

NEWS letter

M_HH

Medizinische Hochschule
Hannover



Graduate School of Excellence

DECEMBER
2025
Alumni



Dear HBRS Alumni,

We proudly present our 20th HBRS Alumni newsletter.

Currently, we are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of structured doctoral education at MHH. About 200 people joined the festive event on November 7th/8th. Everyone had a great time exchanging ideas and catching up with careers of former batch mates.

In addition, we report in this newsletter about current activities of HBRS and MHH.

Thanks for your warm support and interest!

Reinhold Förster, Director of HBRS

Current status of HBRS and news

HBRS currently comprises six international (MD)/PhD programs ("Molecular Medicine", "Infection Biology / DEWIN", "Regenerative Sciences", "Auditory Sciences", "Epidemiology" and "Biomedical Data Science"). The Research Training groups SIIRI IRTG, RNApp, the DFG RTG 2978 (Cancer, with the University of Göttingen) and the DFG RTG 3135 ACME (Microbiology) are associated to HBRS. There are meanwhile a total of three structured doctoral programs for medical students to obtain the Dr.med degree (StrucMed; KlinStrucMed and DigiStrucMed). Three HBRS-associated Master programs "Biomedicine", "Biochemistry" and "Biomedical Data Science" are established.

Currently, the various programs of HBRS host ~280 PhD students. In addition, 26 medical students were accepted for StrucMed, 11 for KlinStrucMed and 7 for DigiStrucMed this year. About 80 new Master students (in three programs) are enrolled. About 60% of our PhD students are international and around 5% have a medical background. About 50% are women. HBRS is an independent entity of the Deanery of Academic Career Development lead by Prof. Dr. Anette Melk.

25th Anniversary of structured doctoral education at MHH



President of MHH
Prof. Denise Hilfiker-Kleiner

Initially planned for 2020, the event was postponed twice due to COVID, and HBRS finally celebrated its 25th anniversary on November 7th/8th, 2025.

Roughly 200 Alumni, members of HBRS faculty, and current students enjoyed personal, scientific, and career-oriented interactions. Some Alumni came from far away, including India, Singapore, and Madrid.

It all started with a lively welcome get-together in the so called "Student's Living Room" in building J2, which has been established by the student union ASTA a few years ago. Participants liked the cozy atmosphere. Food was provided at a buffet and drinks were available at the bar. Unfortunately, the party needed to be closed around 10 p.m. as next day stood ahead.



Dean of Academic Career Development
Prof. Anette Melk

Saturday morning was dedicated to greetings and keynote lectures. First, the Director of HBRS, Prof. Reinhold Förster, welcomed everyone and provided an overview of HBRS history and new developments. Next, the President of MHH, Prof. Denise Hilfiker-Kleiner, offered a few welcoming words and shared MHH's plans for the future. Afterwards, Prof. Anette Melk introduced the Deanery of Academic Career Development, which was established in 2022.

The first keynote lecture was given by Prof. Hans-Gustaf Ljunggren, long-standing member of the HBRS International Advisory Board. He talked about "Science under pandemic conditions: Evaluation SARS-CoV-2 vaccines in immunocompromised individuals".

The following keynotes were given by HBRS Alumni who in addition to



Director of HBRS
Prof. Reinhold Förster

their scientific talks shared some of their memories with the audience: Julia Skokowa (MolMed, Professor, Translational Oncology, Tübingen), Nico Lachmann (RegSci, Professor, Pediatric Pneumology, Allergology and Neonatology, MHH) and Sylvia Dreyer (Infection Biology, Group leader, Institute of International Animal Health/One Health (IITG), Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute Riems).

After a lunch break, participants could choose from four different sessions on scientific and career topics, designed by Alumni. A lot of them are now in leading positions either in academia or industry and could give valuable insights into career development.



