

A brief ABC guide to the
MD/PhD program Molecular Medicine
(Hannover Biomedical Research School)



A

Accommodation

HBRS has only in total 10 rooms available in one of the Studentenwerk's own dormitories (for the three main PhD programs). You will find more information at <http://www.studentenwerk-hannover.de/en-vor-wohnen.html> (English) or <http://www.studentenwerk-hannover.de/wohnen.html> (German).

An alternative is to organize a private room by your own. An online room search (Wohnraumbörse) is offered e.g. at <https://www.studentenwerk-hannover.de/index.php?id=1199>
Or: <https://www.studentenwerk-hannover.de/en/en-rooms/en-privathousing/>

You may rent a private room in a shared apartment (Wohngemeinschaft or WG). You should ensure that a written tenancy agreement is made once you have chosen a room or an apartment. When you rent a room in a „WG“, you are a subtenant (Untermieter), which does not have the same rights as the main tenant (Hauptmieter). Make sure to sign a sub-tenancy agreement before moving in. You will find numerous offers for free rooms on the bulletin boards in the MHH or in the local newspapers. Some students also rent their rooms temporarily to incomings.

Another useful platform: <http://www.wg-gesucht.de/en/wg-zimmer-in-Hannover.57.0.1.0.html>

Activities

We offer many non-scientific activities. There are the orientation weeks, a trip to Berlin for the 1st years, parties, excursions, theatre visits. You can also use the sport facilities of MHH or join the MHH choir or orchestra. There is also a student theatre company.

See also **Excursions** or **Theatre visits**

Affiliation/ Acknowledgements

Please use the following in your publications:

Institute/department xxx, Medizinische Hochschule Hannover, Carl-Neuberg Strasse 1, D-30625 Hannover

The work was supported by the Hannover Biomedical Research School (HBRS) and the MD/PhD program “Molecular Medicine”.

Application and Admission

The application is online <https://hbrs.cloud.opencampus.net> from December 1st to March 1st the following year. Requirements among others: Master (e.g. Biology, Biotechnology, Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, Biomedicine, Immunology etc.; -> Pharmacy students are usually not taken), MBBS or equivalent; at least 6 months molecular experimental research experience in one of the topics MHH researcher are working on; excellent command in English; two references.

It is not necessary to find a supervisor/project before. We first select the best candidates. We will announce open projects shortly before the interviews. Selected candidates have the free choice of projects afterwards. They can approach supervisors on their own, even if they are not on the HBRS list, and we might even approach other supervisors on your behalf.

Alumni

HBRS started building up a huge Alumni network. Finalists of every program will be included in the distribution lists. We also have a yahoo group. Please write to molecular-medicine@subscibeyahogroups.com.

And a group on linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2354739> (please get invited by one of the members).

In the past years, we performed regular Alumni surveys, built up a career network, established a "mentoring and/or meet and greet program" (we e.g. regularly invite Alumni students to our Career Day), organized regional or class reunions, and implemented fundraising campaigns. For details and if you would like to get into contact with Alumni students, please ask the HBRS office (hbrs@mh-hannover.de).

Alumni Newsletter

The HBRS publishes an annual alumni newsletter (<https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/hbrs/alumni>). Here you find for example all new information on MHH and HBRS as well as reports from Alumni students about their research and life/career in a foreign country. There used to be also an extended list of all alumni students, including their current job positions.

Arrival

Hannover is easy to reach as is situated quite in the middle of the northern part of Germany, in the region called Lower Saxony (Niedersachsen). The airport has intercontinental as well as extensive European connections. A direct rail link (S-Bahn) connects the airport with the main railway station in the city center. Hannover is also well connected to numerous other European and German cities by rail and by bus.

From the main railway station you can easily reach the MHH by taking the underground line no. 1 or 2 direction Sarstedt/ Messe to the stop Aegidientorplatz, then changing there to the line no. 4 direction Roderbruch. It takes about 20 minutes to reach the stop Medizinische Hochschule.

Archive

We are bound to store all important student information (including PhD theses) for at least 10-15 years. We are following the data protection laws.

Attendance

Students have to attend 75% of the announced obligatory lectures/tutorials (those which take place on Mondays) per study year (approx. 160 hours; canceled lectures do not count). There are exceptions for students who did their Master at MHH. In addition we do require the following attendance in your whole PhD time: 60 hours of soft skill courses, 80 hours of scientific lectures/workshops (guest lectures, congresses etc.) and preferably the visit of one international congress/meeting. Students should attend altogether 300 hours of training program during their PhD. (We always calculate with German School hours: 1 hour = 45 min real time). Monday lectures, soft skills and workshops can also be substituted by lectures from all HBRS programs, master classes and other classes of MHH, Leibniz University and TiHO.

B

Bank

We usually deal with this in the orientation weeks.

A clearing account (Girokonto) is very useful in Germany, because money transactions (e.g. rents) are mostly settled through direct transfers. With a German EC-card you can also collect funds free-of-charge from an ATM (Geldautomat).

