LeGCI

Leibniz Graduate School
Chronic Inflammation

Study Record Book

ZIBI

DRFZ
Deutsches Rheuma-Forschungszentrum

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Study Record Book

Leibniz Graduate School Chronic Inflammation

Doctoral researcher

Name:

Envisaged degree: (PhD or MD)

Work group: (name and affiliation)

Primary supervisor/PI:

Co-supervisor I:

Co-supervisor II:

Admission date:

Doctoral thesis

Project/title:

University:

Faculty:

Reviewers:

Date of defense:

11/2026

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The Leibniz Graduate School on Chronic Inflammation

The interdisciplinary, international orientation of the DRFZ and its strong cooperation with the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin offers an attractive research environment at the interface between basic and clinical research. The Leibniz Graduate School on Chronic Inflammation (LeGCI) is the graduate programme of the DRFZ. It is associated to the Center of Infection Biology and Immunity (ZIBI) Graduate School Berlin which provides an umbrella structure for various graduate programmes in the field of infection biology and immunology in Berlin.

Within the framework of LeGCI, a mutual responsibility is established between the doctoral researcher and her/his supervisor for all phases of qualification leading to the doctorate and the development of a career plan. LeGCI forms the basis for a structured progression of the PhD, MD or MD/PhD work and doctoral study. The graduate programme is open for PhD, MD and MD/PhD students of the DRFZ and cooperating partners. Within the programme doctoral researchers will receive a wide range of technical and scientific support as well as personal assistance. The support and assistance aims to foster young scientists by promoting scientific excellence and personal competence. The goal is to recognize individual potentials and to provide knowledge, skills and qualifications preparing best for a successful professional career.

The programme is designed to enable PhD, MD and MD/PhD students to pursue the abovementioned goals.

Maintaining a Study Record Book

Each doctoral researcher keeps a Study Record Book to document the fulfillment of the curriculum.

Central element of the Study Record Book is the supervision agreement. A copy must be attached to the Study Record Book. For doctoral researchers that are employed at the DRFZ, the original supervision agreement with all signatures is stored at the DRFZ personnel department, in accordance with data protection regulations. The doctoral researcher, with support from the primary supervisor, is responsible for the timely execution of the supervision agreement and for organizing and documenting annual meetings with the primary supervisor and the TAC. Copies of the supervision agreement and meeting records should be sent to Dr. Katrin Moser (moser@drfz.de).

A further integral part of the Study Record Book are the progress reports of the regular TAC meetings. The doctoral researcher´s participation in lectures courses and if applicable in seminars must be documented. After successful completion of the LeGCI Graduate Programme each doctoral researcher will be awarded a “PhD certificate”, “MD certificate” or “MD/PhD certificate” issued by DRFZ. The certificate will contain information on all successfully completed courses seminars and lectures.

Enrolment at university

In Germany, only universities can award doctoral degrees. The graduation criteria of the universities are laid down in the doctorate regulations of the respective faculty and are applied to their full extent. Since the enrolment regulations of the universities vary, the university/faculty at which the doctorate is to be completed should be decided at the beginning of the doctoral period. University graduation criteria are outlined in the doctoral regulations of the respective faculty/university and apply fully.

Selection process and admission

LeGCI considers applications from scientists with a diploma, master's degree in natural sciences with an emphasis on life sciences**,** or state exam (“Staatsexamen”). For admission to the LeGCI, candidates apply with a letter of intent (“Motivationsschreiben”), a CV (which includes a possible list of publications), certificates and possible letters of recommendation, submitted to the coordinator. Based on the quality of these documents (grades, motivation, research experience, and publications), selected applicant will be invited to an interview with the LeGCI Steering Committee. Here, the applicant gives a short presentation (15 minutes max.), introducing him-/herself and the PhD project. Three members of the Steering Committee must be present at the interview. Based on a written recommendation by the interviewing members, the Steering Committee decides about admission to LeGCI.

Members of the LeGCI Steering Committee:

Prof. Dr. Anja Hauser (spokesperson LeGCI; Charité and DRFZ)
Dr. Helena Radbruch (spokesperson LeGCI; Charité)
Felix Weiss, PhD (spokesperson LeGCI; DRFZ)
Prof. Dr. Hyun-Dong Chang (TU Berlin and DRFZ)
Dr. Andrey Kruglov (DRFZ)
Prof. Dr. Raluca Niesner (FU and DRFZ)
PD Dr. Volker Siffrin (Charité and MDC)
Dr. Axel Schulz (DRFZ)

PhD thesis / MD thesis and supervision

Once admitted at LeGCI, the doctoral researcher, with the help of the primary supervisor, needs to establish a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) within three months after starting the doctoral work. The TAC is composed of a senior scientist from a different research group associated with the LeGCI consortium, and at least one other postdoc or senior scientist. It is recommended that at least one TAC team member should have a natural scientific background and at least one should have a medical background. Doctoral researcher, primary supervisor and the members of the TAC complete a Supervision Agreement (Appendix 1).

