



University of
Zurich^{UZH}

MD-PhD Program

Study guide and guide for applicants

This study guide applies to students who are accepted to the program in 2022 or later.

Interfaculty MD-PhD Committee IMPK

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1 Requirements

The MD-PhD program enables medical students and graduates to gain a basic natural science education in addition to their degree in medicine, dentistry, or veterinary medicine. This 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 oriented exclusively toward Master students and graduates of degree programs in human medicine, veterinary medicine, or dentistry.

1.1 Track I

The Track I MD-PhD program is restricted to students who have earned at least a bachelor's degree in human medicine, veterinary medicine or dentistry at any Swiss university. The propaedeutic studies are entered in parallel to the medical Master studies at UZH. The PhD dissertation is conducted after earning the medical master's degree.

Track I applicants must have attained at least a 5.0 grade average during their bachelor studies.

1.2 Track II

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.

We only accept candidates up to five years after completing their medical degree, counting from the date of the next submission deadline after receipt of the application.

1.3 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. Medical degrees obtained within the EU can be recognized in Switzerland through the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH). Students who have completed their medical studies in a non-EU country can only practice clinically during their PhD if this is approved by the Directorate of Health.

For more information, please contact the Federal Office of Public Health.

2 Deadlines

2.1 Track I

For Track I students, there are no deadlines for acceptance into the propaedeutic studies.

For admission to the PhD, the Track II deadlines apply.

2.2 Track II

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

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

2.3 Track II for applicants from non-EU/EFTA countries

Students residing 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	late June – mid July	Spring semester

Interviews are conducted via 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.

If you apply by the deadlines specified under 2.2, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to enroll for the following semester.

3 Application

3.1 Track I

Please refer to the German version of the study guide.

3.2 Track II

Initial contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thomas Aeppli, coordinator• email: thomas.aeppli@uzh.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 / academic transcripts• Brief outline of PhD project (ca. 5 pages)• Confirmation of supervisor (form available on the website, section 'Application')
Review of the application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted by the program leadership in coordination with the program coordinator• The applicant must have secured a host laboratory at this point.
Admission interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of the proposed MD-PhD project and interview by the IMPK• If successful: Acceptance into the program

3.3 Admission criteria

Essential criteria for admission to the interview with the IMPK are the qualification of the applicant (grades in medical school, other qualifications), the qualification of the host laboratory, and the quality of the proposed project.

The MD-PhD program requires a confirmation by the host lab that the salary for the students is secured for a minimum duration of 3 years.

3.4 Repetition

Rejected candidates are not permitted to apply again.

4 Funding

4.1 General remarks

4.1.1 Track I

There are no possibilities to apply for financial support during the propaedeutic studies in the framework of Track I.

For the duration of the PhD dissertation (3 years minimum), the host lab must provide a salary which corresponds to the Swiss National Science Foundation's (SNSF) rates for doctoral students. In addition, students may engage in clinical work up to an employment level of 20% (see 5.3).

4.1.2 Track II

For the duration of the PhD dissertation (3 years minimum), the host lab must provide a salary which corresponds to the Swiss National Science Foundation's (SNSF) rates for doctoral students. In addition, students may engage in clinical work up to an employment level of 20% (see 5.3).

4.2 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 a limited number of competitive individual MD-PhD grants each year.

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

These scholarships are awarded through the SAMS. Applicants must be enrolled in an MD-PhD program to submit an application. Starting in 2025, the application and evaluation process is conducted entirely at the national level, and all applications are submitted directly to the SAMS.

Application deadline	See SAMS website
Requirements	Personal and formal requirements are listed in section 7 of the SAMS regulations.
Timing	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.
Repetition	Only one application is possible, meaning that students who are accepted into the MD-PhD program but unsuccessfully apply for a scholarship cannot apply a second time.

4.3 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](#)

5 Organization

5.1 Propaedeutic studies

In the framework of the propaedeutic studies, students must gain a minimum of 30 ECTS credit points, equivalent to 6 months of fulltime studies. For further information, including a selection of mandatory and recommended courses and lectures, see the document “Propaedeutic Studies” on the program website (section ‘Curriculum’).

The credit points earned during the propaedeutic studies must be documented when registering for graduation. This is done online through the Faculty of Science’s StudentAdmin tool.

5.1.1 Track I

Please refer to the German version of the study guide.

5.1.2 Track II

It is advisable to attend the courses and lectures of the propaedeutic studies during the first year of the MD-PhD program. This applies especially to block courses, which impart important basic skills and knowledge.

It is possible to have external academic achievements recognized towards the propaedeutic studies. The number of credit points awarded is decided by the Faculty’s Office of Student Affairs upon request by the IMPK. Please contact the program coordinator.

5.2 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 found on the website of the Faculty of Science.

<https://www.mnf.uzh.ch/en/studium/studienangebot/phd-programme.html>

5.3 Clinical Work

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

6 Host laboratory

6.1 General remarks

Candidates must find a host laboratory/supervisor on their own initiative; the MD-PhD committee does not give any assistance. The host laboratory must be affiliated to the Life Science Graduate School.

Research groups can be found by way of the Life Science Graduate School website:

<https://www.lifescience-graduateschool.uzh.ch/en/about-LSZGS/phd-programs.html>

PhD-Programs > select individual programs > Research Groups

> contact suitable research group

Please note that the MD-PhD program is not a self-contained PhD program; you must find your supervisor in one of the regular PhD programs (Cancer Biology, MLS, ...).

6.2 Time frame

6.2.1 Track I

Please refer to the German version of the study guide.

6.2.2 Track II

Track II candidates need to select a host lab prior to their advisory discussion with members of the IMPK.

7 Matriculation and module booking

7.1 Matriculation

7.1.1 Track I

Please refer to the German version of the study guide.

7.1.2 Track II

Track II students must be matriculated as PhD students at the Faculty of Science at UZH. For further information: <https://www.uzh.ch/en/studies/application/doctoralstudies.html>

7.2 Module booking

General information about module booking: <https://www.students.uzh.ch/en/studyadmin/booking.html>

Further information and conditions regarding eligible modules are detailed in the document “Propaedeutic Studies” in the ‘Curriculum’ section of the website.

7.3 Modules at ETH

In order to attend modules at ETHZ, UZH students need to register as a “special student”:

<https://www.ethz.ch/en/studies/non-degree-courses/special-students.html>

7.4 Credit points gained outside UZH

Credit points that do not automatically appear in the Summary of Credits (ETH modules, LTK1, etc.) can be added manually. Please send a copy of the course certificate to the MD-PhD coordinator (Thomas Aeppli).

8 Life Science Graduate School

All students accepted to the MD-PhD program must join one of the PhD programs/graduate schools of the Life Science Graduate School. In order to join the program of their choice (to be discussed with supervisor), *they do not need to go through any additional application processes or interviews*. They need, however, to fulfill all the requirements of their chosen program (retreats, courses, teaching duties).

For the doctoral studies as well as for graduation, the regulations of the Faculty of Science and of the respective doctoral program apply.

[UZH – Faculty of Science – Check List for PhD Students](#)

9 Lab Rotations

Candidates who do not have any wet lab experience are strongly advised to engage in at least one lab rotation prior to joining the MD-PhD program.

Laboratory rotations can be completed at a research group affiliated with the Life Science Zurich Graduate School. Credit points for prior laboratory internships not completed as part of a specific university program, as well as internships at other university institutes, can also be credited upon request.

After submitting a written report, which is reviewed by the head of the host institution, 1 ECTS point is awarded for each week of the laboratory internship (full-time attendance is required). The report must be written in the form scientific publication: title, abstract, introduction, results, discussion, materials and methods, and references; typically 5 to 10 pages in length. In addition, the internship supervisor must confirm in writing that the student has successfully completed the internship.

Students may acquire a maximum of 16 ECTS credit points for lab rotations.

10 Retreat

There is an annual MD-PhD retreat which is sponsored by the program and organized by the students.

MD-PhD students are required to attend the retreat at least twice during their studies. Participation in the organizing activities is awarded with 1 ECTS credit point which is counted towards the soft skills points.

11 Transfer into MSc Medical Biology

The propaedeutic studies of the MD-PhD and the MSc Medical Biology programs are identical. This allows students to transfer from one program into the other.

A transfer from the MD-PhD to the MSc Medical Biology program must be requested no later than 12 months after entering the MD-PhD program by submitting a written request to the directors of the MD-PhD as well as of the MSc Medical Biology program.

12 Contacts and web links

MD-PhD-Program, committee and coordination	Interfaculty MD-PhD Committee IMPK: Prof. Dr. Anne Müller, President <u>Contact:</u> Thomas Aeppli thomas.aeppli@uzh.ch https://www.med.uzh.ch/en/doctoralprograms/md-phd.html
Admission and matriculation: Swiss qualification	University of Zurich Student Administration Office Büro KOL E8 Rämistrasse 71 8006 Zürich https://www.students.uzh.ch/en/contact.html
Admission and matriculation: Foreign qualification	University of Zurich Admissions Office Rämistrasse 71 8006 Zürich https://www.students.uzh.ch/en/contact.html
Scholarships SAMW/SNF	https://www.samw.ch/en/Funding/MD-PhD-Program.html
Life Science Graduate School	https://www.lifescience-graduateschool.uzh.ch/en.html Coordination: Dr. Susanna Bachmann gradschool@lifescience.uzh.ch
Dean's Office Science Faculty Doctoral Studies	Cornelia Schmid, promotion@mnf.uzh.ch https://www.mnf.uzh.ch/en/studium.html
