EVEREST
EVOLUTION AND ECOLOGY
RESEARCH SCHOOL TÜBINGEN

Bylaws
(Geschäftsordnung)

http://www.everest.uni-tuebingen.de

Version: 21 July 2017
1. Preamble

- The Evolution and Ecology Research School Tübingen EVEREST offers structured doctoral training as specified in its Key Principles (Satzung) that were approved on 15 April 2013 and amended on 15 November 2016. The founding members are from the Faculty of Science of the University of Tübingen and the Max Planck Institute for Developmental Biology.
- The bylaws explain the detailed organisation and functioning of EVEREST.

2. Status

- EVEREST started as a joint activity of professors from the involved partner institutions.
- A grant from the VW Foundation financed its establishment and first three years (2012–2015).
- EVEREST PhD students graduate at the Faculty of Science of the University of Tübingen.

3. Tasks of EVEREST

- Observe standards for good scientific practice
- Offer reliable supervision and mentoring
- Support students through thesis advisory committees (TACs)
- Request supervision agreement for quality control
- Promote interdisciplinary doctoral training
- Offer courses in relevant scientific fields
- Instruct doctoral students in professional skills
- Prepare doctoral students for their graduation
- Facilitate personal exchange within the school
- Assist in obtaining scholarships or grants
- Assure equal opportunities

4. Membership

- Scientists can become an EVEREST member provided formal authorization from the Faculty of Science to supervise doctoral students (= all Professors, but also some junior PIs).
- Members work broadly in evolutionary biology or ecology.
- Memberships are individual: Professors as well as other PIs from one unit can become members. If a professor is not a member, PIs from within her/his unit can be member.
- Membership of EVEREST can be cancelled on short notice, but this requires that the continuation of the member's supervision is ensured. In unclear cases, the board will assign a replacement.
- PhD students whose supervisor cancelled his/her membership still can obtain the EVEREST certificate, assuming all other requirements are fulfilled.

5. Responsibilities and privileges of members

- Members are committed to EVEREST.
  - They support the goals of EVEREST internally and externally.
  - Their PhD students working in a field that fits within the scope of EVEREST should be informed about and enrolled in EVEREST. This is the responsibility of the supervisor.
  - They strive to increase EVEREST-internal scientific collaboration.
  - They take a fair share of EVEREST’s task and aims, including (minimal) administrative tasks such as participation in the Steering Committee and its meetings.
  - They organise the Meeting of Students in Evolution and Ecology on a yearly basis, alternating between members of Geosciences and Biology.
They participate in Thesis Advisory Committees.
They offer course places in advanced training courses. Topic, time and location should be sent to the coordinator 2 months in advance.
They assure that membership fees (see Budget) are paid without delay.

- Members have the following privileges
  - Their PhD students receive additional guidance through their own personal EVEREST Thesis Advisory Committee. This support is the main direct benefit from being a member of EVEREST.
  - Only the enrolled PhD students supervised by members can present at Meeting StEvE. Depending on the availability of presentation slots, their MSc students or young postdocs can also present.
  - They can obtain support from the EVEREST coordinators and speakers (but see 15.).
  - They can propose speakers for the Hilgendorf Lecture series.
  - They can actively participate in defining the policy and function of EVEREST, and can participate in all EVEREST programmes and activities.
  - They can use the corporate design (job adverts, letterhead, home page).
  - They have full voting rights in the Steering Committee, and can be represented by a co-worker if not available in person.
  - They can mention EVEREST in grant applications for e.g. PhD or grad school funding, or for advertising a position.

### 6. Student hiring and registration

- **Advertisements**: Available PhD positions are advertised with the EVEREST (and university) logo (template available). Where possible, advertisements are coordinated with EVEREST colleagues to increase visibility. They should indicate that the candidate will be enrolled in EVEREST. Exceptions apply when the topic is out of EVEREST’s field of interest.
- **Interviews** include information about EVEREST as well as personal conversation between the prospective candidate and EVEREST students.
- **Formal registration** as a PhD student is with the Faculty of Science, and is followed by registration in EVEREST.
- The Faculty of Science requires **two** formal supervisors (see: Rules and Guidelines for Doctoral Studies at the Faculty of Science). The first is the PhD supervisor. The second is not necessarily an EVEREST member, but preferentially an external (international) scientist.
- Students enrol in EVEREST by filling out and submitting the registration form.
- Enrolment is final after submission of the supervision agreement form, signed by all members of the Thesis Advisory Committee. This should occur before or during the first TAC-meeting and within 3 months after registration at the faculty.
- Students enrolled in EVEREST cannot be enrolled in another graduate programme simultaneously. Exceptions need to be approved by the board.
- A **tick list** for new students guides them through the enrolment process: www.everest.uni-tuebingen.de/information-for-students.html

### 7. Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC)

- **Thesis Advisory Committee**: The goal of the TAC is to follow and optimise the progress of a PhD project, and to make recommendations to the student and the supervisor on any relevant aspect (scientific topic, methodology, effectiveness, quality, cooperation, training, outreach, career planning, etc.). It identifies or anticipates problems, and offers solutions.
- The TAC is not meant to replicate the student’s “home environment”, but should **expose** a student to external views, ideas, suggestions, compliments and constructive criticism from peers.
- **TAC composition**
Three TAC members is the minimum, 4-5 are possible.
- TAC members are not automatically identical to the thesis reviewers or defence examiners.
- TAC members are usually scientists (Professors, PIs) that are formally allowed to supervise their own PhD students. However, it is acceptable to have one TAC member who has not yet obtained this authority (PhD required. E.g. junior postdocs in an EVEREST group).
- One TAC member is the PhD supervisor.
- At least one TAC member is from outside the research field. EVEREST members are first choice, yet a minority of non-EVEREST members is allowed. Biology students have at least one member from the Geosciences and vice versa.
- The TAC is proposed by the PhD supervisor and student. In case of difficulties finding members, the EVEREST coordinators make recommendations or help establishing contact to individual members.
- The TAC is confirmed by the Board and the PhD supervisor.

- **TAC Timing:** First meeting within 3 months after registration (date fixed at registration). During each TAC, the next TAC date is fixed (to be changed when necessary). One meeting per year is compulsory (irrespective of the duration of the PhD). More are possible on demand (e.g. by student or supervisor). TAC meeting dates are communicated to the coordinators through the TAC protocol.
- **TAC Meetings** are prepared by the PhD student and chaired by a guest member (not the PhD supervisor) who fills out the protocol. The student presentation does not exceed 15 min (if presented uninterrupted). This talk initiates the discussion. Students may have more slides ready in anticipation of further questions. The meeting ends with 5-10 min of private exchange between student and TAC members excl. supervisor, and 5-10 min for all TAC members incl. supervisor, excl. student. Total meeting duration is 1-2 h.
- TAC members evaluate student progress and give recommendations on how to continue.
- From the third year, specific advice on thesis submission and defence is provided. Career plans are discussed to encouraging the candidate to think about their future in time.
- The chair assures that the protocol is signed by all and sends it to the coordinators. All participants receive a digital scan.
- **TAC Guidelines:** All information regarding preparation, topics and protocols can be found here: http://www.everest.uni-tuebingen.de/information-for-students.html

8. **Skill development and incentives for PhD students**

- Students must meet the credit requirements outlined in the EVEREST Key Principles. This includes one or more contributions to the annual Meeting of the Students in Evolution and Ecology (Meeting StEvE), and organisation and attendance of the DOSE (DOctoral SEminar) and the PhD retreat (internal PhD meeting). Current details on credit point regulations are available from the EVEREST website.
- Students are encouraged to recognise the merits of commitment for their future career:
  - Pro-actively (co)organise and initiate (TACs, meetings, PR, etc.)
  - Suggest speakers, courses, summer/winter schools
  - Talk to visiting scientists and speakers
  - Learn new ideas and techniques from fellow students, bridge gaps
  - Attend seminars and meetings
  - Go beyond activities that offer credits
  - Anticipate expectations: Do it (before being asked to)

9. **PhD thesis evaluation**

- Thesis submission, evaluation and defence are initiated and controlled through the Faculty, not by EVEREST. Formal graduation at the faculty precedes EVEREST graduation.
- **PhD reviewers**: The Faculty of Science requests at least two reviews. EVEREST recommends that at least one external reviewer is from outside the university.

- **PhD defence examiners**: EVEREST expects that at least two of the four oral examiners are from other labs than the one in which the thesis was written. These examiners are unrelated to the PhD student’s subject. TAC members and thesis reviewers can, but do not need to be examiners. At least one external examiner from outside Tübingen is recommended.

- The (public) PhD defence of an EVEREST student is announced to all EVEREST members to allow all students and members to attend.

10. EVEREST Graduation

- After formal graduation by the Faculty and fulfilment of the EVEREST requirements, EVEREST students receive the formal EVEREST certificate and a transcript of records.

- A pre-graduation, intermediate transcript can be given to students e.g. when applying for a position.

11. EVEREST Structure

- The core institution is the Steering Committee (“Beirat”) which discusses and approves EVEREST’s long-term policy. The Board (“Geschäftsführung”) is responsible for the daily operations. Both are led by the speaker or vice-speaker and assisted by the coordinators. An External Advisory Board evaluates EVEREST every three years, and did so for the first time in October 2015. The administration of EVEREST consists of two coordinators and a secretary. In the following, these structures are explained one by one.

12. Speakers

- EVEREST has a speaker and vice speaker, one from Biology, one from Geosciences.

- The speakers are elected or re-elected by the Steering Committee every two years.

- They meet regularly with the coordinators and are responsible for the daily management. Routine decisions are taken by them. Decisions that require discussion and agreement from more colleagues are discussed by the EVEREST Board or in the EVEREST Steering Committee. The speakers and the PhD students can meet on request for reciprocal exchange of views and wishes (e.g. DOSEs, Meeting StEvE, PhD retreat). A key task of the speakers is also to take care of a fair distribution of tasks among coordinators, board members, secretaries and members.

**CURRENT STATE (Jan 2017)**

Speaker and vice-speaker are Prof. Nico Michiels (Biology) and Prof. Hervé Bocherens (Geosciences) (confirmed 10 Jan 2017).

13. EVEREST Steering Committee

- The Steering Committee is the central institution of EVEREST and defines intermediate and long term planning and the scope of the school. It represents the interests of EVEREST towards the University of Tübingen, institutions for extramural funding and the public.

- The Steering Committee includes all EVEREST members (or their representatives), the coordinators and two student representatives. All have the right to vote.

- The EVEREST speaker(s) chair the Steering Committee meetings.

- The Steering Committee meets at least twice a year. Meetings are announced by the coordinators two months in advance via email. In urgent cases, the speakers can reduce this period of notice.

- Members not able to attend,+ are kindly asked to excuse themselves. They can name a representative who will attend (and vote) for them.
• A call for a meeting includes a preliminary agenda. Any SC member can propose a topic to be sent to the coordinators at least two weeks before the meeting. The final agenda must reach the members one week before the meeting. Topics not on the agenda can nevertheless be discussed if all members that are present also approve. In such cases, absent members must have the opportunity to express their opinion or vote in written form.
• Resolutions are passed during SC meetings. When appropriate, resolutions can also be passed via email if no member disagrees with this procedure.
• The speaker decides on the order of the topics on the agenda as well as on the mode of voting.
• Resolutions of the Steering Committee are passed with a simple majority. Abstention does not count as a vote. In the case of equality of votes, the vote of the speaker decides the resolution.
• The discussions and resolutions of the Steering Committee are protocolled by the coordinator(s). The protocol includes time and location of the meeting, participant names, the agenda and a summary of the discussions and resolutions.
• The protocol is sent to all members of the Steering Committee as soon as possible.

14. EVEREST Board

• The EVEREST Board is the executive institution of EVEREST and is responsible for running operations, organisation, budget management and internal and external communication.
• The speakers, 2-3 additional professors and the coordinators make up the EVEREST Board. Care is taken to assure that all different disciplines of EVEREST are represented.
• Professorial members can send a representative from among the EVEREST members when not able to attend in person. This does not apply to the speaker(s).
• As for the speakers, the other professorial members of the board are proposed and elected by the Steering Committee for 2 years.
• The EVEREST Board prepares the Steering Committee Meetings and reports to the latter. The competences of the EVEREST Board extent to all subjects that are not regulated by laws of the state of Baden-Württemberg, the University of Tübingen or the Max Planck Institutes or via cooperation agreements with other institutions.
• The speakers supervise all business processes of the EVEREST Board. They act in close cooperation with each other and with the Steering Committee.
• The speakers make recommendations to the Steering Committee concerning the strategic and organisational development of EVEREST (e.g. new drafts of the key principles and bylaws).
• In addition, the EVEREST Board executes the implementations for quality control as defined by the Steering Committee.
• Additional responsibilities include decisions about acceptance of students for EVEREST and representation of EVEREST inside and outside the university. The board also discusses and approves credit point assignment to doctoral students where necessary.
• The Steering Committee can assign further responsibilities to the EVEREST Board.

CURRENT STATE (Jan 2017)
Board members are currently the speakers, Prof. Katerina Harvati and Prof. Oliver Bossdorf (elected 10 Jan 2017), and the two coordinators.

15. Coordinators

• EVEREST has two coordinators, one from biology and one from the Geosciences. Their appointment on this function is open-ended, allowing them to assure the long-term integrity of EVEREST.
• Coordinators are elected by the Steering Committee.
The coordinators take care of the day-to-day business in close consultation with the EVEREST students and EVEREST Board. They initiate activities, manage the internet site, take care of exchange between students, supervisors and the administration.

The coordinators are responsible for the security of personal (student) data. Summarizing statistics are published regularly on the EVEREST website.

The coordinators are also neutral contact persons for students and can mediate in case of problems.

The coordinators are not responsible for tasks that are normally carried out by EVEREST members or students. For specific activities that take too much of their time, they can be assisted by student assistants paid from the EVEREST budget (after approval by the board).

CURRENT STATE (Jan 2017)
The coordinators are Dr. Nils Anthes (Biology) and Dr. Dorothée Drucker (Geosciences).

16. Student representatives

- The attendees of the meeting of all doctoral students of EVEREST elect two student representatives for a mandate of two years, not exceeding the duration of their PhD. Re-election as a student representative is possible.
- If a student representative resigns before his mandate ends, the coordinator calls a meeting of all doctoral students immediately and a new representative is elected for the remaining mandate of the resigning representative.
- The student representatives meet regularly with the EVEREST Board to present and discuss the subjects and concerns of the participants of EVEREST.

CURRENT STATE (Jul 2017)
Student representatives are Lara Braun (Biology) and Kerttu Majander (Geosciences, now in Jena) (elected April 2016) and Judith Beier (Paleoanthropology) (elected in July 2017).

17. Administrative support

- Budget and administration are supported by a secretary, who assists the two coordinators only.

CURRENT STATE (since Oct 2015)
The current secretary is Ms. Michaela Istvan (Biology, Animal Evolutionary Ecology)

18. Hilgendorf Lecture

- All EVEREST members can make suggestions for future Hilgendorf speakers lecturers. They should send their suggestions to the initiator of the lecture series, who keeps a list of suggestions.
- Besides being internationally renowned scientists, Hilgendorf lecturers are expected to be eloquent, inspiring speakers.
- We strive to obtain a good balance across disciplines. There are 3 to 4 lectures per semester.
- The selection of speakers is approved by the Board for each semester.
- Hosts cover traveling costs. EVEREST covers accommodation in Tübingen (max. 2 nights) and a honorarium. Detailed information is available on the EVEREST website

CURRENT STATE (since Dec 2016)
The Hilgendorf Lecture is initiated by Dr. Ingmar Werneburg (Geosciences).

19. External Advisory Board
• The External Advisory Board consists of 4-5 professors who are recruited internationally by the Steering Committee and whose research topics relate to EVEREST.
• They are invited in the context of the Meetings of Students in Evolution and Ecology (Meeting StEvE) every three years. The aim is to establish a rotation system with two permanent and three variable members of the External Advisory Board. The maximum mandate is two dates (= six years).

CURRENT STATE (Oct 2015)
EAB members (Oct 2015) Prof. Matthew Collins (Uni York), Prof. Mikael Fortelius (Uni Helsinki), Prof. Hanna Kokko (Uni Zürich) and Prof. John Pannell (Uni Lausanne).
John Pannell and Mikael Fortelius indicated their willingness to be on the EAB next time.

20. Budget

• **Income:** The member fee is 500 € minimum per year, for all members.
  o This is irrespective of whether a member currently has students in EVEREST or not.
  o For one PhD student in EVEREST, this fee remains unchanged.
  o For two PhD students in EVEREST, it is raised to 1000 €
  o For 3 or more enrolled PhD students, the fee is fixed at the upper limit of 1500 €.
  o Students are counted at the level of professorships, embedded (member) groups are automatically included. Fees are issued irrespective of student names, only the number of EVEREST PhD students per professorship on 31 Dec counts.
  o Voluntary contributions to EVEREST are encouraged (e.g. higher fee, or assumption of costs for e.g. Meeting StEvE or Hilgendorf guests).

• **Expenditures:** What is paid or not can be decided by the coordinators and speakers for routine running costs. Unusually large regular costs or new types of expenditure need approval of the Steering Committee.
• A budget report is presented during a Steering Committee Meeting once per year.
• Typical costs are:
  → Activities, courses, lectures for PhD students (assumption of costs by host encouraged)
  → DOSEs, PhD student retreat, EVEREST day, External Advisory Board
  → Hilgendorf Lectures (partial assumption of costs by host expected)
  → Meeting StEvE (partial assumption of costs by host expected)
  → Office costs (kept minimal, largely absorbed by existing offices)
  → External Advisory Board – once every three years

21. Amendments

• The EVEREST Board and the Steering Committee check the Key Principles (Satzung) and Bylaws (Geschäftsordnung) on structure and organization once per year and approve changes.

22. Ratification

• The first EVEREST Bylaws were unanimously approved by the Steering Committee on 11.10.2013.
• This revision was approved through voting by the Steering Committee on 21.07.2017.