



International Max Planck Research School

for Evolutionary Biology

Agreement of the International Max Planck Research School for Evolutionary Biology

Preface

The International Max Planck Research School (IMPRS) for Evolutionary Biology is a direct cooperation between the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Biology (MPI-EB), the Christian Albrechts University of Kiel (CAU) and the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel.

This international graduate school is dedicated to highest level research and training in all areas of contemporary Evolutionary Biology.

§ 1 General structure of the IMPRS graduate program

(1) All participating doctoral researchers will be eligible to receive their doctoral degrees (Promotionsurkunde) from Kiel University or Lübeck University, following the official Doctoral Degree Regulations (Promotionsordnung) of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences or Doctoral Examination Rules and Regulations (Promotionsordnung) of the Faculties of Computer Sciences / Engineering and Natural Sciences respectively, and the general guidelines of the universities.

Participation in the IMPRS for Evolutionary Biology will be documented with an official IMPRS certificate after the graduation.

After a training phase of six months, the doctoral project should be completed within three years. All scientific work in the program is based on the Max Planck Society's rules for good scientific practice.

(2) The working language of the school is English.

(3) It is mandatory for all doctoral researchers to apply for acceptance as a doctoral candidate at their respective university's faculty (entry into the doctoral degree list) before the commencement of work on the doctoral project.

Furthermore, all doctoral researchers are obligated to register online for the doctorate statistics. By law, universities have both the permission and the obligation to collect data from you as a doctoral candidate and deliver them to the statistical office of the federal state of Schleswig Holstein.

In addition to the faculty registration, the IMPRS strongly advises all doctoral researchers to enroll at the university. This gives them access to all benefits reserved for matriculated students.

IMPRS doctoral researchers also need to register with the university's training center for young researchers (CAU Graduate Center, Lübeck University CDSL) in order to access their offers of soft skill courses or general support in areas of interdisciplinary qualifications, funding, consulting of doctoral teams, among others.

(4) The doctoral researchers are supervised by their primary supervisor, who is the PI and member of the IMPRS for Evolutionary Biology faculty in whose research group the doctoral researcher performs her/his doctoral project.

The primary supervisor and the doctoral researchers are required to appoint a secondary supervisor. This is a PI who is an expert in the field of the doctoral project and who will establish and maintain a close contact with the doctoral researcher.

The secondary supervisor can be a member of any German or international institution. She/He must be a person who has agreed to take over supervision of the doctoral researcher in the unlikely event that the primary supervisor becomes unavailable. It is therefore essential that the secondary supervisor remains up to date about current progress and future plans.

(5) Thesis advisory committee (TAC): Committee of the primary supervisor, the secondary supervisor and up to two other members, whereby one could be an external member or a postdoc from a lab of the faculty who is independent from the primary supervisor.

(6) The graduate program consists of a training program and the dissertation. Both should be discussed with and guided by the primary supervisor and a thesis advisory committee.

- a. Training program: complementation of the skills and experience of the doctoral researcher
- b. Dissertation: independently compiled scientific output of the doctoral project. It follows the official statutes (Promotionsordnung) of the degree awarding university. The dissertation has to be written in English.

The participation in the IMPRS for Evolutionary Biology and the detailed (additional) curriculum will be certified individually by the IMPRS.

§ 2 Supervision and dissertation

(1) Once admitted, the doctoral researcher will work closely with her/his primary supervisor on finding a doctoral topic. Besides the guidance from their primary advisor, doctoral researchers are also mentored by their secondary supervisor and the other members of their thesis advisory committee (TAC).

The secondary supervisor is a back-up in the event that the primary supervisor cannot fulfill her/his task for a (temporary) period of time and is also a member of the TAC.

The TAC should be formed within the first 6 months and its members are jointly elected by the doctoral researcher and her/his primary supervisor. The TAC members are not necessarily the opponents during the dissertation defense. The committee should meet for the first time within 9 months of the doctoral project, further meetings should take place once per year. A minimum of two TAC meetings is required.

The purpose of meetings with a thesis advisory committee is to guide and advise the doctoral researcher in all aspects and development of her/his doctoral project and to monitor the her/his work progress. In addition, they are also intended to make suggestions for participating in specific curriculum modules that should complement the skills of the doctoral researcher and to assist her/him in all aspects of career planning and networking.

(2) Before the first TAC meeting, the doctoral researcher should have completed a written progress report. In general, the report will indicate the progress to date and, most importantly, the plans for the future including a timeline with defined milestones. It should not exceed 5000 words. This report will be sent to all members of the thesis advisory committee at least seven full days before the meeting.

At the TAC meeting, the doctoral researcher will present her/his plans during a 30-minute presentation. All committee members will have read the report and will discuss the proposed work in detail, the main aim being to provide critical and constructive feedback to the doctoral researcher before putting it into practice.

(3) The second TAC meeting should normally be called by the doctoral researcher 12-15 months after the first meeting. The doctoral researcher will present her/his research progress in a written and oral way. The research and additional curriculum schedule of the last and for the next period should also be planned/adjusted during these meetings. A positive evaluation by the thesis advisory committee members at this meeting is essential for the doctoral researcher to continue in the program.

Thereafter, TAC meetings should be ideally called by the doctoral researcher once a year as described above. During each of the meetings, the doctoral researcher should get the possibility to talk to the members of the TAC committee without the presence of the primary supervisor and vice versa.

The doctoral researcher is obliged to document the meetings as well as the courses taken and day equivalents achieved to the program coordinator using standard forms.

More details can be found in the TAC checklist.

(4) The TAC members are asked to actively collaborate with the doctoral researcher, e.g., to read and comment on drafts of manuscripts.

(5) If potential problems should evolve between the doctoral researcher and the supervisor, both parties are encouraged to address the thesis advisory committee, which will try to solve it.

