



University of
Zurich^{UZH}

MD-PhD Program

Information for Supervisors

Interfaculty MD-PhD Committee IMPK
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1 General information

The MD-PhD program enables medical students and graduates (in addition to their 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 not an independent PhD program. MD-PhD students are affiliated to one of the LSZGS PhD programs (Cancer Biology, MLS, ...) and have to fulfil their requirements.

The MD-PhD program differs from a regular Life Science Graduate School PhD regarding these points:

- Application deadlines
- Application process
- Curriculum (propaedeutic studies)

Steering Committee / Coordination and contact:

Interfaculty MD-PhD Committee (IMPK)

Prof. Dr. Adriano Aguzzi, Chairman

Artemi Bendandi, Coordinator

artemi.bendandi@usz.ch

2 Requirements

2.1 Qualification

The MD-PhD program is restricted to students who have a degree in:

- Human medicine
- Veterinary medicine
- Dental medicine

Applicants holding an MSc degree in Life Science or related fields in addition to their medical degree may apply directly to the Life Science Graduate School. They do not need to fulfil the additional requirements of the MD-phD program. However, they may be affiliated to the program and attend retreats or other activities.

2.2 Nationality

The MD-PhD program is open to students of all nationalities. Admission of applicants from outside Europe (EU/EFTA) 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.

2.3 Track I vs. Track II

The Track I MD-PhD program is restricted to students who have earned at least a Bachelor's degree in medicine at any Swiss university. The propaedeutic studies are started in parallel to the medical Master studies at UZH. The PhD dissertation is conducted after earning the medical Master degree.

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 recommend that candidates enter the program no later than five years after completing their medical degree.

3 Deadlines

3.1 Applicants from EU/EFTA countries

<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Interview</i>	<i>Matriculation</i>
15 December	mid January	Spring semester
15 June	mid July	Fall semester

The exact date if the interviews will be communicated upon submission of the application documents.

3.2 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:

<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Interview</i>	<i>Matriculation</i>
15 December	mid January	Fall semester
15 June	mid July	Spring semester

If necessary, interviews can be conducted via Skype or Zoom. The VISA/work permit formalities may be initiated in collaboration with the host institute as soon as the confirmation of acceptance has been issued.

Non-EU/EFTA applicants may also apply at the deadlines listed in 3.1, however, it might not be possible to finalize matriculation by the following semester.

If you plan to host a candidate from a non-EU/EFTA country, please contact the program coordinator as early as possible.

4 Application process

Initial contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artemi Bendandi, coordinator• email: artemi.bendandi@usz.ch
Submission of application documents (Web-Upload, login will be provided)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motivation letter/career plan (1 page)• CV• Copies of diplomas and grades• Brief outline of PhD project (ca. 5 pages)• Confirmation of supervisor (form: see Downloads)
Advisory interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prof. Adriano Aguzzi (Chairman, Interfaculty MD-PhD committee IMPK), for appointments contact J. Wiedler• Supervisors may join the meeting if they like.• The applicant should have secured a host laboratory at this point.
Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of the proposed MD-PhD project and interview by the IMPK.• If successful: Acceptance into the program.

4.1 Admission criteria

Essential criteria for the admission to the interview are:

- the qualification of the applicant (grades in medical school, other qualifications)
- the qualification of the host laboratory
- the quality of the presented project

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. This is in accordance with the regulations of the Life Science Graduate School:

<https://www.lifescience-graduateschool.uzh.ch/en/PI/recruitment.html>

4.2 Repetition

Rejected candidates are not permitted to apply again.

5 Funding

5.1 General remarks

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 6.3; salary to be negotiated according to rules for clinical work).

5.2 Scholarships

The Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences SAMS and the Swiss National Science Foundation, with the support of private foundations and in collaboration with the Swiss School of Public Health, award each year a limited number of competitive individual MD-PhD grants.

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

The UZH candidates are shortlisted by the Interfaculty MD-PhD Committee (IMPK). The awarding procedure is coordinated by the SAMS. The decision of the IMPK is final and cannot be disputed. Applications cannot be submitted to SAMS directly.

Application deadline	15 December
Conditions	Conditions are listed in the SAMS guidelines in section 5. (see link)
Timing	<p>Candidates must apply at the beginning of their MD-PhD studies. It is not possible to apply for a scholarship 1-2 years into the program.</p> <p>Candidates who apply in the summer must decide at the point of application whether they will also apply for a SAMS scholarship. We do not accept any late applications.</p>
Repetition	It is not possible to apply more than once. Applicants who are accepted into the MD-PhD program, but not shortlisted for a scholarship, may not apply for a scholarship again in the following year.

5.3 Other funding opportunities

Funding for PhD students	https://www.research.uzh.ch/en/funding/phd.html
Medical Faculty: Foundations, awards and grants (German)	UZH - Medizinische Fakultät - Stiftungen und Preise

6 Organization

6.1 Propaedeutic studies

In the framework of the propaedeutic studies, students must gain a minimum of 30 or 35 ECTS¹ 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”).

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 (contact program coordinator).

6.2 Dissertation

Completion of the PhD dissertation and graduation is 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.html>

6.3 Clinical Work

MD-PhD students may engage in clinical work (up to an employment level of 20%) alongside their PhD dissertation.

7 Supervision and thesis committee

MD-PhD students are PhD students at the Faculty of Science (MNF) and subject to their regulations.

Specifically, this means that the PhD thesis project must be approved by a professor of the Faculty of Science, or a professor who holds the right to confer a PhD-degree at the Faculty of Science (*Promotionsrecht*). The approving person must declare their willingness to act as a member of the thesis committee.

For more information, please refer to the website of the Faculty of Science:

<https://www.mnf.uzh.ch/en/studium/reglemente.html>

<https://www.mnf.uzh.ch/en/fakultaet/fakultaetsangehoerige/fakultaetsmitglieder.html>

¹ Students entering the program 2021 or earlier: 35 ECTS; students entering 2022 or later: 30 ECTS