

19.08.2025

Guidelines of Hannover Biomedical Research School (HBRS) for dealing with conflict situations during the PhD time

In principle, conflicts should be discussed in the respective lab / department and, if by any means possible, a solution should be found. If this fails, several **contact persons** are available:

- Two co-supervisors
- PhD or HBRS office
- Class representative (**for students**)
- International Office of MHH (**primarily for international students**)
- Program speaker (or vice speaker)

Always available:

- Acting Dean of HBRS (Prof. Dr. Reinhold Förster)
- Dean of Research (Prof. Dr. F. Bengel)
- Ombudsperson (Contact: Geschäftsstelle Ombudswesen und Gute Wissenschaftliche Praxis; Dr. Olga Halle, ombudsstelle@mh-hannover.de, Phone: 6002)

If a solution of a conflict after consultation of the above contact persons cannot be found, there are the following alternatives:

1.) Change of project:

- **Within the first 6 months (time of probation)** a change of a research project and lab is possible by mutual agreement of student and supervisor / program committee. Prior to that, the respective PhD office and the PhD program committee have to be informed. They give their formal consent upon request.
- A change of a research project and lab **after the first 6 months** requires at first a moderated discussion with a member of the PhD committee and the respective PhD student and supervisors (preferably the whole thesis advisory group). A student representative of the PhD committee might be invited as well to that discussion. After that the PhD committee gives their recommendations. Only after the official approval, the working contract" between student and supervisor will be cancelled.
- The PhD student may search for a new research project / lab him- / herself or ask for support in the PhD or HBRS office. Very often, there are still "open projects" available, also a direct approach of project leaders is feasible. In addition, there is the internal MHH job market on:

<https://mhh.hr4you.org/bewerber>

[Of course, the PhD student may approach the PhD or HBRS office anytime beforehand to receive information and advice. The PhD offices and the HBRS office will handle every consultation as "confidential".]

2.) Drop out of a program:

a) By accepting the offer of a position in a HBRS program, the student enters into an agreement with HBRS. The student commits him- / herself to stay at least 3 years at Hannover Medical School. An active quitting of a program by the students can or should only happen very rarely and can only be tolerated if there are extremely good reasons. Prior to a drop out, every other possibility and solution should have been well considered!

b) In principle, the dismissal from a program by HBRS is possible. However, there have to be very strong reasons to do so:

- A project matching was not successful up to the **end of the time of probation (first 6 months)** despite all efforts made by the PhD programs and HBRS
and / or
- There are strong concerns regarding the qualification and ability of a student, even after **changes of the PhD research project / lab**. [In total, not more than two changes of a project should be allowed, before and after the time of probation]
- Violation against the rules of good scientific practice (see below)
- serious misconduct such as committing criminal offence

3.) Violation of the rules of good scientific practice:

A serious violation of the rules of good scientific practice must be reported immediately, regardless of the status of the guilty party (student or supervisor)! The Principles of Hannover Medical School for the Safeguarding of Good Scientific Practice can be found on the Website of Hannover Medical School:

https://www.mhh.de/fileadmin/mhh/ombudswesen/Dokumente/GSP_Principles_of_MHH___Version_5.0__2022_.pdf

Reports of violation of the rules of good scientific practice can be made directly to the Ombudsperson of MHH or his/her Deputy or to the Ombuds office (see below for contacts). All reports will be handled with confidentiality.

Also, the Ombuds office provides advice to doctoral candidates on issues related to Good Scientific Practice, such as for example authorship criteria and data documentation.

In case of violation against the rules of good scientific practice by a PhD student, HBRS may dismiss the student and, if applicable, revoke the doctoral degree (PhD or Dr. rer. nat.).

Contacts:

Ombuds office (Geschäftsstelle Ombudswesen und Gute Wissenschaftliche Praxis):

Dr. rer. nat. Olga Halle; ombudsstelle@mh-hannover.de; Tel. 0511-532-6002

Ombudsperson: Prof. Dr. Karin Weißenborn; Weissenborn.Karin@mh-hannover.de; Tel. -3145

Deputy Ombudsperson: Prof. Dr. Thomas Werfel; Werfel.Thomas@mh-hannover.de; Tel. -7655