD exam. If experimental work is still needed, the PI may agree to extend the writing time to 4 months. Otherwise, if the 3 or 4 months are over and the thesis is still not submitted, the student's contract can be terminated or not extended.

Students are encouraged to use the office space assigned to each department for the writing of their thesis. Useful information on thesis writing and submission by former IMPRS students can be found on the intranet.

Students have the opportunity to print and bind the official copies for the University of Freiburg at the MPI-IE. Please contact Rose Black for more information.

7.2. Thesis submission and defense

While planning the last phase of the PhD it should be kept in mind that the defense will take place **6 to 8 weeks** after the thesis submission to the Graduation Office. The date of the exam depends on the time reviewers need to prepare the evaluation (up to 4 weeks), number of PhD students finishing at the same time (there is a limited number of possible dates during the week) and the schedule of the examining committee.

7.3. After the defense

Students should submit a copy of their University degree to the IMPRS office and a copy of their thesis to the MPI-IE library. IMPRS certificates are usually handed out at the yearly IMPRS graduation day. However, if needed, we also provide an advance copy.

All IMPRS graduates are encouraged to join the IMPRS Alumni group.

8. FUNDING

Since July 2015 all new IMPRS students receive a student contract in accordance with the guidelines of the Max Planck Society. Currently, the MPI-IE offers an E13 (50%) contract plus a 15% incentive premium. The initial contract is issued for three years with a 6 months probationary period. Extensions for one more year are possible. Under exceptional and justified circumstances, an extension into the fifth year can be granted. All extension require the approval by the managing director of the institute.

Students who were previously employed on a PhD stipend will continue to be financed via this model.

It is in the student's interest to discuss and plan the timeline of the final phase of the PhD with the supervisor and the TAC well ahead of time to avoid financial and visa related difficulties.

9. RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

If there are any conflicts that cannot be resolved by talking to the other party directly, the student should first contact the IMPRS coordinator and explain the situation. All conversations between the student and the IMPRS coordinator are confidential and the IMPRS coordinator will only take action upon consent of the student.
The student and the IMPRS coordinator will try to find a solution or decide upon the next required steps, which could entail the following:

- Scientific conflicts of opinion should be discussed in with the thesis advisory committee.
- Cases of scientific misconduct should be discussed with the “Ombudsmann” of the MPI-IE or the University.
- Other conflicts might have to be discussed by the IMPRS Steering Committee.
- For personal crises the University of Freiburg offers free counseling to PhD students.

10. SUPPORT FROM THE IMPRS OFFICE

The IMPRS office supports you with all formalities and legal issues. We make sure that the program is running smoothly and that you are provided with excellent training possibilities. We also track your progress regarding the TAC meetings and the IMPRS curriculum.

Please keep in mind that you need to let us know if you encounter any problems on either a professional or a personal level. We can only help you if we know about your problems!

We are always happy to get your feedback on the program and listen to your ideas or suggestions.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF IMPRS-MCB

The participation in the IMPRS-MCB program should be acknowledged in presentations and publications.

The logo of IMPRS-MCB can be downloaded from the IMPRS website.

For publications, the following affiliation is suggested:
International Max Planck Research School for Molecular and Cellular Biology (IMPRS-MCB), Freiburg, Germany