



7. STUDENT REGULATIONS

These regulations conform to the Ph.D. regulations of the ETHZ and the UZH.

MISSION STATEMENT

The aim of the Ph.D. program in Molecular Life Sciences is to recruit and train outstanding young scientists during their Ph.D. thesis in the Molecular Life Sciences.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Molecular Life Sciences Ph.D. program is a 3-4 year M.Sc. to Ph.D. program. Participating students can choose from a broad selection of research topics and participate in cutting edge research. Enrollment into the program is decided by an admission committee. To graduate, students need to fulfill the following requirements:

- Completion of 4 scientific modules offered by the program and the Scientific Exposition and Ethics course (6 credit points altogether)
- Attend the MLS student retreat at least once, preferably in the first year (1 credit)
- Acquisition of another 5 credit points of advanced courses,
- Deposition and defense of a Ph.D. thesis describing the student's original research work
- Any other requirements imposed by the host institution (University of Zurich or ETHZ):
<http://www.mnf.uzh.ch/study/reglemente-merkblaetter/promotion.html?L=1>
https://www.rektorat.ethz.ch/doctorate/admin/DE_doc_regulations_2008.pdf

The final degree is conferred by either the University of Zurich or the ETHZ, depending on the academic affiliation of the host laboratory.

7.1. Admission procedure for students

The applicants are required to have a Master's degree or an equivalent when they start the Ph.D. thesis. Students are not required to have obtained their Master's degree at the time of application or interview.

Track I: Application to the program

The deadlines for application are July 1 and December 1.

Three-day interviews are held in February (week 6) and September (week 36), respectively. Invited candidates are informed by the program administrator no later than four weeks after the deadline.

The admission interviews are held on the first day, lab visits take place during all three days.

During the three days of interview, applicants will meet with group leaders who have an available Ph.D. position.

No later than Tuesday after the interviews the applicants as well as the MLS Faculty members send a preference list to the program coordinator.

The matching is done by the LSZGS jointly with all Ph.D. programs according to their rules.

Track II: Direct application to a Principal Investigator (PI)

An applicant has the possibility to directly apply to a research group and can be accepted by the PI.

In order to be part of the MLS Ph.D. program the student must apply no later than 6 months after the start of the thesis. For the interview and the acceptance into the program the same criteria are used as for track I applicants.

7.2. Thesis committee

The thesis committee consists of three to four members:

- The direct thesis supervisor (MLS member)
- At least one additional member of the MLS Ph.D. program
- At least one external member (not a member of the MLS Ph.D. program)

The student selects the members of his/her thesis committee members after consultation and in agreement with the PI.

7.3. Thesis committee meetings

The students are responsible for organizing the meetings. At least three members (including the thesis supervisor) have to be present.

Committee meetings will be held after 6 months (in exceptional cases after consulting with the program administrator no later than 12 months). Subsequent meetings are held every 12 months. The thesis defense must not take place later than 18 months after the last thesis committee meeting. In case that the PI and the student agree that the duration of the Ph.D. will significantly exceed 4 years, this should be communicated to the program.

For the first meeting the students write a project proposal describing their Ph.D. project in the format of a short grant application describing the background of their research field, preliminary results, the specific aims and planned experiments. This proposal has to be submitted to the thesis committee members and the program administrator at least two weeks before the meeting. The program administrator will hand out guidelines for the students.

The proposal has to be presented and defended by the students during the first meeting.

In case of unsatisfactory performance, the students can repeat the proposal defense after three months. If the students should fail a second time, they will be expelled from the program.

The chair of the thesis committee sends a brief report to the coordinator after each meeting stating the date, the members present, the committee's decision (pass/fail) and specific recommendations.

For the subsequent meetings the students have to submit a progress report two weeks before the meeting to the committee members and the program administrator.

Should a student repeatedly fail to do so, she or he may be excluded from the MLS program by the steering committee.

7.4. Course work during Ph.D. program

- Introductory courses

A variety of introductory courses and modules of different lengths will be offered throughout the year. The goal is to introduce the students to the various models, methods and techniques that are used by the MLS research groups. Moreover, students should get an overview of the research that is performed at the different institutes and broaden their general knowledge in Biology to complement their specific expertise in their field of Ph.D. work. The students need to gain a total of 6 credit points by attending different MLS modules. In general, 1 credit is awarded for 2-3 full course days. The students are required to earn the 6 credit points within the first 2 years of their Ph.D.

- Courses in Scientific Exposition and in Ethics

The attendance of a course in Scientific Writing and in Ethics is compulsory for MLS students. The program offers these courses once or twice per year. Alternatively, MLS students can attend similar courses organized by another program or by the LSZGS.

Advanced and transferable skill courses

The advanced courses may contain symposia, EMBO courses or similar courses.

A variety of transferable skill courses is offered by the Life Science Zurich Graduate School.

The advanced and transferable skill courses can be taken throughout the entire duration of the Ph.D.

In order to complete their Ph.D., students must acquire 12 credit points. During the Ph.D. a maximum of two credits may be gained through participation in a MLS committee. This requirement complies with ETHZ and University of Zurich regulations.

7.5. Thesis defense

The thesis defense complies with the rules of the host institution:

- http://www.rektorat.ethz.ch/doctorate/admin/de_doc_regulations_2008.pdf
- <http://www.mnf.uzh.ch/study/reglemente-merkblaetter/promotion.html?L=1>

In addition to the ETHZ or University diploma, students will receive a certificate from the MLS Ph.D. program stating their successful participation in the program.

The date and title of the defense must be communicated to the program administrator no later than one week in advance.