



Agreement on Training and Supervision

1. Preamble and Purpose

The IMPRS aims to provide first-class training and education for outstanding doctoral candidates from all over the world in a stimulating research environment. This competitive doctoral programme provides an excellent starting platform for a successful career in the field of plant biology.

This agreement serves as a framework for doctoral training and supervision. It should be discussed and adapted to the specific needs of the doctoral candidate and the supervisor(s) at the beginning of the project. Potential changes may require amendments.

It is required to submit the signed agreement to the IMPRS and the respective departmental graduate school within three months of the contract start of the doctoral project.

The agreement is based on and adheres to:

- the Max Planck Society's *Guidelines for Doctoral Training at Max Planck Institutes*
- the University of Cologne's *Doctoral Study Regulations of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences* ("*Promotionsordnung der Mathematisch-Naturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität zu Köln*")
- the *Regulations of the Graduate School for Biological Sciences*
- the principles of good scientific practice of the Max Planck Society (Rules of Procedure in Cases of Suspected Scientific Misconduct) and the University of Cologne (Regulations on the Investigation of Scientific Misconduct and Guidelines of the University of Cologne on Good Research Practice).

2. General Principles

Code of Conduct

All parties commit to maintaining a professional, respectful, and non-discriminatory working environment. Harassment, abuse of power, discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, nationality, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristics will not be tolerated. Any violations should be reported to the appropriate institutional body.

Data Storage and Open Science

All data collected within the scope of supervision must be made available to the faculty upon request, insofar as necessary for scientific purposes, quality assurance, or institutional obligations, while complying with applicable data protection regulations and the Open Science Principles of the University of Cologne and the Max Planck Society.

Life-Domain Balance

The compatibility of personal life and academic work is actively supported. Special measures to promote life-domain balance are agreed upon as needed (further information via <https://www.mpipz.mpg.de/phd-program/wellbeing>).

3. Parties to the Agreement

Doctoral Candidate:

Mr. Ms. No Title

Last Name	First Name(s)	Current Academic Degree

Under the guidance of the **direct supervisor**:

Last Name	First Name(s)	Affiliation (Institute, Department)

Project location

the project will be conducted in at MPIPZ

the project will be carried out at _____

Working title of Doctoral Research Project/Thesis:

4. Supervision and Advisory Structure

Supervisors

- Provide initial 36 months of funding according to TVöD/TV-L 13 (65% position) or equivalent.
- Extension will be discussed after 24 months; duration length must be justified.
- Allow participation in soft skills courses and training modules and ensure opportunities for training in core facilities and specialized methods.
- Provide regular professional advice and support early scientific independence.
- Attend all TAC meetings and annual retreats.
- Support the doctoral candidate to identify two additional advisors within the first 3 months to form the TAC.
- Give feedback on written reports.
- Ensure project design allows completion within planned timeframe.
- Ensure an appropriate ratio of supervision by limiting the number of doctoral candidates; should usually not act as main supervisor for more than eight doctoral candidates at the same time
- Serve as tutor on a reasonable number of other thesis committees.

Doctoral Candidate

- Must enrol at the University of Cologne before or immediately after project start and remain enrolled throughout.
- Must join the departmental Graduate School and complete the Core Programme.
- Assembles a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) within the first 3 months and communicates this to the PhD Office at MPIPZ. TAC includes:
 - direct supervisor,
 - at least two co-advisors (one external or different department; one may be a postdoc; a third can be added in justified cases).
- Organises TAC meetings, submits reports on time (at least two weeks before each TAC meeting), and prepares and gives presentations during the TAC meeting.
- Attends mandatory training on Good Scientific Conduct.
- Presents work at least once at a conference.
- Participates in at least two courses/workshops and one public outreach module (one writing + one engagement activity).
- Attends annual retreat (within first 36 months).
- May apply for financial aid to visit conferences and courses.
- May track progress of the PhD via the PhD Management System.

Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC)

- Meets the doctoral candidate at least four times:
 - 1st meeting (≤ 5 months): short written progress proposal (≤ 1000 words); TAC approves continuation beyond probation.
 - 2nd meeting (~ 12 months): structured report (~ 3000 words); decision on continuation.
 - 3rd meeting (~ 24 months): structured report (~ 3000 words); decision on extension.
 - Final meeting (earliest 30-33 months): thesis outline instead of report.
- Reports have to be submitted at least two weeks before each TAC meeting.
- If studies extend beyond 3.5 years: TAC meetings every 6 months.
- TAC approves deviations from meeting schedule and communicates them to the PhD Office at MPIPZ.
- PhD Office at MPIPZ monitors and documents meetings, reports, and minutes.

5. Training, Courses, and Scientific Development

- Attendance of lectures, seminars, workshops, retreats, conferences, fieldwork, lab rotations as agreed during the TAC meetings and fixed in TAC meeting minutes (timing specified by year/stage of PhD).
- Doctoral candidate may apply for financial aid to visit conferences/courses.
- Doctoral candidate attends mandatory training on Good Scientific Conduct.
- Doctoral candidate participates in at least two courses/workshops and one public outreach module (one writing + one engagement activity).
- Supervisors ensure opportunities for training in core facilities and specialized methods.

6. Resources and Infrastructure

- In addition to access to relevant scientific literature and research material, the following resources will be made available to the doctoral candidate (check and complete as required):
 - workstation/desk, PC, laboratory access, equipment and data storage (2.),
 - _____
- Doctoral candidate has a personal travel budget of €1,200 (valid for the first 36 months) to cover travel, housing, and fees for conferences/workshops (subject to prior approval by supervisor and the PhD Office at MPIPZ). Other means of funding (e.g. ERC, DFG) should be exploited first.
- Doctoral candidate may document the progress of the PhD in the PhD Management System. The stored data are only accessible to the respective doctoral candidate and the PhD Office.

7. Arrangements in case of conflict

Conflict

- In case of disagreements or concerns, any party may seek assistance from:
 - the PhD Office at MPIPZ,
 - IMPRS Speaker,
 - departmental Graduate School Steering Committee,
 - Ombudspersons at MPIPZ, University of Cologne, or Max Planck Society.
- All reports are handled confidentially and impartially.

Termination of Agreement

- The doctoral candidate may terminate the advisory relationship at any time without stating reasons. Replacement advisors must be identified in consultation with the TAC.
- The agreement may be dissolved at any time by mutual agreement.
- The supervisor may only unilaterally terminate for just cause.
- IMPRS, the departmental Graduate School, and the MNF Doctoral Office must be informed in all cases.

8. Important Dates

	Date
Project start:	
TAC assembly (within 3 months)	
1 st TAC meeting (after 5 months):	
2 nd TAC meeting (after 12 months):	
3 rd TAC meeting (after 24 months):	
Final TAC meeting (e.g. 30–33 months, see above):	
Estimated date of thesis submission (e.g. 36 months):	

Place & date

9. Signatures

Doctoral Candidate:

Direct thesis supervisor:

First co-advisor:

Second co-advisor:

Graduate School coordinator:
Monika Schlosser

(if necessary) Third co-advisor: