



Regulations for the Doctoral Program Molecular Life Sciences

Version July 1, 2013

I. General Information

1. Overall Concept

The goal of the PhD program in Molecular Life Sciences is to recruit exceptional young scientists and to educate them in the area of Molecular Life Sciences over the course of their doctorate.

2. Program Overview

Over the course of the PhD program in Molecular Life Sciences, students will progress from a master's degree to a Dr. sc. nat. UZH or a Dr. eth. in 3-4 years. PhD students may select their research project's topic from a wide variety of topics in the area of Molecular Life Sciences. Their research contributes to the success of the Zurich's research community. Participation in the program depends on admission by the admissions committee. To complete the program, students must fulfill the following requirements:

- Participation in 4 of the programs modules, courses or tutorials in Science, one ethics course and one course on writing in science (6 ECTS Credits in total).
- Participation in at least one retreat, ideally during their first year (1 ECTS Credit).
- Completion of 5 additional ECTS Credits.
- Regular meetings with the doctoral committee.
- Submission and defense of a dissertation documenting the students' own original scientific research.
- Fulfillment of any other requirements set by UZH or ETHZ.

Depending on where students are matriculated, they will receive their degree either from the University of Zurich or the ETH Zurich.

The PhD program in Molecular Life Sciences is a member of the Life Science Zurich Graduate School (LSZGS).

II. Admission

1. Applicants must have earned a master's or an equivalent degree when they begin their dissertation. However, they need not have finished their master's at the time of their application and admissions interview.

2. Track I: Online Application on the LSZGS Website

Application deadlines are July 1 and December 1. The admissions interviews and lab tours take place over the course of three days in February (week 6) and September (week 36). The program coordinator will inform candidates whether they have been admitted at the latest four weeks after the application deadline.

Admission interviews take place on the first day, lab tours over the course of all three days.

During this time, applicants have the opportunity to meet with research group leaders who have open PhD positions.

By the Tuesday following the interviews, the applicants and the research group leaders submit their list of preferences to the program coordinator.

According to the rules of the Life Science Zurich Graduate School, the matching of candidates to research group leaders will be conducted simultaneously for all PhD programs.

3. Track II: Direct Application to a Research Group Leader

Applicants also have the option to apply directly to a research group leader, who may accept them as a doctoral student.

To be admitted to the MLS PhD program, doctoral students must apply to the program within six months of beginning their dissertation. The same rules apply for their interview and admission to the program as for candidates in Track I. The application deadlines are January 15 and August 15, the admissions interviews take place in week 6 and 36.

4. The program's official language is English. The admissions committee uses the admissions interview to ascertain whether a candidate's English skills are sufficient for communication in science.

III. Structure of the Doctoral Program

1. Curricular Portion

Module/Course	ECTS Credits
Compulsory modules (Ethics, Scientific Writing, 1st Year Presentations, retreat)	4
Core elective module (min. 2 tutorials)	3
Elective module	
Institute and group seminars, participation in a convention with a personal contribution, summer schools, etc.	max. 2
Transferrable skills	min. 3
Total	min. 12

2. Teaching Assistance

Obtaining a doctoral degree requires students at MNF (UZH) to participate in 100-420 hours of teaching.

In addition to teaching at the institutes (teaching bachelor and master's students, monitoring and grading exams, supervising master's students, etc.), students can also complete their teaching requirement at the Science Education Center (in the area of Life Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Geography).

Implementation of the teaching requirement should be conducted in consultation with the Studies Coordination in Biology according to the rules specified in the document "Teaching requirement for PhD students" (see www.biologie.uzh/studium/Doktorat.html).

3. Doctoral Committee and Doctoral Committee Meetings

The doctoral committee consists of three or four members:

- The direct advisor (MLS member).
- At least one other member of the MLS PhD program.
- At least one external member (not a member of the MLS PhD program).

The PhD students select the members of the committee with the understanding of their advisor.

The PhD students are responsible for organizing meetings. At least three members (including the PhD advisor) must attend.

The first meeting should take place after 6 months (as an exception and in consultation with the program coordinator, the meeting can be postponed to maximally 12 months after the beginning of the dissertation). A follow-up meeting should be scheduled every 12 months. The PhD defense may not take place more than 18 months after the doctoral committee's last meeting.

Students should prepare a research proposal for the first meeting, in which they describe their project, its scientific background, preliminary results as well as future goals and experiments. PhD students should send their research proposal to the committee and the program coordinator two weeks ahead of meeting. The program coordinator should give the PhD students guidelines for their research proposal.

PhD students should present and defend their research proposal during the first doctoral committee meeting.

In the case of an unsatisfactory performance, doctoral students can repeat the doctoral committee meeting and defense of their research plan after three months. If they fail a second time, they will be expelled from the program.

The head of the doctoral committee should send a brief report to the coordinator after every meeting. The report should record the date, the members present, the committee's decision (requirements fulfilled/ not fulfilled) and any specific recommendations. The program coordinator gives students a form for this report. The report must be signed by the members of the doctoral committee as well as the PhD student and will be considered the doctoral agreement.

PhD students should send the members of the doctoral committee and the program coordinator a progress report two weeks ahead of all subsequent meetings.

If a PhD student repeatedly fails to fulfill these requirements, the Steering Committee can expel him or her from the MLS program.

IV. Doctoral Degree

Confidentiality

An important aspect of the doctoral program is the exchange of scientific data and results between the various institutes at both universities. Such results should be treated as strictly confidential by all those involved and may not be passed along to individuals outside of the program if they have not yet been published by the author or their initial discoverer. No member of the doctoral program may use scientific results to the disadvantage of the university. In particular, no member may infringe upon the University's right for the protection of its intellectual property by publishing data prematurely.