

# PhD Program Systems Biology Regulations

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The aim of this highly interdisciplinary PhD program “Systems Biology” of systems biological researcher of the University of Zurich and ETH in Zurich and Basel is to train students from various disciplines and departments including computer science and (bio)informatics, biological sciences, and engineering to become future leaders in Systems Biology. Systems Biology aims at the quantitative analysis and predictive mathematical modeling at all levels of biological organization. The PhD program “Systems Biology” provides students with the generic skills for working in this new scientific field as well as training in project-specific (biological and / or computational) aspects of their PhD work.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The PhD program “Systems Biology” is a 3-4 year PhD program. It is part of the Life Science Zurich Graduate School and collaborates with the program “Biomedicine” in the teaching of graduate courses. 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 from the Systems Biology program, students need to fulfill the following requirements:

- All requirements imposed by their host institution (ETH Zurich or University of Zurich) and home departments.
- Completion of the compulsory introduction course: “Systems Approaches in Biology” in the first year, in any case not later than 18 months after starting the thesis.
- At least 6 ECTS in total must be acquired from courses offered by the Systems Biology and/or Biomedicine programs.
- Deposition and defense of a PhD thesis describing the student’s original research work.

Students will receive a graduation certificate from the Systems Biology program.

The final doctoral degree is conferred by either ETH Zurich or the University of Zurich, depending on the academic affiliation of the host laboratory. In order to finish their doctoral studies, students must acquire 12 ECTS. This requirement complies with the regulations of ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich.

# **REGULATIONS FOR THE PhD PROGRAM**

## **1. Thesis committee**

Each student has to assemble a thesis committee consisting of at least three persons:

- The thesis supervisor
- A second member according to ETH Zurich or University of Zurich regulations (ideally, a member of the SysBio PhD program)
- A third member according to ETH Zurich or University of Zurich regulations (ideally, a member external to the student's host institution)

Further thesis committee requirements/details need to be in line with host institution departmental regulations.

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

One of the members – but not the student's supervisor - will chair the thesis committee.

With regard to the thesis committee, the Systems Biology PhD program complies with the regulations of ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich.

## **2. Research Plan**

After one year, at the latest, the student has to submit a research plan describing his/her proposed PhD work. The templates from any host institution department may be used. The research plan has to be uploaded into the DissGo or UZH MNF Student Admin database.

## **3. Thesis committee meetings**

The student is responsible for organizing the meetings. At least three members (including the thesis supervisor) have to be present. Committee members may participate via video conferencing. After the scientific part, you will have the chance to talk to your committee members without your PI (and also the PI without you) to discuss any non scientific aspects that you might consider important.

Committee meetings should be held after 9-12 months, after 2 years and if necessary after 3 years, depending on how advanced the student is with his/her work. Adjustments of timing are possible upon mutual agreement of PI and student. Prior to each meeting, please submit a short report (2-3 pages) about your progress to the committee.

Further rules on the committee meetings and reports follow the regulations of the respective host institution/department.

After every meeting students need to upload the respective thesis committee meeting report forms into the DissGo or UZH MNF Student Admin database.

#### **4. Course work during PhD program**

- **Thematic block course**

The PhD program “Systems Biology” offers courses with thematic focus on a) Systems Approaches in Biology (jointly with the PhD Program “Biomedicine”) and b) Computational Biology.

- **Courses of the Life Science Zurich Graduate School**

In addition to the courses offered by the individual PhD programs, the LSZGS offers a variety of cross-disciplinary courses that are of interest to students from different programs.

- **Courses of other programs in the Life Science Zurich Graduate School**

Students are free to take courses of other programs of the Life Science Zurich Graduate School (the number of participants might be limited).

#### **5. Thesis defense**

The thesis defense will follow the regulations established by the students host institute ETH Zurich or University of Zurich.

#### **6. Publications and Presentations**

Any publications with a PhD student as author or co-author should mention the PhD program “Systems Biology” in the author’s affiliation.

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