In general, students do not need to pay any account fees. To open an account, please take along your passport or national identity card, the letter of acceptance of the MHH or your enrolment certificate as well as your registration document, which you will obtain at the Bürgeramt. Please note that you may not overdraw your bank account except in cases specially allowed by the bank.

Of course you may continue using online banking from your bank account back home. You may collect funds from the cash dispensers in Germany with your bank card or credit card.

Booking

If you would like to book a seminar room/ lecture hall e.g. for your intermediate exam at MHH yourself, please go to <https://factweb.mh-hannover.de/Login-Hannover/login.xhtml;jsessionid=AD9C8211C9AD8AE42761B3D99B15C934?ctx=RP&origin=https%3A%2F%2Ffactweb.mh-hannover.de%2FRaumplan%2FRaumplanung&dswid=-5308>

Concerning booking for official travel: Please ask your department secretary for all formalities and how to book tickets if you are going on a congress or meeting.

Building

HBRS/PhD office and seminar rooms are located in building J4. Lecture halls are in building J1, J2 and J6. Student secretary, library, international offices are in building J1.

See **Map** or **Office**



Careers

Students have excellent career perspectives after finishing their PhD. The MD/PhD office is happy to offer career advice. We also have a huge list of **Alumni** students whom you could contact. So, far nearly 70% of more than 300 MD/PhD Alumni still stay in research, either in academics or industry.

Career Day

HBRS is organizing an annual career day in form of a symposium (usually in March). **Alumni** students, representatives from industry and funding bodies are invited to talk about their careers. In addition, they give advice on application strategies and they are happy to answer a lot of questions, also during the breaks. Participation at the Career Day can also be credited as soft skills.

Chairman

The current chairman of the program is Prof. Dr. Georg Behrens (Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology). He represents the program in the **HBRS** committee as well as to all other internal or external institutions. Of course, he is also leading the committee meetings.

Class

All students from one year form a class. They meet at least once a week on Mondays to attend the lectures/tutorials.

Class speaker

Each batch of students elects a class speaker. This person represents the class to outside bodies as well as distributes information or organizes certain things among the students. The class speaker attends the **MD/PhD** committee meetings - here, the class speakers from all classes together have one vote. Also, the class speakers organize/moderate the student meeting on the retreat. If you have any problems or questions you can contact your class speaker and they can forward them on your behalf to the PhD committee.

One PhD student representative has a seat in the senate of MHH. If you have any global matters, the current member – Maximilian Schinke, MD/PhD program Molecular Medicine - is happy to forward your request.

Child allowance

HBRS is paying the so called child allowance upon request especially to those students who receive a stipend. The child/children must live here in Hannover. And one parent needs to be member of HBRS. It currently amounts to 400,- Euro/month for the first child plus 100,- Euro for each additional child. The child allowance is seen as a "stipend" as well and is therefore tax-free. Please contact the HBRS office (hbrs@mh-hannover.de). They would need a copy of the birth certificate.

Child care

There are several child care facilities on campus. The Wilhelm Hirte Kindergarden and crib has a limited amount of seats reserved to HBRS students and faculty. There is a babysitter service at MHH available, too. You could book this if you want to attend a lecture or meeting. (All info on <https://www.mhh.de/gleichstellung/familienportal/kinderbetreuung>).

Colloquia

See **G**uest lectures.

Committee

See **M**D/PhD committee or **H**BRS committee

Confidentiality

If you are going to consult the MD/PhD office, everything said is kept confidential. You determine what should be done and discussed with other persons. Also if you talk to the co-supervisors, you could tell them to keep things confidential.

Congress

MD/PhD student should at least once during their PhD time attend a national or international congress. Unfortunately, neither the MD/PhD office nor HBRS office can financially support this. You would have to ask your supervisor.

Contract

MD/PhD students who are going to be employed with MHH will automatically receive a contract. Also students receiving a stipend will sign a HBRS contract, which is distributed during the orientation weeks. Dr. Kruse will send the contract upon request.

Coordination

The coordination of the MD/PhD program is done by the MD/PhD office (building J4, level 1). These are currently Dr. Susanne Kruse, Tel. 9844, kruse.susanne@mh-hannover.de and Birgit Müller, Tel. 6011, Mueller.birgit@mh-hannover.de. Our doors are always open!

Co-supervisors

The thesis advisory board is composed of the student's personal supervisor at the MHH or partner institutes, and two further scientists qualified as university teachers whose professional activity shall be closely related to the subject of the project (co-supervisors). The Co-supervisors do not grade your thesis and have only an advisory function (see Examiners). Members of the thesis advisory board usually come from different departments/institutes. In case of several PhD students doing research in the same line, the respective co-supervisors' teams can be composed of the same individuals. You should meet once a year (preferably before the retreat) to discuss the status of the project. A protocol has to be handed in at the MD/PhD office.

See also **Supervisors**

Counseling

The MD/PhD is offering counseling in all possible matters. Please just drop by. In case, we cannot help you personally, we will try to find a solution.

Credits

The European ECTS (credit point) system is not used for PhD programs anymore. We are only certifying credits in urgent cases.

Curriculum

You find the HBRS curriculum booklet on the HBRS website <https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/hbrs/curriculum/-/study/-/faculty>

See also **Lectures**, **Tutorials** and **Soft-skill courses**

D

Data protection

MHH follows the EU rules for data protection (DSGVO). The data protection manager is: Dr. Synia Weber, Peter L. Reichertz Institut für Medizinische Informatik +49-(0)511-532-2555 oder +49-(0)511-17532-2555; Fax. +49-(0)511-532-4621 Weber.Synia@mh-hannover.de; Datenschutz@mh-hannover.de

More info and documents can be found on: <https://www.mhh.de/die-mhh/praesidium/datenschutz>

Degree

Students can decide between the PhD or Dr. rer. nat. degree. You have to decide shortly before the final exams. In case of Dr.rer.nat. one examiner needs to be a life scientist by training. You also have to choose the language (English or German) of your final certificate.

Digital Media

This is the central printing facility of MHH. It is found in building J4, level H. Here you can print for example your poster for a congress or your final thesis. You need to give them a "Kostenstelle" (MHH account number) of your department (only your department can pay them).

Directory

MHH has got a phone directory of all members/employees, which can be reached on the "internal" platform (<https://telefonbuch.mh-hannover.local/>).

Diversity

Overall, no distinction is made on account of gender, handicap and nationality/ cultural background in any of the programs run by HBRS. At present, for example the gender ratio at MHH is well balanced, both amongst students and postdoctoral fellows. In addition, we do not follow any quota in our selection processes.

Doctor

If you have an **E**mergency, you can go to our emergency ward (Notaufnahme) of MHH any time (24 hours), which is near the main entrance. Otherwise there are a number of doctors available outside, like at Roderbruch market. A general practitioner is for example: Dr. med. Holger Köntopp, Roderbruchmarkt 12, 30627 Hannover, Tel.: 0511-575051

Donations

Donations can be made to the MD/PhD program account at the „Gesellschaft der Freunde der MHH e. V.“, reference: 11000227, HBRS, Commerzbank Hannover, IBAN DE12 2504 0066 0312 0003 01, BIC COBADEFFXXX

Downloads

Many useful information can be found in the "download" section of HBRS website <https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/hbrs/links-downloads>

Dual Career

The MD/PhD office will try to find a position for your husband/wife. We have for example good contact to the Leibniz University of Hannover. Just ask at the office hbrs@mh-hannover.de

Duration

Usually a PhD takes 3-4 years (average 3.6 years). The maximum duration of a PhD is five years. Rare exceptions from the 5-year rule are only made in case of pregnancy, serious illness and/or medical training in parallel.

E

EDUROAM

Eduroam (education roaming) is a secure worldwide roaming access service, developed for the international research and education community. See all info on:

<https://www.mhh.de/zimt/zimt-wichtige-links/eduroam>

Email

When you get enrolled as a student, you automatically receive an MHH student email account (**firstname.lastname@stud.mh-hannover.de**). Please make sure that you check this from time to time!

In addition, the department/institute secretaries are going to help you in applying for a “normal” MHH Email address (**lastname.firstname@mh-hannover.de**).

Emergency

You are able to go to the MHH emergency ward (“Notaufnahme”, open 24 hours), which is near the main entrance of K5/main clinic. In case of urgent dental problems, please go directly to the clinic of dentistry (K20).

Important German Emergency Telephone Numbers:

110 -- Police Emergency

112 -- Fire Emergency or Ambulance Call (you have to call the ambulance even if you are in one of the “J” buildings).

Employment

Some students are employed with MHH. The pay level is usually 50% or 65% TVL 13. You will receive a “Christmas bonus”. We recommend the membership in a public health insurance. International students need a working permit.

Your supervisor will deal with all formalities.

Please see the website for explaining the difference between stipend vs employment status:

<https://www.mhh.de/fileadmin/mhh/hannover-biomedical-research-school/HBRS/Struktur/Differencestipendposition.pdf>

English Conversation Course

The English conversation course with Mrs. Lange is taking place every Tuesday at 5.15 p.m. in HBRS seminar room.

Enrolment

Enrolment will take place in September/October.

Enrolment is online. You will receive the information by Email of our student secretary.

After having enrolled, you will be provided with the official plastic student card. This acts as proof of student status should you wish to take advantage of student rates for e. g. the gym,

magazines, free public transportation etc. You can also put money on that card to pay at MENSA etc.

Equal opportunities

By offering an intensive training program (including a great variety of complementary skills) and excellent supervision, HBRS would like to encourage and convince, in particular female PhD students, to pursue a further career in academics. So far, roughly 70% of all female PhD finalists in the HBRS PhD programs continued to carry out research in Postdoc positions, the others mainly chose to work in industry.

