

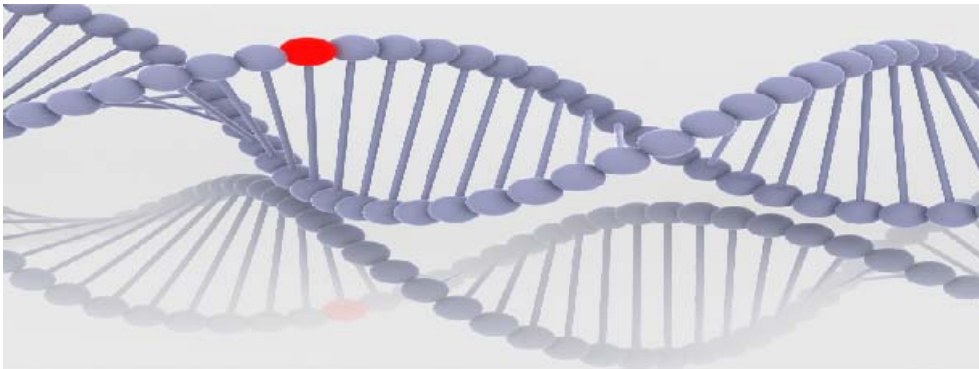


UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI  
DI TRENTO

  
**CIBIO**  
Centro per la Biologia Integrata

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **International PhD Program in Biomolecular Sciences**



**Approved by the CIBIO Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013**



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## **Art. 1 – Policies and Regulations of the International PhD Program in Biomolecular Sciences**

In order to activate the International Doctorate Program in Biomolecular Sciences at the Centre for Integrative Biology (CIBIO), pursuant to Art. 8 of the University Regulations for Doctoral Programs and enacted with Rectoral Decree n. 383 dated July 4 2013, the following Policies and Regulations governing the PhD's activities are introduced. The Policies and Regulations set forth its specific objectives, internal organization and rules of conduct for PhD students attending the Program.

### **Art. 2 - Specific objectives**

1. The International PhD Program in Biomolecular Sciences conducts its main activities within A05 macro-area: Biological Sciences.
2. In addition to the general objectives common to all PhD Programs set forth in Art.3 of the University Regulations, the BS International PhD Program proposes as its specific objectives:
  - a) the education of experts in Biology and Biotechnology able to practice their skills in an interdisciplinary manner:
  - b) the study of the fundamental mechanisms of the cell, their regulation and role in the maintenance of cell and tissue integrity. This study is approached from a mechanistic perspective of molecular physiology and makes use of the most advanced tools of genomic analysis. To this end, the use of genetic engineering technologies, analysis approaches applied to biomolecular techniques and biotechnological platforms for the global understanding of biological phenomenon is promoted;
  - c) the study of the cellular phenomena at the molecular level by means of the understanding of the structural and dynamic features of molecules that are at the basis of the cell functioning (nucleic acids, proteins, primary and secondary metabolites), from biosynthesis mechanisms to the molecular recognitions, from the host-guest interactions to



the selectivity based on the chirality, to the mechanisms of lipidic membrane permeability and more in general to all intra- and intermolecular processes in which the understanding of molecular features is relevant.

d) The establishment of a course for the education of professional researchers able to work in the academic environment as well as in public and private organizations through the training of experts in biomolecular technologies.

**3.** The main subject areas take into account the laboratories at CIBIO that conduct research activities in various fields of Biological Sciences, as well as the existence of the Departments of Physics, Mathematics, Engineering, and Computer Science at the University of Trento with whom a program for scientific and teaching collaboration is active, as well as the presence in the local community of foundations and public services active in research and technology development activities.

Such areas of interest include:

- Biochemistry
- Bioinformatics
- Bioorganic Chemistry
- Developmental Biology
- Genetics
- Lipidomics and Biomembranes
- Metabolomics and Metabolic Imaging
- Microbial Genomics
- Molecular and Cellular Biology
- Molecular Vaccinology
- Molecular Virology
- Nanobiotechnology
- Neurobiology
- Physiology
- Structural Biology
- Synthetic Biology
- Systems and Computational Biology

### **Art. 3 – Program overview**



1. The PhD in Biomolecular Sciences is a three-year program. One call in Italian and English for public selection of the candidates is issued every year. The call specifies the number of candidates accepted for enrolment and of fellowships available.
2. Admission to the PhD Program shall be granted to the best qualified students, regardless of their gender, age, nationality, religion, ethnicity or social class.

#### **Art. 4 – Specialization Areas**

1. Pursuant to Art. 7 of the Doctorate School Regulations (hereinafter University Regulations), the PhD Program in Biomolecular Sciences may offer specialized courses which may be incorporated into the title of Doctor of Philosophy, according to the directions set forth in the Manifesto of Studies each academic year.

#### **Art. 5 – Language**

1. The official language of the PhD Program in Biomolecular Sciences, including seminars, courses, web site, exams and dissertations, is English.
2. All PhD internal rules and communications are written both in English and in Italian. The translation shall ensure the exact matching between the contents in the two languages. In instances of discrepancy between the Italian and the English versions, the Italian version takes precedence.

#### **Art. 6 – Bodies of the Doctoral Program**

The bodies of the Doctoral Program include: the PhD Committee, the PhD Director, the Executive Committee.

#### **Art. 7 – The PhD Committee**



1. The PhD Committee is appointed pursuant to provisions under art. 14 of the University Regulations. It is composed of the following voting members:

- I and II tier full professors and not tenured professors
- tenured and tenure-track researchers
- fixed-term researchers (*RTD*)

2. The PhD Committee may include – upon positive response of its members:

- representatives of public and private entities collaborating with the Program;
- international experts.

3. Members of the PhD Committee referred to under point 2 must not exceed 40% of the total number of members of the PhD Committee, rounded down.

4. The application for admission to the PhD Committee must be submitted to the Director, accompanied by a curriculum vitae, a list of publications of the last five years (with an indication of the five ones considered the most significant) and a declaration stating whether the prospective member is or is not part of PhD Committee of another University and, in the case of university professors and researchers from other Universities, also a clearance letter from their institution of origin.

5. If invited by the Director, additional members, without right of vote, may also attend the PhD Committee meetings, if their scientific, educational, technical or financial contribution is considered beneficial. In particular:

- An administrative assistant of the PhD Program for the purposes of taking minutes.
- Two student representatives enrolled in the PhD Program, limited to matters concerning the trend of the doctoral program and curriculum.
- Representatives of public and private entities collaborating with the PhD Program.

6. Individuals referred to under paragraph 2 intending to participate in the PhD Committee shall produce a CV, as well as a declaration of their commitment to perform activities for the Program in the role of tutor or advisor. Once the PhD Committee has been appointed, requests for new members by individuals under paragraph 2, including the case of



replacement of those members whose term has expired, shall be submitted to the PhD Committee in office.

**7.** The PhD Committee is convened by the Director, or on request of one third of its members.

**8.** The notice is sent at least five days prior to the meeting with the methods considered most suitable to ensure reception. The agenda is usually sent with the convocation.

**9.** The PhD Committee meets at least twice a year to approve the draft of the budget, and to analyze the financial report.

**10.** In the event that the PhD Committee has to issue a deliberation that is urgent or that has to meet a deadline and it is not possible to bring together its members in time, the Director may convene an electronic meeting, during which each member will transmit his or her via electronic mail and vote on a specific proposal of resolution. The determinations made electronically with the involvement of all members shall be ratified at the following meeting.

**11.** An absolute majority of the members referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, after subtracting the justified absentees, is required for a meeting to be valid.

**12.** More than three consecutive unjustified absences by a member of the PhD Committee shall result in his or her termination from office, whereas his or her functions as tutor or supervisor, if already assigned, shall be retained.

**13.** Resolutions are adopted by a majority vote of those present. In the event of a tie, the vote of the Director prevails.

**14.** The minutes of the meetings of the PhD Committee shall be taken by an administrative assistant of the PhD Program. If not available, they will be taken by the associated



professor holding the shortest tenure. The minutes, or an excerpt of them, shall be published on the website of the PhD Program.

**15.** The PhD Committee carries out all the functions pursuant to art. 14 and art. 29, paragraph 4 of the University Regulations, to which we hereby refer to. The PhD Committee may, by deliberation, delegate the Executive Committee for the performance of all or part of its functions.

### **Art. 8 – The PhD Program Director**

1. The Director of the PhD Committee performs the tasks set forth under art. 15 of the University Regulations.
2. The term of office for the Director is three years and may be extended only once.

### **Art. 9 – The Executive Committee**

1. The Executive Committee is composed of at least four Faculty members and researchers elected by the PhD Committee among its members. The Director, or the vice-Director if the former is not available, is a member of the Executive Committee and presides over it.
2. The Executive Committee shall hold office for the term of office of the Director.
3. The operation of the Executive Committee and the minutes of the sessions are governed by the same regulations laid down for the PhD Committee.
4. In the event of resignation, termination or impediment of a member of the Executive Committee for a period of more than three months, the PhD program Director shall initiate an election for a substitution.
5. The term of the new member shall end with the term of office of the Executive Committee.





**6.** In particular, the Executive Committee:

- assists the PhD Program Director in fulfilling his or her tasks;
- deliberates on matters delegated to it by the PhD Committee, to which it regularly reports on its own activity;
- approves the teaching activities plan at the beginning of each academic year, deciding times and procedures for the submission and assessment of any progress reports
- assigns a Tutor to each PhD student. As a rule, the tutor shall be a member of the PhD Committee;
- authorizes the PhD students to go abroad for training periods longer than six months;
- approves the attendance of the PhD students to internships organized by public and private institutions in Italy or abroad, for internship programs exceeding six months;
- authorizes PhD students to conduct teaching, ancillary or supplementary activities and extracurricular research activities as set forth in Art. 16 of this rules of procedure;
- identifies the external referees for the evaluation of the thesis before the dissertation;
- collaborates with the Director on the drafting of the annual report as required by art. 17, paragraph 1 of the University Regulations.

**7.** The PhD Program Director may assign, to single members of the Executive Committee, specific tasks that are deemed necessary for the direction and organization of the PhD Program.

### **Art. 10 – Tutors and Supervisors**

**1.** At the beginning of the academic year, each PhD student is assigned to a tutor who supervises his or her course of studies. Tutors are designated by the PhD Committee among its members, or whenever delegated, by the Executive Committee also or on advice of the Heads of research programs or external institutions funding PhD Program scholarships.



2. The tutor is responsible for the integration of the Doctorate student regarding the research activities of the Doctoral Program and shall assist him or her in the proposal and outline of his or her individual course of study.
3. By the end of the first year of study, the PhD Committee shall, upon verification of the availability, appoint a supervisor for each student who requests one.
4. The supervisor may be either a member of the PhD Committee or may be external. Where the supervisor is external, he or she shall be introduced by at least two members of the PhD Committee and then approved by the Committee itself.
5. When the PhD student does not submit a request, the tutor shall also act as the student's supervisor.
6. The supervisor has the task of assisting the PhD student, as well as overseeing the use of personal funding assigned to the student by the PhD Committee.
7. The supervisor shall assist the PhD student in the proposal and planning of his or her individual course of study, identifies his or her specific areas of research and, later on, the dissertation and ensures the quality of the student's work.
8. The tutor, during the first half of the first year of study, and the supervisor, later on, shall assist the PhD student, by overseeing his or her activity and compliance with the rules, including his or her behaviour, that are essential to the value of the PhD Program and to the scientific and professional growth of the students.
9. The PhD Committee may revoke the appointment of a tutor or a supervisor who does not comply with the aforesaid obligations.