Dr. Susanne Kruse
Coordinator of HBRS

The sessions sparked lively discussions in small groups at round tables or poster displays. Some of the topics of the round table discussions included: How to combine family and career?; Career in Industry and founding a Start-Up; How to navigate academia as an introvert? and Medical Writing/Communication. Future networking activities were also initiated, providing opportunities for participants to connect with each other and build relationships that could benefit their careers. Everyone was impressed by the great variety of career pathways and experiences, which highlighted the diverse opportunities available after PhD.

The last session of the day was dedicated to the topic "New and Exciting at MHH". Prof. Reinhold Förster reported about the Excellence Cluster "Resolving Infection Susceptibility" (RESIST), Prof. Athanasia



Key Lecture: Prof. Hans-Gustaf Ljunggren
Member of HBRS International Advisory Board, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm

Warnecke described the Excellence Cluster in Hearing Research (Hearing4all) and Prof. Markus Cornberg introduced the new Center of Individualized Medicine (CiiM).

The day ended in a relaxed mood with dinner at a nearby Italian restaurant!

To those who couldn't join us: we hope to see you soon! We're already looking forward to our next event, a Career Day scheduled for March 27th, 2026.

Feedbacks from Alumni (selection)

"I really enjoyed the HBRS Alumni Meet in Hannover! It was so nice to see familiar faces and catch up after so many years. The event was well organized, and the discussions were inspiring. Thanks to the whole team for making it a wonderful reunion. Looking forward to joining again!"

At dinner: "Hannover, Vienna, Munich, Mainz, Biberach, Stuttgart and Berlin, spanning nationalities Russia, Spain, Venezuela, India, and Croatia all brought together around a single table. HBRS MHH sure connects people ♥ Thank you organizers!"



Fritz Hartmann Lecture Opening of study year, October 2024

Leif Erik Sander, Charité – University Medicine Berlin | Director, Clinic for Infectiology & Intensive Medicine, Berlin Institute of Health | Head, Personalized Infection Medicine



from professors and supervisors:

- In December 2024, PD Dr. Stephan Traidl (Dermatology) and Dr. Bernd Heinrich (Gastroenterology) received the Memorial stipends of Else-Kröner-Fresenius Foundation endowed with 250.000 Euro.
- In January 2025, Prof. James Thackery (Nuclear Medicine) was awarded the ERC Consolidator Grant of 2 million Euro for his project MIGRATE (Molecular Imaging to Guide Repair and Advance Therapy: Targeting the inflammation-fibrosis axis in ischemic heart disease and remote organs)
- In the same context, Prof. Yang Li (Head of the Centre of Individualized Medicine) gained the prestigious ERC Proof of Concept Grant.
- Prof. Thomas Thum receives 800.000 Euro for two years from the Institute of Biomedical Translation (IBT) to establish a start-up in the field of lung fibrosis therapy.
- Prof. Amar Deep Sharma and Prof. Michael Ott are also supported by IBT for developing liver fibrosis therapy.
- Prof. Christian Mühlfeld is new director of the Institute of Functional and Applied Anatomy.
- Lower Saxony and Volkswagen Stiftung are supporting the new Research Training Group RNapp coordinated by Prof. Thomas Thum with 800.000 Euro for the MHH projects. It is a network initiative of universities and institutes in Hannover region.
- The new Research training group "Activating cellular anti-microbial effectors" (ACME) will be supported by DFG with 7 million Euro for 5 years, starting in April 2026.
- Prof. Amar Sharma received 600.00 Euro from Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation for his research on liver fibrosis and hepatitis.
- Prof. Axel Schambach was awarded the ERC Proof of Concept-Grant for his work on the Usher-Syndrome (inherited vision loss).
- The department of Experimental Haematology received the Innovation Prize of Lower Saxony (20.000 Euro) for their project IGuard in November 2025

Guided tour through Celle, October 2025



Weekend workshop in Berlin

Susanne Kruse and 20 international HBRS students travelled to Berlin from May 31st–June 2nd, 2024. Students from 11 different countries formed part of the group. In the mornings, the trainer Grit Kümmele discussed various aspects of integration into the German thinking and way of life as well as conflict management. The cultural program in the afternoons and evenings included a guided bus tour, a guided tour through the "Tränenpalast", the Reichstag, as well as a walking tour to Eastside Gallery. The DAAD kindly supported the weekend workshop for specialists from third world countries on the topic "Understanding the Germans – Intercultural aspects". The weekend was a great success. The workshop will certainly be repeated 😊.



Fritz Hartmann Lecture Opening of study year, October 2025

Klaus Osterrieder - President, University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover



from MHH

In February 2025, MHH received 20 million Euro from the Lower Saxony zukunft.niedersachsen program for the project "From Molecules to Human Health". Two virtual centers are going to be established: the Single Cell and Spatial Omics Analysis Centre (SICSAC) as well as the Centre for Gene and Cell Therapy (CGaCT).

Since 2025, Prof. Denise Hilfiker-Kleiner is the new president of MHH. Sadly, Prof. Michael Manns, former president of MHH, died in August 2025.

MHH is currently on rank 5 of all German "World's Best Hospitals".

MHH celebrates its 60th birthday in 2025! The official ceremony took place on May 19th. The guest speaker was Dr. Ursula von der Leyen (President of the EU commission).

PhD RegSci Annual Retreat 2025: Fostering Science, Collaboration, and Industry Exchange

The Annual Retreat 2025 of the PhD Program "Regenerative Sciences" (PhD RegSci) took place on September 9th–10th at the Lower Saxony Center for Biomedical Engineering, Implant Research and Development (NIFE).

The two-day event featured 26 scientific talks and 14 poster presentations by the PhD classes of 2022, 2023, and 2024, including the students who are currently participating in the exchange program with the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratories in Bar Harbor, Maine, USA, who flew in for the event. The retreat offered an excellent platform for sharing research, exchanging ideas, and strengthening connections across cohorts.

This year's retreat was particularly exciting and entertaining, thanks to the participation of our industry sponsors. Representatives Artur Zimmermann (BD), Agata Widera, PhD (BioLegend), Dr. Valentin Burkart (NEB), Dr. Adrian Korde (Novogene), Dr. Érica Schulze & Hugo Alejandro Martinez Alvarado (Sartorius), Katharina Debowski, PhD & Michaela Bienert, PhD, MBA (StemCell Technologies) shared valuable insights into their companies' histories, current services, and latest technological advancements. Their interactive sessions with students sparked engaging discussions that were thoroughly enjoyed by both sides.



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PhD RegSci

MHH was successful in the Excellence Initiative: in May, MHH was approved for two Clusters of Excellence, "Resolving Infection Susceptibility" (RESIST) and Hearing4all.

MHH has applied to become "Excellence University". Decisions are expected in fall 2026.

The Hannover Lung and Thorax Centre (HLTC) was founded in October 2025. It is supposed to be one of the most prominent centres in Germany.

The reapplication of the CRC/Transregio 298 "Safety-Integrated and Infection-Reactive Implants" (SIIRI) was successful and will be supported by DFG for the next 3.5 years with more than 10 million Euro.

The retreat's success was made possible by the dedication of the student organizing team: Laurien Czichon (Class of 2022, LEBAO), Suganya Annadurai (Class of 2022, Transfusion Medicine & Transplant Engineering), Niveditha Varma (Class of 2022, HTTG), Felix Kleemiß (Class of 2023, LEBAO), and Shannon Alyson McCallan (Class of 2022, LEBAO).

The Class of 2024 competed for the Best Poster Award, with Nabhonil Chatterji (Nuclear Medicine), Niharika Patlolla, and Theresa Niemöller (both LEBAO) emerging as winners—congratulations to all! Additionally, a certificate presentation was held for Class of 2023 for successfully completing their intermediate examinations.

Overall, the retreat was a vibrant showcase of scientific exchange, professional growth, and community spirit within the PhD RegSci program.

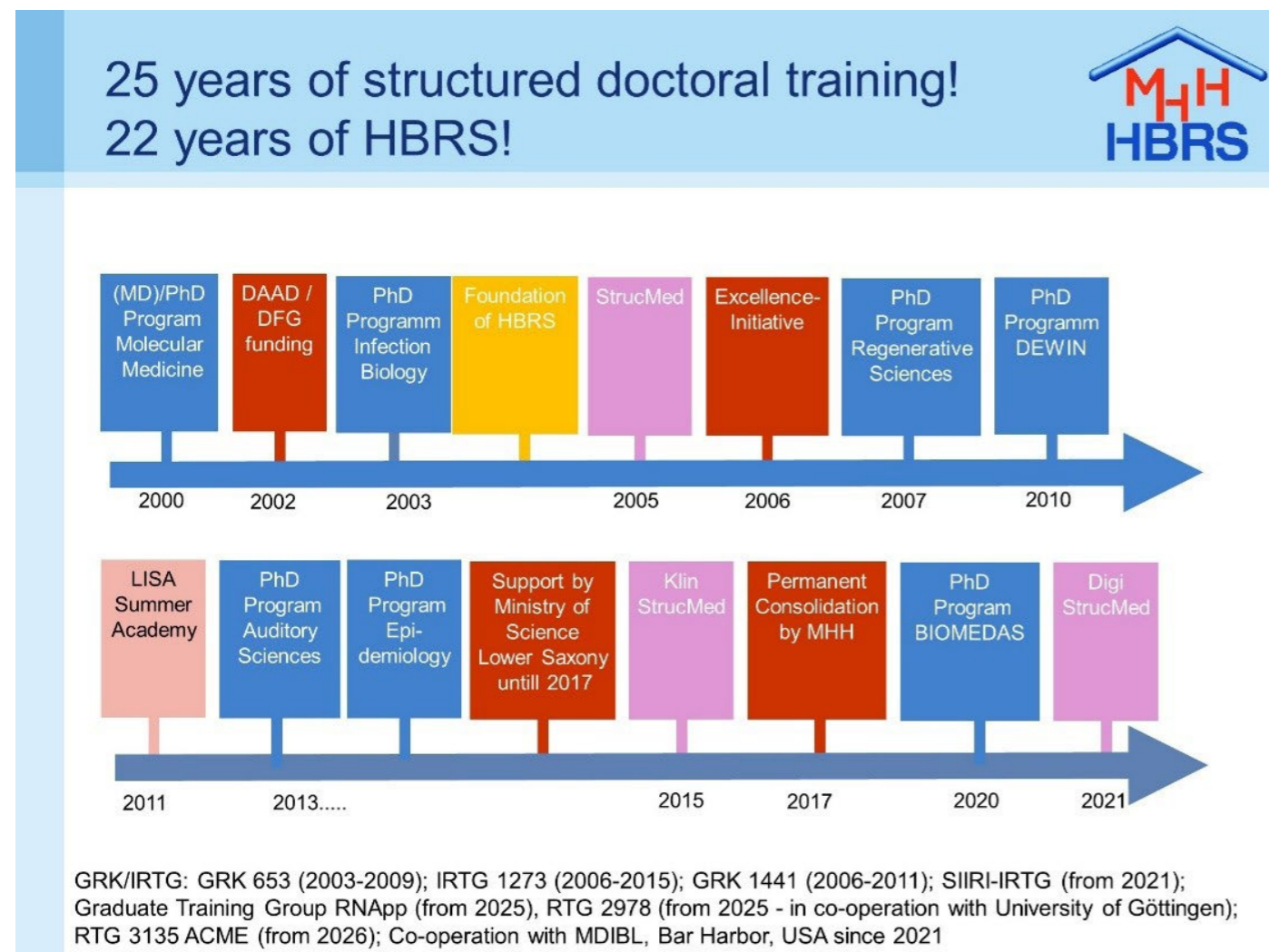
Final exams

In November 2024, June 2025 and November 2025, twenty-three students of the MD/PhD program "Molecular Medicine" successfully passed their final exams [Atalay Ata, Frauke S Bahr, Tonia Bargmann, Yannic Becker, Marco Bentele, Büsra Cinar, Katja NM Dinkelborg, Eline Gall, Mi-Sun Ruth Jang, Maximilian Keisker, Bushra Khan, Ömer Kocdölü, Friederike Kühl, Kristina Losse, Chiara Malinconico, Jennifer Marx, Christian Melcher, Lea Oehlsen, Robert Polten (né Körner), Pegah Rahmati, Hanna Luisa Redeker (née Martin), Henrike Steding, Josephine JL Wilkes (née Macdonald)]. The next exams are planned for January 23rd and June 19th, 2026.

The final exams in the PhD programs "Infection Biology" and "DEWIN" took place on January 31st, 2025 (Shruti Chopra, Bamu Fufor Da-maris, Franziska Hüsters, Karla Ximena León Lara, Nina Plückebaum, Talia Samara Schneider, Rita Haller, Ylenia Heinrich-Sanchez, Ilka Simons) followed by the next ones on June 30th, 2025 (Kim Thi Hoang Do, Maureen Obara, Alaleh Rezalotfi, Judit Burgaya Ventura, Lea Fritz, Ahmed Elarabi Abd Elaziz Hassan, Marie Sophie Schulze, Sommer Hannes, Ju Eun Yoo, Fenja Laue). The next final exams are scheduled for January 30th, 2026.

Short history of HBRS:

It all started with the MD/PhD program "Molecular Medicine" in 2000. Then in 2003, HBRS was founded. All further details are displayed in the graphic below:



Award of PhD Prizes



PhD Infection Biology/DEWIN, January 2025

Karla Ximena León Lara,
Institute of Immunology,
MHH



PhD Infection Biology/DEWIN, June 2025

Judit Burgaya Ventura,
Institute of Molecular
