



Agreement on Training and Supervision

The IMPRS and MPIPZ Graduate School aim to provide first class training and education for outstanding doctoral students from all over the world in a stimulating research environment. The competitive doctoral programme will provide students with an excellent starting platform for a successful career in the field of plant biology.

The first page offers guidance to tailor the agreement and supports the initial stages of the PhD. The sections provided are intended as suggestions, which can evolve throughout the course of the PhD project. The content should be actively discussed to meet the current needs at the initial stages of the PhD project between the doctoral student and their direct supervisor. Potential changes might require an amendment.

Doctoral Researcher:

Mr. Ms. No Title

Last Name	First Name(s)	Current Academic Degree

Working title of Doctoral Research Project/Thesis:

Conditions for the Successful Completion of the Doctorate:

Meeting frequency (weekly, biweekly, etc.), meeting type (individual, lab meeting, progress report, etc.), meeting format (person, hybrid, online), communication times and channels (email, phone etc.)

Attendance of lectures, seminars, workshops, retreat, conferences, field travel, lab rotations:

specify year/stage of PhD

Access to required infrastructure

Training and embedding in core facilities etc.

For the Supervisor:

- Supervisors provide funding for an initial 36 months doctoral funding contract according to TVöD/TV-L 13, 65% salary.
- Extension will be discussed latest after 24 months and the extension should have a justified duration.
- Doctoral students have the right to apply for financial aid to visit conferences or courses.
- Supervisors allow the doctoral student the participation in appropriate soft skills courses, special training modules.
- Doctoral students have the right to take days of vacation per year according to the rules of the TV-L/TVöD.
- Supervisors undertake to provide the doctoral student with regular professional advice and to support his or her early scientific independence.
- Supervisors agree to attend all TAC meetings and should attend annual retreats.
- Supervisors must make sure that, in agreement with the doctoral student, two advisors will be identified within the first 3 months after start of the doctoral studies, to complete the thesis advisory committee (TAC).
- Supervisors should give feedback on the written reports.
- Supervisors are expected to serve as tutors on a reasonable number of thesis committees of other students.
- Supervisors will design the doctoral project in a way that it can be completed within the planned time frame and support adherence to the schedule.

For the Doctoral Student:

- Doctoral students must enrol at the University of Cologne where they will obtain the doctoral degree upon successful completion of the doctoral studies. The registration as a doctoral student must either happen before or immediately after the project start and the Graduate School office (gradschool@mpipz.mpg.de) supports doctoral students during the registration process. Doctoral students must remain registered at the University of Cologne for the entire duration of the doctoral studies. Registered doctoral students at the University of Cologne must become a member of the departmental Graduate School for Biological Sciences (GSfBS) and fulfil the GSfBS Core Programme.
- Each doctoral student should be supervised by a direct thesis supervisor and advised by two more independent scientists. At least one of the two co-advisors should be from another department or institution. One co-advisor can be a postdoc. A third co-advisor can be selected in justified cases. The direct thesis supervisor and the co-advisors comprise the thesis advisory committee (TAC). A TAC should be assembled within the first 3 months of the doctoral studies by the doctoral student and communicated to the Graduate School office. The Graduate School coordinator (gradschool@mpipz.mpg.de) joins TAC meetings depending on availability.
- The TAC will meet the doctoral student at least four times. TAC meetings are to be organised by the doctoral student. In preparation for TAC meetings, the doctoral student must submit a written report to the TAC members and the Graduate School office. Reports have to be submitted at least two weeks before each meeting and the Graduate School office informs the doctoral student about the scope of the report. The doctoral student additionally gives an oral presentation at each TAC meeting.
- The first TAC meeting should be scheduled within the first 5 months of the doctoral studies and prepared with a written report of not more than 1000 words. In case of problems or conflicts, the direct thesis supervisor and doctoral student should inform the Graduate School coordinator before this and other TAC meetings. The TAC must approve the doctoral student's progress to continue the project beyond the 6-month probationary period.

Please return the signed form to the Graduate School Office (email: gradschool@mpipz.mpg.de).
A copy will be forwarded to the doctoral student and all committee members

- The second TAC meeting should be scheduled after 12 months and prepared with a structured written report of about 3000 words. The doctoral student and the TAC should discuss whether the doctoral studies should be continued as originally planned. If the TAC does not approve the student's progress, the IMPRS Steering Board (for IMPRS students) or the Graduate Studies Committee (for MPIPZ Graduate School students) will be notified.
- The third TAC meeting should be scheduled after 24 months and prepared with a structured written report of about 3000 words.
- A final TAC meeting should be scheduled to discuss the content and structure of the doctoral thesis. Instead of a written report, a written outline of the doctoral thesis should be submitted to the TAC and the Graduate School office before the meeting.
- If the doctoral studies cannot be completed within 3.5 years, TAC meetings should take place every 6 months to facilitate submission of the doctoral thesis. Deviations from this rhythm must be approved by the TAC and communicated to the Graduate School office. A final TAC meeting to discuss the content of the structure of the doctoral thesis must be held.
- Appointments for the TAC meetings and the deadline for reports should be scheduled at the beginning of the doctoral studies, when this document is signed by all parties. The Graduate School office will ensure and monitor that meetings take place. Written reports and meeting minutes will be collected by the Graduate School office.
- Each doctoral student must attend a training on Good Scientific Conduct such as the one offered by the Graduate School for Biological Sciences (GSfBS).
- Each doctoral student should have the opportunity to present their work at a conference at least once during the doctoral thesis work.
- Each doctoral student must participate in a minimum of two courses/workshops and a public outreach module consisting of one writing activity and one public engagement activity during the doctoral period. The student selects appropriate courses/activities, integrating suggestions from the TAC.
- The MPIPZ will organize an annual retreat where attendance of doctoral students and supervisors is expected. Doctoral students are allowed to attend within the first 36 months after contract start.
- All doctoral students have a travel budget of 1.200 € during their doctoral studies (budget is available only within the first 36 months). Only travelling, housing, fees for conferences and/or workshops can be paid from this source, subject to previous approval by the direct supervisor and the Graduate School coordinator.

Important Dates

	Date
Project start:	
TAC assembly (within 3 months)	
1 st TAC meeting (after 5 months):	
2 nd TAC meeting (after 12 months):	
3 rd TAC meeting (after 24 months):	
Final TAC meeting (e.g. 30–33 months, see above):	
Estimated date of thesis submission (e.g. 36 months):	

Place & date

The agreement on training and supervision has been established to guarantee that doctoral research, training and qualification are conducted optimally, adhering to the Max Planck Society's "Guidelines for Doctoral Training at Max Planck Institutes", the University of Cologne's "Doctoral study regulations of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Cologne" ("Promotionsordnung der Mathematisch-Naturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität zu Köln") and the "Regulations of the Graduate School for Biological Sciences" in consideration of the principles of good scientific practice as formulated, among other things, in the "Rules of Procedure in Cases of Suspected Scientific Misconduct" by the Max Planck Society and in the regulations for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice and for Dealing with Scientific Misconduct of the University of Cologne, as amended from time to time.

Doctoral student:

Direct thesis supervisor:

First co-advisor:

Second co-advisor:

Graduate School coordinator:

Monika Schlosser

(if necessary) Third co-advisor: