

Graduate Program Interfaculty Institute of Biochemistry (IFIB) („GRASP Biochem“)

Summary

The graduate program (GP) offers all doctoral students at the IFIB a broad interdisciplinary education in biochemistry and facilitates their acquisition of diverse key qualifications. Supervision by individual doctoral committees guarantee the quality of training in the GP. The program is organized by a coordinator and monitored by an executive board, and it cooperates with the Graduate Academy of Science of the University of Tübingen. Manifold possibilities to pursue a career in the academic or non-academic sectors will be open to graduates who have completed this training.

Profile of the Graduate Program

The aim of the GP is to provide its participants with a unique training that integrates the acquisition of key qualifications into a modern, interdisciplinary research environment. The training in the GP aims to promote the scientific independence of the doctoral students and to provide them with wider expertise than would be possible in individual projects.

The priority objectives of the GP are:

1. The provision of a modern, high quality professional training, which will furnish students with above-a-average qualifications for the competitive employment market
2. The acquisition of soft skills through training programs and workshops in collaboration with the Graduate Academy of Science of the University of Tübingen
3. Communication and interaction with internationally renowned scientists to promote the acquisition for further scientific qualification and the establishment of national and international contacts
4. The establishment of an international scientific network among the participating students.

Theses training courses should take up a maximum of 10 % of the doctoral student's study time. The teaching and communication language is English, which also encourages foreign students to apply and to pursue a doctoral degree and prepares the students for their future work in an international setting.

Required Credits

For the successful acquisition of the final IFIB Graduate Program Certificate, supplementary courses to the value of 18 credit points (ECTS) are necessary.

Overview of the curriculum:

| Type | Duration | Frequency | Content | CP |
|--------------------|------------------|--|---|-----------|
| Mentoring | 90 h | During the period of the doctoral studies | The 90 h can also be absolved by combining different mentoring opportunities | 3 |
| Progress report | 1 h | Once a week | Informal exchange of information on progress of the project in the work group, at least 1x talk/year | 2 |
| GP IFIB Symposium | 2 days | Once a year, at least 3x during the period of the doctoral studies, at least 2x talk | Short talks (and posters) by doctoral students on the subject of their work | 3 |
| Method training | 40 h | During the period of the doctoral studies | Doctoral students acquire a supplementary professional qualification by learning the latest methods currently used in different research areas | 3 |
| Lectures/ seminars | 2 h | Once a week during the semester | Doctoral students can choose lectures and seminars from the range offered; e.g. the IFIB Monday seminar | 2 |
| Journal Club | 1 h | Every two weeks during the semester, at least 1x talk/semester | Presentation of current work from leading journals on biochemistry | 1 |
| Scientific meeting | Block | At least 1x during the period of the doctoral studies | (short) talk or poster presentation at an international or national congress (The supervisor will take over the expenses if no other money is available) | 1 |
| Training courses | 1 h or in blocks | 3 courses, during the period of the doctoral studies | Diverse training courses are possible to strengthen the key qualifications of the doctoral students. The following subjects and skills are to be taught: scientific writing, posters, talks, lectures, language courses, etc. The doctoral students can choose from the offers by the Graduate Academy of the MNF, Faculty of Medicine, the IFIB, the language learning center (Fachsprachenzentrum). | 3 |

Attendance at the respective courses is certified for each doctoral student on a pre-printed form, which must be completely filled in and submitted in order to receive the certificate.

Supervision Concept

At the acceptance as a doctoral student the dean assigns supervisors to the doctoral student according to the requirements of the “Rules and Guidelines for Doctoral Studies in the Faculty of Science of the University of Tübingen”. The director of the Graduate Program Executive Board assigns an individual supervisory committee to the doctoral student. This committee consists of at least one project leader of the IFIB, a group leader or project leader of the IFIB or another group working in the field of biochemistry positioned in Tübingen/Reutlingen and eventually of a direct supervisor within the laboratory (Postdoc). This individual supervisory committee monitors the doctoral student throughout the entire dissertation and supports him/her dealing with conceptual and methodological issues or other problems that may arise. Six months at the latest after the doctoral studies start, the supervisory committee holds a first meeting with the doctoral student, at which a supervision agreement is completed and signed. This does not have an influence on the validity of the agreement according to the rules of the Faculty of Science of the University of Tübingen. At least once a year, and if necessary, more often, the doctoral student meets with the committee to give a talk describing the current state of the project and plans for its continuation. The scientific progress is assessed and, if necessary, constructive advice is given on how the work should continue. A short protocol of the discussion is drawn up and signed by all the participants to ensure that all points under discussion have been properly understood. A copy is sent to the coordinator. In the third year, specific advice on a successful final examination and on the defense of the dissertation is provided. On this occasion career plans and possibilities are discussed so that the doctoral student is encouraged to think about planning his/her career in good time

Supervision Agreement

All doctoral students participating in the program complete a written supervision agreement with their mentors. This agreement is drawn up according to the recommendations of the DFG guidelines for good research practice and regulates, among other things, the rights and responsibilities of the doctoral students and their supervisors. It also contains a short thematic overview of the dissertation. This does not have an influence on the requirement and validity of the agreement according to the rules of the Faculty of Science of the University of Tübingen.

Further Qualifying Measures

The individual supervisory committee also determines whether it is expedient for the doctoral student to spend time in another laboratory for research purposes.

Final certificate

After completion of the doctoral degree and successful participation in the Graduate Program, the doctoral students can be awarded a certificate confirming participation and stating the supplementary credits gained. The certificate is signed by the IFIB director.

Organisation

Every two years the members of the ZMBP Research Group Leader Assembly elect a coordinator for the Graduate Program. Shortly after election he/she organizes a general meeting of all doctoral students, who then elect two student members for the two-year period. These two doctoral students, together with the coordinator, the IFIB director and his deputy, make up the Graduate Program Executive Board. The board is responsible for the recognition of academic

performance and changes in the study program. All the members of the board are equally entitled to vote and a simple majority decides every issue.

The coordinator ensures that an individual supervisory committee is set up for every doctoral student and that each student signs a supervision agreement. He/she makes sure that a sufficiently wide spectrum of courses is available, advises the doctoral students on their choice of courses and ensures that every doctoral student receives a form for the certification of academic achievements.

Graduates who have completed this training have manifold possibilities to pursue a career in the academic or non-academic sectors due to the wide spread professional training and portfolio of methods as well as their strengthened soft skills.

This Graduate Program was unanimously adopted by the Research Group Leader Assembly on 12th of February, 2014. The graduation committee of the Faculty of Science agreed on this Graduate Program on 16th of April, 2014. The faculty council of the Faculty of Science agreed on this Graduate Program on 30th of April, 2014. These statutes become operative on 1st of July, 2014. The Research Group Leader Assembly decides on changes of the statutes with a simple majority. The graduation committee and the faculty council of the Faculty of Science have to agree. The rules mentioned in these statutes are valid as long as they are not contradictory to the rules and guidelines for doctoral studies (=Promotionsordnung) in the Faculty of Science of the University of Tübingen.