



University of
Zurich^{UZH}

MD-PhD Program

Guide for applicants

This study guide applies to students who are accepted to the program in 2022 or later.

Interfaculty MD-PhD Committee IMPK
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| | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Requirements | 3 |
| 1.1 | Track I | 3 |
| 1.2 | Track II | 3 |
| 1.3 | Nationality | 3 |
| 2 | Deadlines | 4 |
| 2.1 | Track I | 4 |
| 2.2 | Track II | 4 |
| 2.3 | Track II for applicants from non-EU/EFTA countries | 4 |
| 3 | Application | 5 |
| 3.1 | Track I | 5 |
| 3.2 | Track II | 5 |
| 3.3 | Admission criteria | 5 |
| 3.4 | Repetition | 5 |
| 4 | Funding | 6 |
| 4.1 | General remarks | 6 |
| 4.2 | Scholarships | 6 |
| 4.3 | Other funding opportunities | 6 |
| 5 | Organization | 7 |
| 5.1 | Propaedeutic studies | 7 |
| 5.2 | Dissertation | 7 |
| 5.3 | Clinical Work | 7 |
| 6 | Host laboratory | 8 |
| 6.1 | General remarks | 8 |
| 6.2 | Time frame | 8 |
| 7 | Matriculation and module booking | 8 |
| 7.1 | Matriculation | 8 |
| 7.2 | Module booking | 8 |
| 7.3 | Lehrveranstaltungen an der ETH | 8 |
| 7.4 | Credit points gained outside UZH | 8 |
| 8 | Life Science Graduate School | 9 |
| 9 | Lab Rotations | 9 |
| 10 | Retreat | 9 |
| 11 | Transfer into MSc-Program Medical Biology | 9 |
| 12 | Contacts and web links | 10 |

1 Requirements

The MD-PhD program enables medical students and graduates (in addition to their degree in medicine, dentistry, or veterinary medicine) to gain a basic natural science education that allows them to conduct regular doctoral studies at the Faculty of Science at UZH, without previously attaining an MSc degree in natural science. The program serves as an entry point for medical students and graduates into the Life Science Zurich Graduate School.

The MD-PhD program is oriented exclusively toward Master students and graduates of degree programs in human medicine, veterinary medicine, or dentistry.

1.1 Track I

The Track I MD-PhD program is restricted to students who have earned at least a Bachelor's degree in human medicine, veterinary medicine or dentistry at any Swiss university. The propaedeutic studies are entered in parallel to the medical Master studies at UZH. The PhD dissertation is conducted after earning the medical Master degree.

Track I applicants must have attained at least a 5.0 average during their Bachelor studies.

1.2 Track II

The Track II MD-PhD program is open to students who have earned at least a Master's degree or an equivalent degree in human medicine, veterinary medicine or dentistry. Both propaedeutic studies and doctoral dissertation are conducted after attaining a medical Master or an equivalent degree.

In general, we only accept candidates up to five years after completing their medical degree.

1.3 Nationality

The MD-PhD program is open to students of all nationalities. Admission of applicants from outside Europe (EU/EFTA) is subject to the recognition of their degree by the Admission Office of UZH. Residence and work permits are granted by the local authorities.

Students wishing to do clinical work during their MD-PhD studies are subject to the regulations on medical professions. For more information, please contact the Federal Offices of Public Health.

2 Deadlines

2.1 Track I

For Track I students, there are no deadlines for acceptance into the propaedeutic studies.

For admission to the PhD, the Track II deadlines apply.

2.2 Track II

| <i>Deadline</i> | <i>Interview</i> | <i>Matriculation</i> |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 15 December | mid January | Spring semester |
| 15 June | mid July | Fall semester |

The exact date if the interviews will be communicated upon submission of the application documents.

2.3 Track II for applicants from non-EU/EFTA countries

Students resident in non-EU/EFTA countries at the time of application need to organize their entry into Switzerland (visa application). This process usually takes up to 3 months. Therefore, these applicants are subject to the following deadlines:

| <i>Deadline</i> | <i>Interview</i> | <i>Matriculation</i> |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 15 December | mid January | Fall semester |
| 15 June | mid July | Spring semester |

If necessary, interviews can be conducted via Skype or Zoom. The VISA/work permit formalities may be initiated in collaboration with the host institute as soon as the confirmation of acceptance has been issued.

3 Application

3.1 Track I

Please refer to the German version of the study guide.

3.2 Track II

| | |
|--|---|
| Initial contact | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artemi Bendandi, coordinator• email: artemi.bendandi@usz.ch |
| Submission of application documents (Web-Upload, login will be provided) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motivation letter/career plan (1 page)• CV• Copies of diplomas and grades• Brief outline of PhD project (ca. 5 pages)• Confirmation of supervisor (form: see Downloads) |
| Advisory interview | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prof. Adriano Aguzzi (Chairman, Interfaculty MD-PhD committee IMPK), for appointments contact A. Bendandi• The applicant should have secured a host laboratory at this point. |
| Admission | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of the proposed MD-PhD project and interview by the IMPK.• If successful: Acceptance into the program. |

3.3 Admission criteria

Essential criteria for the admission to the interview are the qualification of the applicant (grades in medical school, other qualifications), the qualification of the host laboratory, and the quality of the presented project.

The MD-PhD program requires a confirmation of the host lab that the salary for the students is secured for a minimum duration of the thesis of 3 years.

3.4 Repetition

Rejected candidates are not permitted to apply again.

4 Funding

4.1 General remarks

4.1.1 Track I

There are no possibilities to apply for financial support during the propaedeutic studies in the framework of Track 1.

4.1.2 Track II

For the duration of the PhD dissertation (3 years minimum), the host lab must provide a salary which must correspond to the SNSF rates for doctoral students. In addition, students may engage in clinical work up to an employment level of 20% (see 5.3; salary to be negotiated according to rules for clinical work).

4.2 Scholarships

The Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences SAMS and the Swiss National Science Foundation, with the support of private foundations and in collaboration with the Swiss School of Public Health, award each year a limited number of competitive individual MD-PhD grants.

Further information: <https://www.samw.ch/en/Funding/MD-PhD-Program.html>

The UZH candidates are shortlisted by the Interfaculty MD-PhD Committee (IMPK). The awarding procedure is coordinated by the SAMS. The decision of the IMPK is final and cannot be disputed. Applications cannot be submitted to SAMS directly.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Application deadline | 15 December |
| Conditions | Conditions are listed in the SAMS guidelines in section 5. (see link) |
| Timing | <p>Candidates must apply at the beginning of their MD-PhD studies. It is not possible to apply for a scholarship 1-2 years into the program.</p> <p>Candidates who apply in the summer must decide at the point of application whether they will also apply for a SAMS scholarship. We do not accept any late applications.</p> |
| Repetition | It is not possible to apply more than once. Applicants who are accepted into the MD-PhD program, but not shortlisted for a scholarship, may not apply for a scholarship again in the following year. |

4.3 Other funding opportunities

Funding for PhD students <https://www.research.uzh.ch/en/funding/phd.html>

Medical Faculty: Foundations, awards and grants (German) [UZH - Medizinische Fakultät - Stiftungen und Preise](#)

5 Organization

5.1 Propaedeutic studies

In the framework of the propaedeutic studies, students must gain a minimum of 30 ECTS credit points. This is equivalent to 6 months (fulltime). Further information as well as a selection of mandatory and recommended courses and lectures can be obtained from the program website (pdf document “propaedeutic studies”).

From January 2021, the credit points will be administered electronically through the StudentAdmin tool of the Science Faculty.

5.1.1 Track I

Please refer to the German version of the study guide.

5.1.2 Track II

It is advisable to attend the courses and lectures of the propaedeutic studies during the first year of the MD-PhD program.

It is possible to have previously gained credit points recognized towards the propaedeutic studies. Please contact the program coordinator.

5.2 Dissertation

Completion of the PhD dissertation and graduation is subject to the regulations applying to all PhD students of the Faculty of Science (and the respective PhD program/graduate school).

Regulations, forms and further information can be obtained from the website of the Faculty of Science.

<https://www.mnf.uzh.ch/en/studium/phd.html>

5.3 Clinical Work

MD-PhD students may engage in clinical work (up to an employment level of 20%) alongside their PhD dissertation.