#### **Art. 11 – Educational and Institutional Activities**



1. Each year, the PhD Program offers a series of training activities that are presented at the beginning of each academic year, in the Manifesto of Studies.
2. The PhD Program also organizes, in cooperation with partner organizations, seminars, meetings and other educational events throughout the academic year. PhD students are required to attend the aforesaid events.

### **Art. 12 – Manifesto of Studies**

1. Before the beginning of the academic year, the PhD Committee, or the Executive Committee when it has been delegated, shall approve the Manifesto of Studies, which is published online on the PhD Program's web site.
2. The Manifesto of Studies, drawn up on a yearly basis, shall contain:
  - the list of the courses proposed as educational offer;
  - the calendar of the main deadlines for each year of the PhD Program;
  - the admission requirements for the courses;
  - provisions relating to Program's educational, preparatory and / or supplementary activities;
  - policies on laboratory and training activities, if provided by the curricula
  - policies on examinations and other progress tests;
  - policies on rules on credits provided as indicated in Art. 16.

### **Art. 13 – Admission requirements**

The requirements for admission to the PhD Program in Biomolecular Sciences are set forth in art. 19 of the University Regulations and based on the terms and effective dates expressly stated in the call for admissions.

### **Art. 14 – Selection procedures**



1. Admission to the PhD Program consists in the evaluation of titles and in an interview intended to ascertain the qualifications of the candidate and his or her aptitude for research, according to the procedures stated on the call. The evaluation may be held in a foreign language agreed upon with the Admissions Committee.
2. The Admissions Committee for the PhD Program, established by the PhD Committee and appointed by the Rector, may proceed with interviews, provided that equal treatment of all candidates is ensured.
3. Special rules for admission may be provided for foreign candidates. Such rules will be specified in the call, pursuant to art. 19 of the University Regulations.
4. Admission to the PhD Program is based on merit lists drawn up by the Admissions Committee until the number of candidates specified in the call has been reached.
5. The procedures for the communication of merit lists, cases of termination, withdrawal and exclusion are set forth in art. 23 of the University Regulations, or specified in the call.

#### **Art. 15 – Rights and obligations of PhD students**

1. Any attempt to gain an advantage or avoid consequences through lie, deceit or fraud is not tolerated by the PhD Program. Examples of lies, deception and fraud are:

- Falsification of any document;
- Plagiarism;
- Providing untrue information to an officer of the PhD Program;
- Falsification of research data;
- Not being responsible for his or her conduct.

Such violations are dealt with as follows:

- The PhD Committee invites the student, tutor and supervisor (if applicable) to provide an explanation of the events by;
- The PhD Committee decides whether or not to warn the student.



2. After a formal warning, if the student commits another serious violation, or in the case of a single falsification / plagiarism of research data, the PhD Committee may decide to expel the student from the PhD Program.

3. Additional provisions not specifically mentioned here, are covered in art. 27 of the University Regulations.

### **Art. 16 – Admission to the second and third year**

1. Pursuant to Art. 24, paragraph 2 of the PhD Program Regulations, the students enrolled in the International PhD Program in Biomolecular Sciences must attend the courses, seminars, symposia and practical work organized by the PhD Program.

- Basic and advanced courses. The teaching staff of the University of Trento, assisted by visiting Professors, provides advanced courses regarding specific topics of biological and biotechnological relevance. Furthermore, during the first year, practical laboratory activities are planned in order to offer to the new students the opportunity to learn about the scientific topics carried out by the different research groups. Internationally renowned teachers are invited to hold specific courses of particular scientific relevance.

- Seminars. National and international researches are invited to present their research in seminar cycles. Internal seminars (journal clubs and progress reports) are regularly organized in order to present and discuss newly published results or to show data of ongoing research activities.

