



## MSc Program in Biology, Concentration in Molecular and Cellular Biology

### Learning Agreement - Instructions to Students

Francesca Peri and Darren Gilmour, MSc coordinators (last update July 2023)

The Learning Agreement has to be worked out at the start of the MSc study program

#### Step 1:

In general, the student should find a research group where they can do the research for the Master thesis and a supervisor who guides this research as well as the completion of the Master thesis already before beginning the study program. In the Master's program in Molecular Cell Biology, you must conduct your thesis project in a lab approved by the program (see list on

<https://www.biologie.uzh.ch/de/Studium/Masterstudium/MasterStudies/MolecularCellularBiology.html>)

**Research projects must have a clear focus on understanding cellular and molecular mechanisms**, the PI must be substantially involved in teaching in our program, and **there should be no other more appropriate Masters program for the planned project**.

To be included on the list, an interested group leader should contact the Master coordinators (Francesca Peri or Darren Gilmour) well in advance. See appendix about eligibility of supervisors and projects.

#### Step 2:

Together with the supervisor, the student generates a draft of the Learning Agreement on [www.studentadmin.mnf.uzh.ch](http://www.studentadmin.mnf.uzh.ch), without submitting it.

For the selection of course work, the relevant guidelines of the MSc Biology and the concentration MCB should be followed.

(<https://www.biologie.uzh.ch/de/Studium/Masterstudium/General-information/Process-MSc.html>,  
<https://www.biologie.uzh.ch/de/Studium/Masterstudium/MasterStudies/MolecularCellularBiology.html>)

The exam for BIO 520 "Integrated Knowledge in Biology / Themenübergreifende Fachkompetenz" has to be scheduled around 8 weeks after completion of the Master thesis (except for special well founded cases). The date entered into the Learning Agreement is provisional; the definitive date is fixed after completion of the Master thesis.

The student then has to schedule a meeting with one of the MSc coordinators (Francesca Peri or Darren Gilmour) in order to discuss the Learning Agreement and formulate a mutually acceptable study plan.

#### Step 3:

To this meeting, the student should also bring the BSc certificate with academic record (or a current transcript if the BSc is about to be obtained). After an agreement between student, Master thesis supervisor and coordinator has been reached, the Learning Agreement is updated in StudentAdmin and submitted by the student, to be confirmed by the Supervisor and the MSc coordinator, and finally the Academic Support Office Biology (Studienkoordination Biologie) electronically (no signatures needed).

In case of questions about this procedure, contact [studienkoordination@biol.uzh.ch](mailto:studienkoordination@biol.uzh.ch).

## **Appendix: Supervisors of a Master thesis in the program MSc Biology, concentration in Molecular and Cellular Biology**

The legally binding Rahmenverordnung requests that the Master thesis research has to be completed within the Faculty of Science (Mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät MNF) of the University of Zurich. Moreover, the “Studienordnung” of the MNF states that only Professors and Privatdozenten/innen or Lecturers of this Faculty can act as supervisors. These regulations are meant to assure that supervisors are not just experienced researchers but also experienced academic teachers. Other professors of UZH can exceptionally be accepted as supervisors, but only if they contribute substantially and successfully to teaching in the BSc/MSc Biology program in the field of Molecular and Cellular Biology.

According to the general rules of the Division of Biology, offering four places in a 3.5 week practical block course is regarded as the minimum teaching contribution (in case of questions, contact Karin Isler [karin.isler@biol.uzh.ch](mailto:karin.isler@biol.uzh.ch)). However, teaching and a record of engagement is necessary but not sufficient for being accepted as MSc thesis supervisor.

In addition, the planned project must have a clear focus on understanding cellular and molecular mechanisms, and **there should be no other more appropriate Masters program for the planned projects**. Research projects with a focus on applying molecular life sciences techniques and biomedical aims will be redirected towards MSc Biomedicine or other more appropriate Biology Master programs, such as Immunology, Cancer Biology or Virology.