6 Host laboratory

6.1 General remarks

Candidates must find a host laboratory/supervisor on their own initiative; the MD-PhD committee does not give any assistance. The host laboratory must be affiliated to the Life Science Graduate School.

Research groups can be found by way of the Life Science Graduate School website:

<https://www.lifescience-graduateschool.uzh.ch/en/about-LSZGS/phd-programs.html>

PhD-Programs > select individual programs > Research Groups

> contact suitable research group

Please note that the MD-PhD program is not a self-contained PhD program; you must find your supervisor in one of the regular PhD programs (Cancer Biology, MLS, ...).

6.2 Time frame

6.2.1 Track I

Please refer to the German version of the study guide.

6.2.2 Track II

Track II candidates need to select a host lab prior to their advisory discussion with Prof. Adriano Aguzzi.

7 Matriculation and module booking

7.1 Matriculation

7.1.1 Track I

Please refer to the German version of the study guide.

7.1.2 Track II

Track II students must be matriculated as PhD students at the Faculty of Science at UZH. For further information: <https://www.uzh.ch/en/studies/application/doctoralstudies.html>

7.2 Module booking

General information about module booking: <https://www.students.uzh.ch/booking.html>

Further information and conditions regarding eligible modules are detailed in the document «Propaedeutic studies» (see Downloads).

7.3 Modules at ETH

In order to attend modules at ETHZ, students need to register as a “special student”:

<https://www.ethz.ch/en/studies/non-degree-courses/special-students.html>

7.4 Credit points gained outside UZH

Credit points that do not automatically appear in the Summary of Credits (ETH modules, LTK1, etc.) can be added manually. Please send a copy of the course certificate to the MD-PhD coordinator (Artemi Bendandi).

8 Life Science Graduate School

All students accepted to the MD-PhD program must join one of the PhD programs/graduate schools of the Life Science Graduate School. In order to join the program of their choice (to be discussed with supervisor), they do not need to go through any additional application processes or interviews. They need, however, to fulfill all the requirements of their chosen program (retreats, courses).

9 Lab Rotations

Candidates who do not have any wet lab experience are strongly advised to engage in at least one lab rotation prior to joining the MD-PhD program. For detailed information, please refer to the document «Propaedeutic studies» (see Downloads). Students may acquire a maximum of 16 ECTS credit points with lab rotations.

10 Retreat

The annual MD-PhD retreat is sponsored by the program, and organized by the students.

MD-PhD students are required to attend the retreat twice during their studies. Participation in the organizing activities is awarded with 1 ECTS credit point, which is counted towards the soft skills points.

11 Transfer into MSc Medical Biology

The propaedeutic studies of the MD-PhD and the MSc Medical Biology programs are identical. This allows students to transfer from one program into the other.

Students wishing to transfer from the MD-PhD to the MSc Medical Biology program must notify the MD-PhD coordinator no later than 12 months after entering the MD-PhD program by submitting a written request.

12 Contacts and web links

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| MD-PhD-Program, committee and coordination | Interfaculty MD-PhD Committee IMPK: Prof. Dr. Adriano Aguzzi, Chairman <u>Contact:</u> Artemi Bendandi artemi.bendandi@usz.ch https://www.med.uzh.ch/en/doctoralprograms/MDPhD.html |
| Admission and matriculation: Swiss qualification | University of Zurich Student Administration Office Büro KOL E8 Rämistrasse 71 8006 Zürich https://www.students.uzh.ch/en/contact.html |
| Admission and matriculation: Foreign qualification | University of Zurich Admission Office Rämistrasse 71 8006 Zürich https://www.students.uzh.ch/en/contact.html |
| Scholarships SAMW/SNF | https://www.samw.ch/en/Funding/MD-PhD-Program.html |
| Life Science Graduate School | https://www.lifescience-graduateschool.uzh.ch/en.html Coordination: Dr. Susanna Bachmann gradschool@lifescience.uzh.ch |
| Dean's Office Science Faculty Doctoral Studies | Cornelia Schmid, promotion@mnf.uzh.ch https://www.mnf.uzh.ch/en/studium/phd.html |
