

A Guide for the Doctoral Study Program of the Department of Infectious Diseases

As of April 2005, participation in the Doctoral Study Program (DSP) is obligatory for every student in the Department of Infectious Diseases who wants to receive the doctoral degree from the Faculty of Biosciences (Dr. rer. nat. which is equivalent to PhD).

The program is composed of three parts and based on the 'Promotionsordnung der Universität Heidelberg für die Naturwissenschaftlich-Mathematische Gesamtfakultät', which is binding. The DSP aims at improving the student's knowledge and experience beyond the scope of her/his individual scientific project and to ascertain an organized training and education during the time of the doctoral study project. To each doctoral student a supervisor is assigned, who is the direct contact person. Within the first six weeks after the start of the doctoral study work, the student has to select two examiners (first and second examiner) of the thesis. Of course, one of them can be the direct supervisor. The selection of the examiners has to be done according to the rules of the Faculty of Biology (see homepage of the Faculty of Biology - List of examiners). The examiners will confirm by signature on the DSP registration form their willingness to support the student. The student will receive this form in the central registration office of the DSP, located in the Neuenheimer Feld 344, 1st floor, room 103.

The examiners will continuously be informed about the status of the project by the student (see below). Signatures will be made on the 'blue sheet', which the student will receive in the central registration office of the DSP. With this signed blue sheet, the student must register **stringently before** the start of the doctoral study work at the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Biosciences. In addition, each student participating in this study program must register in the central registration office of the doctoral study program located in the Neuenheimer Feld 344, 1st floor, room 103 also stringently before the start of the doctoral study work.

Supervision within the Doctoral Study Program of the Department of Infectious Diseases

To each doctoral student a supervisor is assigned, who is the direct contact person and who will advise and support the student in all daily questions arising during the project. Furthermore, the first and second examiner will support the work of the student

during the whole duration of the project and participate in regular meetings (usually the Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings or *ad hoc* meetings, depending on demand).

Duration of the PhD study project

On the average, the PhD project should last about three years. In case that an extension of the time for the PhD project is necessary, each student has to inform in writing the first examiner and the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Biosciences about the scheduled length of the extension.

Study program

The DSP consists of compulsory elements and elective program elements as described in detail below. IT IS THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH DOCTORAL STUDENT TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS DSP. THIS RELATES TO ALL ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND SUBMISSION OF APPROVED PROJECT REPORTS.

A. Compulsory elements

1. PhD Project Reports and Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings.

Each student selects three to four scientists with expertise in the area of the project. They constitute the Thesis Advisory Committee. Two committee members should be the first and second examiner; the third member is the supervisor in those cases where the supervisor does not act as an examiner. Additional reviewers/advisors may participate in the TAC, depending on demand. It is encouraged that scientists from outside the institute are involved. The TAC meets with the student on a yearly basis, to monitor the student's progress. The first meeting should take place about 6-8 months after the start of the doctoral thesis. At each TAC meeting, the "DSP_TAC_protocol" is filled in and the TAC meeting is performed as described in this form. During the meeting, the student presents the current state of the project in an about 20 minutes oral presentation. Members of the committee will critically discuss the project, its future perspectives and advise the student on particular questions.

Participation in the PhD committee must be confirmed by signature by the supervisor on the 'blue sheet'.

All members of the TAC will receive the thesis proposal (first TAC meeting) or the written project reports (all further TAC meetings) at least one week prior to the TAC meetings. The thesis proposal and the project reports (each max. 5 pages, line spacing 1.5, font size 12, in English) are approved by the supervisor and send as electronic version to the secretariat of the DSP (Im Neuenheimer Feld 344, 1st floor, room 103). Receipt of the report is confirmed by the DSP office by signature on the 'blue sheet'.

2. **Regular participation in internal progress reports** of the department/research team with regular presentation of the work by the student. Participation will be confirmed by signature by the supervisor every half year on the 'blue sheet'.
3. Regular participation in the **Journal Club** of the department/research team and presentation of scientific papers. Participation will be confirmed by signature by the organizer of the journal club every semester on the 'blue sheet'.
4. At least one time during the doctoral study period the student **attends a national or international meeting with peer reviewed abstract selection as presenting author**. Either participation with a poster or giving a talk counts as a presentation. Attending a conference once is the bare minimum. More should be strived for.

B. Elective Program Elements (2 per year)

1. Regular participation in a seminar series with invited external guests. For instance, participation in the CIID/Chica and Heinz Schaller-seminar series or SFB-seminar series such as those organized by e.g. SFB1129 or TRR179 applies accordingly. Participation will be confirmed by the organizer of the seminar series (e.g. by circulation of a participation list).
2. Participation in a methods course such as courses that are offered by other laboratories outside of the institute (e.g. EMBL, partner laboratory within a research network) or courses that will be established within the Department for Infectious Diseases. Participation will be confirmed by signature of the organizer on the 'blue sheet'. All courses (e.g. method practicals, soft skills etc.), which

are offered by the Hartmut Hoffmann-Berling International Graduate School of Molecular and Cellular Biology (HBIGS) are accepted by the DSP of the Department of Infectious Diseases.

3. Participation in a retreat with presentation of the work of the doctoral study by the student.
4. Supervision of bachelor or master students in a laboratory rotation.

The student is free to select two times the same element, e.g. participate in two seminar series within one year or two retreats. It is not mandatory that two different elective program elements are fulfilled.

C. Scientific Achievements and Miscellaneous

This section lists the PhD student's scientific achievements during the doctoral study period. These include publications as a first or co-author, as well as various events such as e.g. receiving a poster award or the prize for the best oral presentation at a conference.

In case of conflicts that may arise from the work on the dissertation, PhD students can **confidentially** contact either the DSP office of the Department of Infectious Diseases (contact: Dr. Ilka Rebhan; ilka.rebhan@med.uni-heidelberg.de) or the PhD office of the Faculty of Biology (contact: Dr. Anette Kurz; dekanat-bio@urz.uni-heidelberg.de). Should a need for mediation arise in the cooperation between supervisor and doctoral candidate from the work on the dissertation, doctoral candidates may also contact an independent ombudsperson at Heidelberg University (see link below).

<https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/beratung/ombudsperson.html>

At the end of the doctoral program, the blue sheet will be checked by the DSP office (Im Neuenheimer Feld 344, 1st floor, room 103) and, if all criteria are fulfilled, signed by the program director (Prof. Ralf Bartenschlager). Only then, the student can apply for the thesis defence at the Dean's office of the Faculty of Biosciences.

Questions referring to this DSP should be addressed to the central registration office:

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