The purpose of the TAC is to monitor the doctoral researcher’s work progress and advise the doctoral researcher, together with the primary supervisor, regarding the development of their research project. When asked by the doctoral researcher, they should read and comment on manuscript drafts, where relevant, and help in building the doctoral researcher´s academic

network. In addition, the TAC members are requested to assist the doctoral researcher in all aspects of career planning.

Doctoral researcher, primary supervisor and TAC should meet within the first three months of the doctoral project for a kick-off meeting and to complete the supervision agreement. The purpose of this meeting is to develop and agree on the research proposal and project plan (Appendix 2: Template Thesis Committee Meeting – Report). The research proposal and project plan is part of the supervision agreement and should be submitted by the doctoral researcher to the doctoral researcher LeGCI coordinator within two weeks from the meeting.

Doctoral researcher, primary supervisor and TAC will meet at once per year. At latest one week before each meeting, the doctoral researcher will submit a progress report to the primary supervisor and the members of the TAC. At the meeting, doctoral researcher gives a short presentation, followed by discussion on the topics included in the progress report. The research and additional curriculum plan for the next period should be adjusted during the progress meetings. Following the meeting, the doctoral researcher is expected to revise relevant parts of the report, collect the signatures or email approval of the AC members, and submit the final document to the LeGCI coordination within one month from the meeting.

Curriculum

Besides their own scientific research culminating in the PhD, MD or MD/PhD thesis, the doctoral researchers are obliged to complete an additional training programme. The purpose of the additional curriculum is to broaden the horizon of the doctoral researchers within the field of immunology / chronic inflammation research, improve their scientific and personal skills, foster research collaborations and personal networks, enhance integration at LeGCI, and allow active peer support and exchange of experiences among the doctoral researchers.

Courses and workshops are mainly offered in cooperation with the ZIBI Graduate School. The ZIBI curriculum, which is aligned with European standards, is jointly organised by the ZIBI member programmes. In addition, LeGCI doctoral students may attend courses offered by the ZIBI cooperation partners Humboldt Graduate School (HGS), Dahlem Research School (DRS) and BSRT, as well as other graduate schools and training programmes within the consortium universities. Being member of LeGCI and ZIBI allows access to the courses offered by these programmes. However, LeGCI cannot cover the cost for attendance. Doctoral researchers are also encouraged to participate in activities offered by other scientific institutes and universities.

The credit point (CP) system of the LeGCI follows the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and courses attended elsewhere are therefore easily creditable. PhD and MD/PhD students are obliged to collect 30 ECTS in total, MD students are obliged to collect 10 ECTS.

The Research Proposal and each Progress Report is acknowledged with 1 CP. In addition, a minimum of 8 CP (MD: 3 CP) must be gained from Scientific Education, a minimum of 8 CP (MD: 3 CP) from Scientific Communication and Meetings and a minimum of 4 CP (MD: 1 CP) from Transferable Skills. An overview of the LeGCI Curriculum is provided in Appendix 3.

The additional curriculum contains:

Scientific Education

Lectures and Seminars

The DRFZ Institute Seminar as well as Scientific Discussion Clubs (SDS) are a platform for project discussion and optimization, and for networking. Doctoral researcher, primary supervisor and TAC should agree on at least one appropriate Scientific Discussion Club, where the doctoral researcher presents and discuss his/her doctoral project on a regular basis.

Practical courses

Doctoral researchers must attend practical courses (with different thematic orientations) to promote methodological skills and background knowledge. The participation and presentations must be documented (Annex 4a: Documentation of activities - Scientific Education).

Scientific Communication and Meetings

Conferences & International Meetings

In accordance with their supervision agreement each PhD and MD/PhD student must participate actively and at least two times in meetings and conferences with international speakers; MD students at least once. In a poster, abstract or oral presentation, doctoral researcher must present the results of her/his own scientific work (project) as well as the scientific findings obtained. The doctoral researchers are encouraged to apply at least once for own funding for travel and conference attendance from the conference organizer, the DFG or other sources.

Students Career Days

The academic training of doctoral researchers often neglects to adequately develop a career plan outside of science. In order to give doctoral researchers a better overview of the professional landscape and to establish links between doctoral researchers and possible future professions in academia and in industry, ZIBI offers the Students Career Days. Every doctoral researcher should have attended this this or a similar event at least once as part of the mandatory curriculum.

ZIBI Students' Day and PhD/MD Meetings

Doctoral researchers from all ZIBI member programmes meet once a month for ZIBI Students' Day. This event serves as a platform for ongoing presentation, discussion of research among peers, and networking and is mandatory for all doctoral researchers enrolled in LeGCI.

The doctoral researchers at the DRFZ are organized in the Doctoral Researchers Network. It aims to facilitate the exchange of experiences and information among the doctoral researchers. The PhD/MD meetings take place regularly and are organized by the DRFZ Doctoral Representatives.

Participation in scientific events and meetings must be documented.

Transferable Skills

Auxiliary non-scientific courses

In addition to professional and methodological competences, LeGCI assists doctoral researchers in developing personal competences which are required in a scientific environment. Within the curriculum, courses are offered on key subjects, e.g. good scientific practice (mandatory), scientific writing, grant proposal writing, presentation techniques and communication skills. The participation in such non-scientific courses shall take place around the same time as the exploitation and/ or use of the obtained information, knowledge and competencies. The participation in these auxiliary non-scientific courses shall be stipulated individually.

Internship

To explore potential career opportunities and to establish contacts with industry, it is expressly desirable for doctoral researchers who do not intend to pursue an academic career to do an internship in industry. Internships must be organized by the doctoral researcher, contacts have to be made individually. The primary supervisor has to agree on the internship which should be thematically linked to the doctoral thesis. The internship should not last longer than four weeks. Internships must be documented and will be acknowledged with CPs.

The participation in auxiliary non-scientific courses, as well as internships, must be documented.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Supervision Agreement

Appendix 2: Template Thesis Committee Meeting – Report

Appendix 3: LeGCI Curriculum

Appendix 1: Supervision Agreement

Supervision Agreement

between

_____ (Doctoral Researcher),

_____ (Primary Supervisor/PI),

_____ (Co-supervisor/Mentor),

_____ (Co-supervisor/Mentor).

In the interests of constructive and productive cooperation during the dissertation project, Doctoral Researcher and Supervisors agree to the following supervision agreement.

Mr/Ms ..... is member of the *Leibniz Graduate School on Chronic Inflammation* (LeGCI) since ..... .

1. Dissertation Project

a. Doctoral Researcher will produce a dissertation with the working title [.....]. The project has been described in more detail in the Research Proposal (Annex 2) and has been accepted by the Primary Supervisor and the Thesis Advisory Committee.

b. The period of time set to complete the dissertation is the predefined standard study period as stipulated within the relevant rules and regulations for doctoral studies of the respective university. This period may be extended with appropriate and documented cause.

c. The work and time plans, provided in detail as an attachment, have been agreed to by the Doctor al Researcher, the Primary Supervisor and the Thesis Advisory Committee.

d. This agreement and its attachments will be reviewed yearly by the Primary Supervisor and the Thesis Advisory Committee and Doctoral Researcher and modified if necessary.

2. Enrolment at a university

The doctorate is anticipated to be completed at the [... *please specify university and faculty*]. The deadline for registering for the doctorate is known to the Primary Supervisor and the doctoral student. Registration will take place in accordance with the applicable regulations. If requested, the Primary Supervisor will support Doctoral Student in the selection of reviewers at the university. Details of the university, faculty and relevant supervisors are listed in Attachment 2.

3. Supervision of the Dissertation / TAC Meetings

a. Doctoral Researcher, Primary Supervisor and Thesis Advisory Committee agree to discuss progress towards the completion of the research project yearly, using the research proposal and annual progress reports as a basis for discussion. Doctoral Researcher will prepare a report of the TAC meetings which are to be signed by Primary Supervisor.

b. Primary Supervisor commits him/herself to regularly monitoring the progression of the research project in the lab meetings of the research group.

c. Primary Supervisor commits him/herself to monitor the progression of the written dissertation and to providing comprehensive commentary and feedback on the dissertation.

4. Organization and Documentation of the activities

a. Each Doctoral Researcher keeps a Study Record Book to provide evidence of his/her attendance of the modules such as lectures or courses within the LeGCI Graduate Programme. The research proposal, the corrected and updated research proposal and the annual reports are integral parts of the Study Record Book.

b. It is the responsibility of each doctoral student to organize the Advisory Committee Meetings within the time frames mentioned in the Study Record Book, as well as the reporting of these meetings.

5. Additional Curriculum / Training Programme

a. Doctoral Researcher, Primary Supervisor and Thesis Advisory Committee agree that Doctoral Researcher will participate in training courses and events of the LeGCI, as part of a general and subject-matter qualification programme. The curriculum is presented in Appendix 4.

b. Throughout the course of the doctoral programme, Doctoral Researcher will make regular independent scientific contributions, for example, participating in a conference, publishing articles in scientific journals, organizing a conference, internships, teaching activities, etc.

c. All activities will be documented in the Study Record Book.

6. Publications

The Primary Supervisor and Doctoral Researcher agree that during the doctoral phase, the Doctoral Researcher is expected to achieve at least one publication with first authorship or make a significant, well-documented contribution to a publication. This is a prerequisite for earning a doctorate at some universities. The Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) should provide support and, when requested by the Doctoral Researcher, offer timely and valuable feedback on the manuscript.

7. Procedure in the Event of Conflicts

a. In the event of a conflict, the involved parties must first contact the institution's ombudsperson. If the Doctoral Researcher and the Primary Supervisor are employed by the same institution, that institution’s ombudsperson is responsible. If they have different employers, the DRFZ’s ombudsperson becomes the initial point of contact. The ombudsperson and the Doctoral Researcher will jointly decide if it's necessary to involve the ombudsperson from the other institution to resolve the issue. Should the supervision relationship be terminated prematurely, the TAC members and the Doctoral Researcher will collaborate to find a qualified new Primary Supervisor, who must agree to the terms by signing the Supervision Agreement.

b. The Doctoral Researcher and Primary Supervisor agree to adhere to the DRFZ’s rules of good scientific practice, which can be reviewed at https://www.drfz.de/en/ueber-uns/richtlinien/. This includes consulting with the Primary Supervisor, TAC, or other trusted individuals whenever the Doctoral Researcher has doubts or concerns. For Primary Supervisors, this specifically entails respecting and acknowledging the copyright rights and responsibilities concerning texts and findings developed by the Doctoral Researcher.

8. Additional Agreements

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

The Primary Supervisor, TAC members, and Doctoral Researcher will confirm by their signatures that they have read and accepted the terms of the Supervision Agreement. All parties are obliged to adhere to this agreement. Each participant will receive a copy of the Supervision Agreement along with the guidelines for doctoral studies at the DRFZ.

Sign and Date

_____ (Doctoral Researcher)

_____ (Primary Supervisor/PI)

_____ (Co-supervisor/Mentor)

_____ (Co-supervisor/Mentor)

Annex 1 to the Supervision Agreement:
Research Proposal and Project Plan

Please use the same template "Thesis Committee Meeting – Report".
To be submitted to the LeGCI coordinator within two weeks from the first meeting with the Primary Supervisor and the TAC.

Annex 2 to the Supervision Agreement:
Enrolment at a university

To be completed after enrolment

a. The dissertation project will be carried out at the Faculty of [.....] of the University of [.....]. The doctoral thesis will be carried out according to the doctoral regulations of the respective faculty.

b. Thesis supervisor at the university is [.....].

c. (if applicable) Additional thesis supervisors at the university are [.....].

Appendix 2: Template - TAC Meeting Report

Thesis Committee Meeting Report

Name: Date:

Project title:

Affiliation:

Primary Supervisor:

Thesis Committee Members:

1. Project description / Progress report

The Research Proposal / Progress report should include the following parts:
- Summary
- Introduction and state of the art
- Results and discussion

2. Outlook and Timeline

3. Curriculum Plan

a) Recommended seminars/conferences/training courses (Scientific discussion clubs, summer schools, ...)

b) Career development (soft skill courses, networking)

c) Comments

Signatures

_____ _____

Name Doctoral Researcher *Name Primary Supervisor*

Appendix 3: Curriculum LeGCI - overview

Required number of CPs: PhD students = 30 CP; MD students: 10 CP

1 CP = 25 – 30 hours invested

	credits
Research Proposal and Progress Reports	
Project Outline + 1st TAC Meeting	1
Progress Report + TAC Meeting	1
Final Report	1
Scientific Education (PhD: 8 CP min; MD: 3 CP min)	
Regularly participation DRFZ Institute Seminar (weekly format)	1/year (max 3 CP)
Regularly participation DRFZ Scientific Discussion Club (weekly format)	1/year (max 3 CP)
Regularly participation in ZIBI Lecture Series	0,5/semester
Practical courses	0,5/day
Scientific Communication and Meetings (PhD: 8 CP min; MD: 3 CP min)	
Presentation Institute Seminar	1
Presentation SDC	0,5
Meeting/Cornference	
active contribution (poster/oral presentation)	1
participation	0,5/day, (max 2/meeting)
ZIBI Students Day (mandatory)	
participation 8 times	1 (max 3 CP)
own presentation	1
ZIBI and LeGCI Retreat (mandatory)	
presentation	0,5
participation	0,5
Prizes (poster, abstract, travel, ...)	0,5
Students Career Days (mandatory)	0,5/day
PhD/MD Meetings	0,25/meeting
Transferable Skills (PhD: 4 CP min; MD: 1 CP min)	
Good Scientific Practice (mandatory)	0,5
Courses (scientific writing etc.)	0,5/day
Assistance/teaching	0,5/day
Organization of activities (Students Career Days etc)	up to 2/year
Supervision of undergraduates	up to 2/year
Internship in industry	up to 2/year