Bacteriology, Twincore

On November 8th, 2024, Ana-Maria Zamfirescu and on January 17th, 2025, Svenja Hanna Bothe, Abhishek Chiyyeadu, Nils Kriedemann, Ruomeng Li and Fawaz Ahmad Saleh of the PhD program "Regenerative Sciences" successfully defended their final thesis. On June 6th, 2024, 7 students of the PhD program "Regenerative Sciences" successfully passed their final exams: Maday Fernandez Mayola, Vanessa Hamann, Maja Strunk, Pimpan Sujariyakul, Sara Sza-docka, Jia Li Ye and Xiaowei Zhong.

Martin Lotto (December 2024) and Annabelle Bockey (February 2025) had their final exams in the PhD program "Epidemiology".

Chunjiang Wei (November 15th, 2024), Alina Schulte (March 28th, 2025), Yanjing Luo (October 29th, 2025) and Sina Tahmasebi (November 5th, 2025) from the PhD program Auditory Sciences successfully passed their final exams.

Nicolai Böker from the PhD program BIOMEDAS passed his final exam on September 8th, 2025.

Rumjhum Mukherjee and Nils Heine (July 2025) had their final exams in the PhD program "SIIRI IRTG".

*"Science and technology revolutionize our lives,
but memory, tradition and myth frame our response"*

Arthur M. Schlesinger (1919-2007), Historian

Announcements



Children

There are new "HBRS babies" by e.g Dorothea Prinz
Congratulations!

If you would like to get in touch with anybody from the huge Alumni list, please contact the HBRS office. We will be happy to assist you!

There is also a HBRS LinkedIn group:
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2354739>

and a LinkedIn ZIB Alumni group:
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/alumni-zib-46756a16b/>

As well as a PhD RegSci LinkedIn group:
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9084167/>

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