- Symposia. A symposium (named *Work in Progress*) which all the Doctoral students must attend, is organized once a year. The Doctoral students must present posters regarding their project and give a short presentation of their results. This meeting allows the students to learn about the projects and results of his or her colleagues. Moreover, this gives the PhD students the opportunity to gain experience in communication and presentation of scientific results and experimental achievements.

2. It is mandatory for each student to spend a period of training abroad of at least one month and not exceeding one year, to be agreed with his or her tutor. Any exception or derogation from this obligation must be evaluated and approved by the PhD Committee.



**3.** Each PhD student attends a tailored training course which includes, besides the research performed under the supervision of his or her tutor and supervisor based on his or her competences, advanced courses of basic knowledge and specialization courses in Biomolecular Sciences and Technology at the University of Trento.

First year PhD students shall attend:

- Courses for a total of 60 hours, selected from the basic courses and other courses offered by the PhD Program in Biomolecular Sciences including courses from other PhD Programs upon authorization by the PhD Committee or by the Executive Committee
- Initiatives under paragraph 1 of this article.

Second year PhD students shall attend:

- Courses for a total of 60 hours, selected from the basic courses and other courses offered by the PhD Program in Biomolecular Sciences including courses from other PhD Programs, upon authorization by the PhD Committee or by the Executive Committee.
- Initiatives under paragraph 1 of this article.

Third year students are required to attend seminars and to present, every 6 months, a report on the progress status of the dissertation before the PhD Committee or, when it has been appointed, before a designated Committee.

**4.** The requirements for admission to the second year are as follows:

- regular participation in the educational activities proposed by the PhD Program; mandatory attendance of 80% of the total hours for each course and 15 seminars per year. If the student cannot comply with the minimum required, the PhD Committee may admit him or her to the second year with warning and, if necessary, oblige the student to attend the courses again.
- Obtaining a minimum of 14 ECTS credits per year, corresponding to 60 hours worth of lecture (1 credit every 6 hours), 15 seminars per year (2 credits), 2 Journal clubs attended (1 credit), 2 Progress reports attended (1 credit).



- Obtaining, by the end of the first year, a satisfactory evaluation from the teachers, the supervisor or tutor. To this end, professors and the tutor/supervisor of each of the PhD students must submit to the PhD Committee a letter of evaluation of the candidate. The evaluation must be concise, clear and precise.

Based on the above information, the PhD Committee will offer one of the following scores:

- PASS, namely a positive evaluation. The student is admitted to the second year
- PASS WITH WARNING namely a positive evaluation, the student is allowed to proceed although gaps have been found either in his or her preparation or research project
- NOT PASS. The student must therefore leave the course and his or her PhD student status is terminated (pursuant to art. 27 paragraph 4 of the University Regulations).

The student who needs a serious revision of his or her research project, based on comments received from either the advisor or the tutor, will be invited to a subsequent discussion before the PhD Committee and in the presence of the supervisor and of the tutor.

At the end of this stage of evaluation, the PhD Committee will inform the student of its decision.

**5. Requirements for admission to the third year are as follows:**

- regular participation in the educational activities proposed by the PhD Program; mandatory attendance of 80% of the total hours for each course and 15 seminars per year. If the student cannot comply with the minimum required, the PhD Committee may admit him/her to the second year with warning and, if necessary, oblige the student to attend the courses again.
- Obtaining a minimum of 14 ECTS credits per year, corresponding to 60 hours worth of lectures (1 credit every 6 hours), 15 seminars per year (2 credits), 2 Journal clubs attended (1 credit), 2 Progress reports attended (1 credit).
- Obtaining a satisfactory evaluation which the teachers, the supervisor and the tutor are required to produce by the end of the second year.

Based on the above information, the PhD Committee will offer one of the following scores:



- PASS, namely a positive evaluation. The student is admitted to the third year
- PASS WITH WARNING, namely a positive evaluation, the student is allowed to proceed although gaps have been found either in his or her preparation or research project
- NOT PASS. The student must therefore leave the course and his or her PhD student status is terminated (pursuant to art. 27 paragraph 4 of the University Regulations).