§ 3 Additional curriculum

(1) Besides their own scientific research culminating in the doctoral dissertation, the doctoral researchers are obliged to complete an additional training program. It has been designed to complement the skills and experience that the doctoral researchers already have. The additional curriculum is individually tailored to the doctoral researcher's specific demands. The doctoral researchers are flexible to visit different teaching modules, after discussing this with their supervisor and thesis advisory committee.

(2) A "day equivalent" factor has been established and the program aims for a minimum of 60 day equivalents over the doctoral project period. A report about the courses taken and day equivalents achieved during the year should be provided for the TAC meetings. A signed copy should be handed in to the coordinator.

(3) The major elements of the curriculum include:

a. Initial training phase

Before the actual start of the doctoral project or accompanying it, the doctoral researchers are asked to improve their skills if necessary. The doctoral researchers are also encouraged to do rotations in the participating institutions, preferably in the respective other location to become familiar with the IMPRS for Evolutionary Biology, its members, and research groups.

b. Celebration Day

Nine months into their project, the doctoral researchers introduce themselves and their work to the IMPRS and MPI EvoBio community. Each doctoral researcher will be asked to present a 15-minute talk about their doctoral project.

There are no strict requirements for the format. The primary supervisor will help to decide what the doctoral researcher should present. Each talk will be followed by a very brief (5 minute) question period.

c. Lectures and seminars

(1 day equivalent for a lecture, seminar or journal club per semester)

The lectures and seminars serve to sharpen the doctoral researchers' conceptual understanding of specific topics in evolutionary biology.

This will be complemented by participation in the ongoing group seminars and institutional literature club.

d. Practical courses and workshops

(1 day equivalent per day or 5 day equivalents per week)

The practical courses/workshops will provide an opportunity for the doctoral researchers to learn specific techniques.

e. Conference visits

(4 day equivalents for preparing the poster or talk)

Funding from the IMPRS is possible for visiting international conferences, conditional on presenting a poster or a talk.

f. Lab exchanges

(5 day equivalents per week)

These offer doctoral researchers the option to get an insight into another project or a new technique. They will be organized on an individual basis between doctoral researchers who are interested in this.

g. Soft skill training

(1 day equivalent per day)

These cover topics like presentation skills, grant writing, paper writing, teamwork, time management or job application. They will be coordinated by the university's training center for young researcher or the coordinator of the IMPRS. Each doctoral researcher is recommended to visit at least three different such courses.

h. Retreats

(2 day equivalents per retreat)

IMPRS doctoral researchers organize one retreat per year that is mandatory for all doctoral researchers. Faculty and teaching staff as well as guest speakers will also be included in the program.

i. Organization of a yearly workshop/conference

(5 day equivalents for working in the organization committee)

The IMPRS doctoral researchers are invited to organize a small conference or workshop once per year. The IMPRS can fund these events on request. It is aimed to invite international speakers who give lectures (and coaching modules if possible). Each doctoral researcher of the school should participate at least once in the organization committee.

j. Teaching (on a completely voluntary basis)

(not more than 5 day equivalents per 60 day equivalents)

This includes assisting with a university or MPI in-house course or supervising a trainee, bachelor or master student.

§ 4 Funding

(1) The best candidates who applied for and passed the IMPRS selection procedure have qualified for a 3.5 years period of funding (stipend plus funding contract) by the IMPRS for Evolutionary Biology. All doctoral researchers should aim to complete their dissertation within this funding period. Under certain circumstances funding may be extended beyond 3.5 years, but this depends entirely on the supervisor. It is important to discuss the possibility of this option with the supervisor at the outset: in many cases it will not be possible.

Doctoral researchers starting with a working contract in accordance with TvöD or TV-L (Collective Wage Agreement for the Civil Service) receive at least 65% of Pay Group13 during the entire period of their education.

Doctoral researchers who start with a six-month training phase receive a tax-free stipend (basic amount of 1,365 €/month plus 103 €/month “Sachkostenzuschuss”).

Furthermore, a health insurance subsidy of max 100 € is paid if the grantees choose a comprehensive health insurance cover. Stipend holders who are parents will be granted a monthly children's allowance of 400 € for the first child and 100 € for every further child.

IMPRS doctoral researchers at Kiel University can spend up to 5.000 € per year for research purposes. All additional research expenses will be covered by institutional funds or third-party funds.

(2) Depending on the financial situation of the graduate school, all IMPRS doctoral researchers are entitled to get funding for visiting international conferences, workshops, summer schools etc., conditional on presenting a poster or a talk or participating actively. Funding possibilities will be advertised. Only travelling, housing and fees for the conference and/or workshop can be paid by the IMPRS. Approval by the supervisor and the spokesperson of the IMPRS is necessary.

§ 5 Scientific results and publication

By law, all scientific results (e.g., original lab-books) have to be stored for ten years in the labs and are lab-property. Only copies for private documentation may leave the labs. All results should be published following the Max Planck Society's rules of good scientific practice. Furthermore, the IMPRS has to be mentioned with its full name in the acknowledgements of all publications, in which IMPRS doctoral researchers and associated members contributed.

If the doctoral researcher does not have the time to finish experiments (and possible publication work), the primary supervisor may ask someone else to finish the work. This third person might gain the right of first authorship depending on how much work still needs to be done.

All documents that are leaving the lab such as grant proposals, manuscripts (and also revisions of manuscripts) as well as abstracts for conferences have to be approved by the primary supervisor prior to leaving the lab.

With their signature, the doctoral researcher and her/his supervisors agree to this supervision agreement of the IMPRS for Evolutionary Biology.

Date

Doctoral researcher

Name in block letters:

Primary supervisor

Name in block letters:

Secondary supervisor

Name in block letters:

