



**University of
Zurich^{UZH}**

MD-PhD-Programm

Guide for applicants

Interfaculty MD-PhD Committee IMPK

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1 Requirements

The MD-PhD program enables medical students and graduates (in addition to their regular 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 courses 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 three 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 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

Start in the spring semester: 15 December

Start in the fall semester: 15 June

The interviews usually take place about one month after the deadline. The exact date 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:

Start in the spring semester: 15 June

Start in the fall semester: 15 December

The interviews usually take place about one month after the deadline. They can be conducted via Skype.

The entry formalities can be initiated in collaboration with the host institute as soon as the confirmation of acceptance has been issued.

3 Application

3.1 Track I

Track I students are accepted to the propaedeutic studies after an advisory discussion with Prof. Adriano Aguzzi. Project presentation/full acceptance (see below) usually takes place during their last year of medical school.

For detailed information, please refer to the German version of the guidelines.

3.2 Track II

Step 1: Finding a host laboratory

Candidates must find a suitable thesis project, host laboratory and a supervisor who agrees to supervise their PhD thesis and provide funding. The host laboratory must be affiliated to Life Science Zurich. (see section 6)

Step 2: Advisory discussion with Prof. Aguzzi (chairman of the MD-PhD steering committee)

Contact: MD-PhD Coordinator - Jacqueline Wiedler, email: jacqueline.wiedler@usz.ch

Step 3: Application

The following documents must be submitted to the MD-PhD committee (web upload):

- CV
- Copies of diplomas and grades
- Motivation letter/career plan (1 page)
- Brief outline of PhD project (ca. 5 pages)
- Confirmation of supervisor

Deadlines: See 2.2

Step 4: Project presentation

Presentation of the proposed MD-PhD project and interview by the MD-PhD steering committee.

If passed: Acceptance into the program.

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.

3.3 Repetition

Rejected candidates will not be permitted to apply again.

3.4 Life Science Graduate School

Upon acceptance into the MD-PhD program, candidates are fully recognized PhD students of the Life Science Zurich Graduate School. They join one of the existing schools for their PhD without any further interviews or exams and conduct their continuing education during their thesis according to the requirements of the respective schools (see section 9).

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

Candidates who wish to apply for a national MD-PhD scholarship need to be resident in Switzerland for a minimum of 2 years before being eligible to apply. UZH candidates are selected by the Interfaculty MD-PhD Committee (IMPK). The awarding procedure is coordinated by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences SAMW.

Application deadline: 15 December

Candidates who wish to apply for a national scholarship must do so at the beginning of their MD-PhD studies. It is not possible to apply for a scholarship 1-2 years into the program.

Furthermore, it is not possible to apply more than once. Students who are accepted into the MD-PhD program, but not recommended for a scholarship, may not apply for a scholarship again in the following year.

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

4.3 Other funding opportunities

The website of the Medical Faculty lists a number of organizations offering funding opportunities in the medical and life sciences.

<https://www.med.uzh.ch/de/StiftungenundPreise.html>

5 Organization

5.1 Propaedeutic studies

In the framework of the propaedeutic studies, students must gain a minimum of 35 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”).

Students who wish to attend courses or lectures that are not included in the above mentioned selection must notify the program coordinator beforehand.

A list of the credit points gained in the framework of the propaedeutic studies must be handed in with the application for the thesis defense. The form can be downloaded from the MD-PhD website (“List of credit points”) and must be sent to the MD-PhD coordinator for approval.

5.1.1 *Track I*

Please refer to the German version of the guidelines.

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

Regarding the completion of the PhD dissertation and graduation, MD-PhD students are 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/programme.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 Basics

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 (PhD programs -> select the individual programs -> Research Groups).

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

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 guidelines.

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 guidelines.

7.1.2 *Track II*

Track II students must be matriculated as PhD students at the Faculty of Science at UZH.

Further information: <https://www.uzh.ch/en/studies/application/doctoralstudies.html>

(see 1b „PhD programs/graduate schools“)

7.2 Module booking

Information about module booking can be obtained from the UZH website:

<https://www.students.uzh.ch/en/booking.html>

Further information and deadlines for biology block courses:

https://www.uzh.ch/zoolmed/ssl-dir/Blockkurse_UNIETH.php

7.3 Courses 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 (Jacqueline Wiedler).

7.5 Soft skills courses

Students may account up to a maximum of 4 ECTS credit points gained with soft skill courses towards the 35 points. Please note that soft skill courses are also offered in the framework of the PhD programs/graduate school and accountable towards the 12 ECTS that have to be acquired there (see sections 5.2 and 8).

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. This mainly applies to Track I candidates. For more detailed information, please refer to the German version of the guidelines.

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 Transition into MSc Medical Biology program

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

MD-PhD program coordination

Interfaculty MD-PhD committee (IMPK)

Prof. Dr. Adriano Aguzzi, chairman

Jacqueline Wiedler, coordinator

Institute of Neuropathology

Schmelzbergstrasse 12, 8091 Zürich

Phone +41 44 255 85 38

jacqueline.wiedler@usz.ch

<https://www.med.uzh.ch/en/doctoralprograms/MDPhD.html>

Admission (international students)

University of Zurich

Admissions Office

Rämistrasse 71

8006 Zürich

Phone +41 44 634 22 36

<https://www.students.uzh.ch/de/administration/email.html>

Life Science Graduate School

Life Science Zurich Graduate School

Dr. Susanna Bachmann

Institute of Molecular Life Sciences

University of Zurich

Winterthurerstr. 190

8057 Zürich

gradschool@lifescience.uzh.ch

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

Faculty of Science: Office of Student Affairs

Cornelia Schmid

Doctoral Studies

phone +41 44 635 40 08

Fax +41 44 635 54 95

promotion@mnf.uzh.ch

MD-PhD Students Association

<http://www.swiss-mdphd.ch/>

Course catalogues

UZH:

<https://studentservices.uzh.ch/uzh/anonym/vvz/index.html?sap-language=EN&sap-ui-language=EN>

ETHZ:

<http://www.vvz.ethz.ch/Vorlesungsverzeichnis/sucheLehrangebotPre.do?lang=en>

Scholarship SAMW/SNF

<https://www.samw.ch/de/Foerderung/MD-PhD-Programm.html>