The student who needs a serious revision of his or her research project, based on comments received from either the advisor or the tutor, will be invited to a subsequent discussion before the PhD Committee and in the presence of the supervisor and of the tutor.

At the end of this stage of evaluation, the PhD Committee will inform the student of its decision.

PhD students, at their request and with the consent of the PhD Committee or the Executive Committee, may be authorized to conduct paid subsidiary or supplementary teaching activities, provided it is compatible with his or her attendance to the course and his or her training activities and not exceeding the caps under art. 27 paragraph 12 of the University Regulations.

**6.** The third year shall be devoted to the completion of the PhD thesis. The thesis must be written in English and must be original. The scientific contributions included in the dissertation, may be the result of a scientific collaboration.

**7.** The provisions of Articles 26 and 28 of University Regulations shall be applied for matters not covered herein.

### **Art. 17 Leave of Absence**

**1.** A leave of absence may be granted for serious and justified personal reasons by the PhD Committee upon presentation of a request by the student. In case of absence due to illness, the student must submit medical certification.





2. Leaves of absence for periods exceeding a total of two months must be made up for by the student and shall result in the postponement of the final exam. The leave of absence from course attendance shall result in the suspension of the scholarship.

3. Absences which are not previously agreed on and not promptly reported in writing to the supervisor and / or tutor may constitute grounds for the student's exclusion from the PhD Program.

### **Art. 18 – Thesis**

1. By the date communicated by the Administration Office, each student shall submit his or her thesis which will be sent for evaluation to external referees suggested by PhD Committee or by the Executive Committee.

2. The thesis is an original scientific work, in which the candidate presents the results of his or her own research in an appropriate format. Scientific publications or manuscripts intended for publication may be included provided they are relevant to the object of the doctoral dissertation. The guidelines for dissertation submission are described in the "Guidance Rules" section published on the Program's web site.

3. The dissertation must be written in English and must include a summary in Italian.

### **Art. 19 – Attainment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

1. The thesis will be evaluated by an Examination Committee composed of at least

- Two external members
- One internal member

2. The PhD Committee (or if delegated, the Executive Committee) shall establish the Examination Committee for the conferral of the title, observing the provisions under Title VII of the University Regulations in force.



3. In the event that a member of the Examination Committee is unable to attend the final discussion, he or she shall be allowed to participate via videoconference.
4. In the case of candidates under co-tutoring, the Examination Committee shall be appointed as provided for in the agreements.
5. One of the following grades will be proposed:
  - *Summa cum laude* (excellent)
  - *Magna cum laude* (very good)
  - Cum laude (good)
  - *Rite* (satisfactory)
6. If the internal member proposes *Summa cum Laude*, the thesis may be sent, upon request of one of the members of the PhD Committee, to an additional external member for a further evaluation.
7. For matters not covered herein, the provisions of Articles. 31, 32, 33 and 34 of University Regulations on Doctoral Research shall be applied.

#### **Art. 20 – Delays**

Any delay in the beginning of the academic year shall be tolerated only in justified cases, promptly communicated, beyond the PhD student's control and considered valid by the PhD Committee, and when they do not interfere with his or her participation in the PhD Program activities.

In the event that the delay exceeds sixty days, the scholarship shall not be paid for the period of absence and its payment shall be resumed at the end of the three-year program for a period equal to the initial delay.

#### **Art. 21 – Amendments to the Policies and Procedures**



Pursuant to art. 8, paragraph 4, of the University Regulations and subsequently to the activation of the Program, any changes to these Policies and Procedures and their annexes shall be approved by the CIBIO Committee and shall become effective from the date of publication on the PhD Program's website.

**Art. 22 – Legal reference**

1. The Regulations of the PhD Program in Biomolecular Sciences approved by the PhD Committee on 19 April 2011 shall be applied for courses preceding the 29<sup>th</sup> cycle.
2. National legislation and University regulations in force shall be applied for issues not specifically covered in these Policies and Procedures.