In addition, there are a number of measures in place to raise female representation, including improvement of necessary skills and working conditions: children allowance, dual-career, babysitter, child care, mentoring program etc. See also the MHH Equal opportunities office: <https://www.mhh.de/gleichstellung>

Evaluations

Evaluations are important for the MD/PhD office. They are performed for every lecture/tutorial as well as the “soft-skill course”. You will receive an evaluation sheet. Please give an overall mark as well as give some comments. If a lecturer gets rather bad evaluations in a row we will not consider him/her for next year’s curriculum anymore. After the lecture, please leave the sheet in the box displayed on the front desk of the seminar room.

Exams

There are only two exams and no particular exams on subjects of the lecture programs. Please see **Final exam** or **Intermediate exam**

Examiners

The MD/PhD committee decides about the examiners for the intermediate exam (one scientist in your field and a member of the MD/PhD committee)

For the final exams, you need an internal and external examiner. Usually the supervisors decide together with you about the examiners and initially contact them. You will have to ask if they are available on the particular exam day before you give their names to the MD/PhD office. The office then will do the further communication with the examiners.

Excursions

From time to time, HBRS is organizing excursions, either to industry or cultural/fun. They are announced by HBRS office.

See also **Theatre visits**

F

Facebook

HBRS is on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HannoverBiomedicalResearchSchool/>

Family

PhD students are welcome to bring their family. We are happy to assist in matters like accommodation, child care, schooling, dual career, visa etc. Since 2005, MHH has been awarded the title of a “family-friendly university” after an official audit taken every four years. Please ask at the office hbrs@mh-hannover.de.

Final exams

Final exams are taking place twice a year in November or June on a same day. The deadlines for submission of the theses are either the first week of September or first week of April. Your thesis should preferably be a cumulative one. This implies that the aim of a PhD should be to publish preferably two first-author original papers in peer-reviewed journals. The exam = public defense itself lasts about 1 hour (20 min presentation by you, followed by a discussion with mainly the two examiners). The MD/PhD has got a detailed guide for the final exams available upon request. (Please contact Dr. Kruse).

Finances

Students are either financed by a stipend (~1700,- Euro/month) or are employed with MHH (50-65% TVL 13). Please see **Employment**.

HBRS and its main PhD programs are currently supported by funds of the president of MHH. The excursions to Berlin and orientation weeks are supported by the German Academic Exchange service (DAAD).

Events like for example retreats or career activities are partly sponsored by industry.

Focus

In the second year, students have to choose two foci in the curriculum according to their projects and interests. So, the class is practically divided into two - making discussions even more fruitful in a smaller group. You can choose between either Immunology or Genetics/Cell Biology in 3rd semester and Infection/Immunity or Differentiation/Oncology in 4th semester. Nevertheless, lectures from other foci can be attended as substitute.

Friends of MHH

The Friends of MHH (Gesellschaft der Freunde der MHH) have been supporting MHH activities in science, research, teaching as well as patient care for 50 years. They have around 650 members. HBRS has also got accounts with them, for donations as well as for dealing with emergency financial situations (mainly for undergraduate medical students). Our annual retreat is sponsored by some companies.

More info on: https://www.freunde-mhh.de/modules//index.php?location_id=68

G

German Class

We offer voluntary German classes once a week. Teacher: Anna Kiefer. The course for beginners (A1 level) is on Tuesdays 3.30-5 p.m. and the one for the little advanced (A2 level) on Tuesdays 5.15-6.45 p.m. in seminar room 1031 (building J4, level 1).

Good Scientific Practice

MHH is following the DFG rules of good scientific practice (see <https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/hbrs/good-scientific-practise>). First year PhD students have to attend an obligatory lecture series on this topic announced by the MD/PhD-HBRS office. It usually takes place end of October/November.

You have to declare in written form at the beginning of your PhD and in your final thesis that you are following the rules.

See also **Ombudsperson**

Grade

See **Marks**

Grants

Senior PhD students can apply for their own grants, especially when they want to do a Postdoc. We present some grant possibilities on the Career Day. You can get advice, of course, by your supervisors or HBRS office, but also at the MHH central offices for research support (<https://www.mhh.de/fwt/forschungsfoerderung>).

For support of your PhD, see **Stipend** or **Employment**.

Guest Lectures

Every day, there are possibilities to attend talks at MHH on various topics, given e.g. by professors from other universities. Many are taking place in the late afternoon or at lunch time. They are usually announced vial email distribution or on the start site of MHH website (<https://www.mhh.de> or <https://intranet.mh-hannover.de/>).

Some of them are organized as a lecture series, the so called “colloquia” like for example the Immunological Colloquium or Gastroenterology Colloquium.

Guides

There are several guides available, helping you in managing your PhD time. Most of them can be found in the “download” section of HBRS website (<https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/hbrs/links-downloads>). Some are distributed by the MD/PhD office.

H

HBRS

Hannover Biomedical Research School (HBRS) was founded in October 2003 as an “umbrella organization” for existing and future structured postgraduate programs. The aim is to train highly qualified junior scientists towards a doctoral degree (PhD or Dr.rer.nat.). HBRS now comprises six international (MD)/PhD programs (Molecular Medicine, Infection Biology, Regenerative Sciences, Auditory Sciences, Epidemiology, BIOMEDAS). Three structured doctoral programs for medical students have also been successfully established (StrucMed, KlinStrucMed and DigiStrucMed). Three Master programs (“Biomedicine”, “Biochemistry” and “Biomedical Data Science”) are associated with the graduate school. HBRS is coordinated by the Dean, the Executive board as well as the HBRS committee (representatives of all programs) and the HBRS office. The Dean is currently Prof. Dr. Reinhold Förster (Immunology).

HBRS also fosters educational and scientific interaction between university and non-university institutions; among these are the Leibniz University of Hannover, University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, the Technical University of Braunschweig, the Helmholtz Institute for Infection Research Braunschweig (HZI), the Friedrich Löffler Institute Mariensee (FLI) and the Fraunhofer Institute for Toxicology and Experimental Medicine (ITEM).

HBRS offers a joint curriculum for all programs. Besides a 3-4-year PhD project, students have to attend 300 hours of obligatory seminars, tutorials, practical courses, soft skill courses. The graduate school provides a framework for international guest lectures, summer schools and for the training of talented medical and life science students for a future career in science. Currently, there are about 250 PhD students from more than 40 different countries in all programs.

HBRS was supported in course of the German Excellence Initiative from 2006 to 2014.

HBRS committee

Members of the HBRS committee are: the individual program speakers, president of MHH, Dean of Research, Dean of Studies and Dean of HBRS. The HBRS committee is discussing all matters concerning the whole graduate school as well as gives recommendations for integrating new study programs.

HBRS prize

See PhD prize

Health Insurance

We will deal with this in our orientation weeks. If you are going to be employed (contract with MHH), you will best take **public** health insurance. If you have a contract, the insurance will automatically be paid with your salary.

Recommendation for a **private** Health Insurance for foreign students **with stipend**: One provider is the “MAWISTA SCIENCE” by the MAWISTA Company. All information in English can be found here: <https://www.mawista.com/en/health-insurance-for-foreign-nationals-in-germany/health-insurance-for-scholarship/>

IMPORTANT: Please apply for the insurance for 60 months (the maximum), it is really difficult to extend if you have initially chosen a lesser amount. It is possible to cancel the insurance within a month in case you need to.

This insurance is relatively cheap and provides basic coverage for healthy people (unfortunately this is not available for Germans!). And please note that they do not cover everything when you already suffer from a chronic disease, get pregnant etc.

PLEASE NOTE: YOU WOULD HAVE TO REGISTER WITH PUBLIC HEALTH INSURANCE IN CASE OF ANY PRE-EXISTING DISEASES/CONDITIONS!

History

The MD/PhD program “Molecular Medicine” was founded in 2000 as one of the first structured PhD programs in Germany. It all started with only eight students. Nowadays, the program accepts up to 20 students per study year. From 2002 till 2006, the MD/PhD program received funding by the German Academic Exchange Program (DAAD). So, the scientific coordinator Dr. Susanne Kruse could be hired in 2002. Since then, the program has been expanded and developed to the current standards.

In 2003, **HBRS** was founded as an “umbrella” organization.

Housing

There are different housing options in Hannover: student hostel or private/ shared apartment on the “free” market.

See also **Accommodation**

I

Insurance

See **Health Insurance** or **Personal Liability Insurance**

Intermediate exam

The intermediate exam takes place after 18 months and will count 20% to the final PhD exam.

Aim:

Put a state-of the art paper in context to your own work.

Procedure:

- a) The MD/PhD program committee chooses a main examiner in November, who will be an expert in your field (but not one of the co-supervisors) and an additional examiner from the MD/PhD program committee.
- b) You will have to arrange the date/place of exam yourself; the exam has to be before TwinCore retreat, end of February. Make sure to start preparation early, e.g. December.
- c) You (the student) will have to suggest three state-of the art papers to the main examiner. Please choose a recent paper and an original article (no review). The paper should be suitable for a fruitful discussion.
- d) The main examiner then selects one paper of the three to be your exam paper
- e) The main examiner is kindly asked to send Dr. Kruse this choice as soon as possible (at least 3 weeks before your exam), but without you knowing the paper of choice!
- f) The MD/PhD office will send out the paper to you and all the examiners 14 days before the exam

Exam:

Duration of exam: 45-60 min

1. Introduction and presentation of the state of the art paper (15 min)
2. Put into context to your own work (10 min)
3. Summary and conclusions (5 min)
4. Discussion (ca. 20-30 min)

Internationality

The MD/PhD program invites application from candidates all over the world. Students in the program usually come from more than 20 different countries.

International Advisory Board

The HBRS has got an International Advisory board (IAB). Members usually visit the MHH once a year in course of the Opening ceremony to discuss ongoing topics of interest. The current members are:

Prof. Dr. Hans-Gustaf Ljunggren (Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden)

Prof. Dr. Seppo Meri (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Prof. Dr. Marcus Thelen (Institute for Research in Biomedicine, Università della Svizzera italiana, Bellinzona)

Prof. Dr. Peter Openshaw (Respiratory Infection, National Heart & Lung Institute (NHLI), Imperial College London, St. Mary's Campus, London)

International Office

The International Office can be found in building J1, ground floor (near the office of the president). In case, the MD/PhD office is not available, international students are welcome to consult this office (Tel. -6026). They are also supporting the orientation weeks as well as theatre visits.

International Student Guide

There is an HBRS international student guide (https://www.mhh.de/fileadmin/mhh/hannover-biomedical-research-school/HBRS/Downloads/International_Student_Guide2020b.pdf).

Interview

See **Selection**

J

Job

See **Career**

Job market (internal MHH)

There are a lot of general or specific online job platforms available. We recommend for example: <https://www.jobvector.de/>

If you are looking for jobs at MHH in particular, please go to the internal job market on <https://mhh.hr4you.org/job/listing/internal>

Journal club

Your lab/institute/department should offer regular journal clubs. This implies that someone will present an interesting paper to the others first, followed by a discussion with the whole group. Similar to these journal clubs are the tutorials in the MD/PhD curriculum.

K

Kindergarden

See **Child care**

L

Lab book

MHH is one of the first universities in Germany with a central lab book system. All lab books are distributed by the department “digital media”, they are numbered and centrally registered on an internal online platform called “sharepoint”. Every student receives his/her own lab book by the respective department. You are obliged to document all your experiments in this book. You have to leave it with the department after finishing your PhD. The department will then keep it for 10 years.

Language

The MD/PhD program “Molecular Medicine” is taught in English. Voluntary language courses are offered.

See also **German class** and **English Conversation Course**

Lectures

You have to attend the obligatory lectures every Monday from 3-6 p.m. in the first two years. These can be found in the Curriculum. A two-hour lecture is usually followed by a Tutorial. In the first year, we offer more basic lectures, including methods. In the second year, you have the choice between different foci.

Lecture halls

The MHH lecture halls used by the MD/PhD program can be found in building J2 (halls A, B, C, D, E), building J1 (halls F, G, H, M, N) and building J6 (halls Q, R).

Library

The MHH library is found in building J1. You will have free access. We will register you during the orientation weeks. The opening hours are: Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 10 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

There is also a media room with access to computers. The library offers courses on e.g. literature research and management.



Maps

The map of MHH can be found on: <https://www.mhh.de/die-mhh/anfahrt>; our clinical buildings are marked with “K” (Klinik), the research institute buildings are marked with “J (=I)” (Institute).

Hannover map can for example be seen on: <https://www.hannover.de/Offizielle-Karte-der-Landeshauptstadt-Hannover>

The Public Transport map is here: <https://www.uestra.de/en/lines-timetables/route-network/>

Marks

You will only receive marks for the intermediate and final exams.

We use the following grading system:

excellent / very good / good / sufficient / failed

or

ausgezeichnet / summa cum laude,

sehr gut / magna cum laude,

gut / cum laude,

genügend / rite,

nicht bestanden / non sufficit

Your final grade is made up out of 20% intermediate exam, 60% evaluation of the thesis and 20% public defense.

You can only receive a summa cum laude/excellent in your final exam if you have a first-author publication from your PhD work (possible with cumulative thesis or monograph).

Master Class

The HBRS is supporting students if they want to organize a 1-2 day Master Class. This means that you could invite two to four internationally renowned scientists on a particular topic to discuss with students. You could e.g. present your own work and then talk about it in the group.

Matriculation

See **Enrolment**

MD/PhD program committee

The MD/PhD Program Committee is overall responsible for all aspects concerning the program (selection/admission, following the rules and regulations, curriculum etc.). As a rule, the PhD Program Committee is composed of at least four professors (or competent habilitated/senior scientists), a university scientist with a doctoral degree, and student representatives of every study year who have a joint vote. Students suggest one person from every year to act as **Class-speaker**. Members of the MD/PhD Program Committee are appointed for a period of four years, or two years in case of student members. Re-election is possible. A program speaker is elected amongst the group of professors. The PhD Program Committee meets regularly. They evaluate for example proposed projects (open projects), conduct interviews, appoint examiners and are chairing the exams. The Program Committee is also officially appointing the team of **co-supervisors** (thesis advisory board) for each PhD student. The current committee members can be found on the **website** or in the **curriculum**.

Current members are: Georg Behrens (chairman), Christian Bär, Armin Braun, Thilo Dörk-Bousset, Josephine Labus, Axel Schambach, Halyna Shcherbata, Siegfried Weiss; student representatives: Bushra Khan (year 2020), Marco Bentele (year 2021), Sandra Maria Jordan & Lea Oehlsen (2022), Friederike Flögel and Shubham Rana (2023)

Mensa

This is the place on campus where you can eat lunch seven days a week. They offer different varieties of meals, including vegetarian. In addition, there are several bistros/cafeterias spread all over the campus. Please show your **student card** for discounts.

Mental Health

Susanne is always available for counselling. More info on the website:

<https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/hbrs/mental-health>

MHH

Hannover Medical School (MHH) was founded in 1965. The MHH is the only free-standing medical university in Germany. It has meanwhile achieved a high international reputation in research as well as teaching, particularly in the fields of immunology, infection biology, transplantation medicine, stem cells and biomedical implants. Hannover Medical School is the leading university in Germany with regard to extra-mural funding per number of professors.

N

Numbers

Usually we accept up to 20 students per year. In total, there are always 70-80 students enrolled in the MD/PhD program at a time. There are about 250 students in the HBRS.

O

Office

The MD/ PhD office (and at the same time the HBRS office) is located in building J4, Level 1, room 1100. Dr. Susanne Kruse and Birgit Müller are happy to answer all questions.

See also **C**oordination

Ombudsperson

The ombudsperson is currently Prof. Dr. Thomas Werfel.

Office/Assistance: Dr. Beate Schwinzer, OE 9100, Phone:+49 (0) 511 532 6002, Fax: +49 (0) 511 532 6003, E-Mail schwinzer.beate@mh-hannover.de (*contact her first on any matter*)

Tasks and Services)

- Initial investigation of potential scientific misconduct
- Consulting and mediation in scientific conflicts (Ombudsperson)
- Conflict consulting for doctorate students and PostDocs (Scientific Manager)
- General advice on all issues of **Good Scientific Practice** (e. g. use of lab books etc.)
- Presentations and workshops on good scientific practice for different target groups
- Upon request: Refresher courses or workshops on specific GSP issues for individual working groups, institutes, or clinics (e. g. "How to avoid plagiarism" or "Data management and GSP" etc.)
- Random testing of MHH doctorate theses and habilitations focused on GSP and recognition of GSP certificates

Opening ceremony

In the festive opening ceremony all new PhD students are officially welcomed. It usually takes place on a Monday in middle/end of October at 5 p.m. The President of MHH, the Dean of HBRS, members of the HBRS International Advisory Board and a high-ranked guest speaker are invited. There is also a musical introduction/closing. The ceremony is followed by a reception. Photos are taken.

Orientation weeks

We start the MD/PhD program with two weeks of orientation. We take care of all formalities (opening bank account, insurance, enrolment, registration, employment etc.) as well as introduce you to MHH (guided tour, **L**ibrary, **M**ensa, **S**ports Facilities), the city of Hannover and a typical small city in the vicinity called Celle. We also arrange a seminar on intercultural aspects as well as an informal Welcome Party. And you will have your first German lessons.

Opening hours

The MD/PhD office is usually open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (lunch break from 12 -1 p.m.); you do not necessarily need an appointment, just drop by.

P

Parties

From time to time, HBRS students are organizing parties, like the Indian Diwali in November or the Christmas party.

Period

Lecture periods are roughly October to February, April to July.

Personal Liability Insurance

It is important to cover personal civil liability in your private life during your stay in Germany, please ask respective insurance companies for more information. Personal liability insurance is highly recommended to all incomings students and should be **a must for all students receiving a stipend!** You have to make sure that the insurance covers your lab activities ("Teilnahme am fachpraktischen Unterricht"). We can offer it to international students in the process of opening the bank account.

PhD prize

The HBRS prize (1000,- Euro) is awarded once a year in course of the opening ceremony. PhD finalists who achieved an excellent mark in their PhD are welcome to apply till beginning of September. Please ask at the HBRS office or exact details (hbrs@mh-hannover.de)

Practicals

The MD/PhD program is only offering practical courses on rare occasions. But you are always welcome to ask around among your fellows, senior students and MD/PhD faculty for advice. And so you can learn a method directly face-to-face when needed. The MD/PhD office is very happy to assist you.

Pregnancy

If you are pregnant, you are entitled to leave work six weeks before birth and eight weeks after. For this period you should receive your stipend/ salary.

If you want to stay longer at home, especially if you are receiving a stipend, you would have to sort this out with your supervisor.

President

The current president of MHH is Prof. Dr. Michael P. Manns.

Problems/ conflicts

In case of any problem, you are very welcome to consult your two co-supervisors and/or the MD/PhD office. There is a guideline on the “download” section of the HBRS website: <https://www.mhh.de/fileadmin/mhh/hannover-biomedical-research-school/HBRS/Downloads/VorgehenbeiProblemenenglisch.pdf>

Project change

A project change is relatively easy in the Time of probation (first 6 months). After that at first a moderated discussion with a member of the PhD committee and the respective PhD student and supervisors is needed. All details on: <https://www.mhh.de/fileadmin/mhh/hannover-biomedical-research-school/HBRS/Downloads/VorgehenbeiProblemenenglisch.pdf>

Project matching

It is not necessary to find a supervisor/project before. We first select the best candidates. We will announce open projects shortly before the interviews. Selected candidates have the free choice of projects afterwards. They can approach supervisors on their own, even if they are not on the HBRS list, and we might even approach other supervisors on your behalf. (see application)

Project report

You have to submit an annual project report before the retreat as a kind of efficiency control. The aim is that you sort out what you have done so far and need to do in the future, so in principle it should help you to keep on track. In addition, it serves as a kind of “abstract” for our retreat, it will help you to prepare the presentation and the other students/supervisors to better understand the background of your project. Please note, this report will be distributed in digital form before the **R**etreat. Please be aware of that, when choosing critical content. The MD/PhD office is distributing a template in January. The project report is usually two pages long. The second years can write an extended report up to 5 pages (so you are e.g. able to put in some figures as well if you like).

Protocol supervisor meeting

Once a year (preferably before the retreat), you should organize a meeting with the whole thesis advisory group (you, main supervisor, two co-supervisors). Either you or one of the supervisors should write a short protocol to be handed in at the MD/PhD office. The form can be found on:

<https://www.mhh.de/fileadmin/mhh/hannover-biomedical-research-school/HBRS/Downloads/supervisormeeingprotocol.pdf>

Public transport

It is very easy to reach MHH via busses or the tram line No. 4. With your student card you can use all means of public transfer (including local trains in Lower Saxony) for free.

Please see Hannover's public transport website: <https://www.uestra.de/en/> and the map on the student union (AStA) website for free train transport <https://www.mhh-asta.de/studium/semesterticket/>



Quality

The MD/PhD program has over the years developed high quality standards in cooperation with other structured PhD programs in Germany (selection process, thesis advisory group, curriculum, retreats, final exams, Alumni etc.). We try to keep or even improve the high quality. We are always open for suggestions. The program was one of the first PhD programs to be accredited according to European standards in 2004.



Registration

After settling down in Hannover your first stop as a EU member should be a Bürgeramt, the Residents' Registration Office (usually you need to do apply for an online appointment. You can go to Bürgeramt "Aegi" or "Podbi-Park" without appointment, but will have to wait. You will have to register your permanent address within two weeks after your arrival. Please bring the proof of residency by your landlord. If you happen to move during your stay in Hannover, you will have to register your new address in the Bürgeramt within one week.

Students coming from a non-EU country will also first have to go to the Bürgeramt, the Residents' Registration Office (see above, please don't forget the proof of residency by your landlord/-lady).

After that they have to go to the Foreigners' Registration Office - Ausländerbehörde (Ausländerstelle, Ausländeramt, Sachgebiet für Ausländerangelegenheiten der Stadt Hannover). The office can be found at Am Schützenplatz 1 (next underground stop is WATERLOO). The MD/PhD office can arrange appointments for you!

To get the residence permit non-EU students must present the following documents:

- completed application form
- valid passport or identity card
- proof of health insurance
- copy of registration at Bürgeramt
- two passport-sized photos
- proof of financing (also possible to receive by PhD office)

Reimbursement

You receive reimbursement for the travel to our interviews as well as when you first come to Hannover in October. Please ask at the MD/PhD office (hbrs@mh-hannover.de).

Unfortunately, we do not have any central funds to support your travel to congresses/meetings. This is usually covered by your respective department/institute.

Retreat

We annually organize a 2-day program retreat, usually end of February/beginning of March in TwinCore building (Feodor-Lynen Strasse). It is obligatory for all students to attend (full days). Every student will have to present his/her work three times during the PhD time. The first and third years are giving talks, the second years a poster presentation. The best presentation of each year will be awarded. You have the opportunity to discuss and meet your senior/junior students. Usually, there is an internal student discussion organized, led by the class speakers. Please make up your mind before the retreat, if you have any questions, notes or critics. All ideas will be collected and discussed with the MD/PhD program committee during the retreat.

Rules and regulations

You find the HBRS PhD rules and regulations in the “download” section of HBRS website <https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/hbrs/links-downloads> or upon request with the MD/PhD-HBRS office (hbrs@mh-hannover.de).

S

Selection

There is a 3-step selection process:

1. Written application
2. Written test in the home countries of the candidates (supervised by professors, DAAD office etc) in April; Candidates residing in Germany are invited to Hannover at the end of April
3. Interview Hannover; beginning of June

For interviews, we will invite most applicants to Hannover. There are SKYPE interviews preferably only used for preselection. Every candidate will get a 20 min slot with the MD/PhD committee. You will have to present your previous research experience in 10 minutes followed by a 10 minutes discussion.

It is not necessary to find a supervisor before application. We first select the best candidates. The open projects are announced shortly before the interviews. Candidates should get into contact with supervisors of their interest and make appointments during their stay in Hannover or virtually. After the interviews, selected candidates have the free choice of projects. We might even approach additional supervisors on your behalf who had not submitted a project yet.

Semester

Winter semester: October 1st to March 31st (enrolment period)
Summer semester: April 1st to September 30th (enrolment period)

Semester fee

The student secretary announces the exact details of payment on their website: <https://www.mhh.de/studierendensekretariat/gebuehren> The semester fee is usually around 400,- Euro (students receiving a stipend have to pay 75,- Euro less than the announced amount).

Please don't forget to pay the fee for every semester in time; otherwise you will be automatically exmatriculated:

For winter semester between 15.06. - 07.07.

For summer semester between 15.01. - 07.02.

Account:

Account holder: Med. Hochschule Hannover
IBAN: DE26 2505 0000 0101 3290 27
BIC: NOLADE2H
reference: student number, Name

Seminars

See Lectures or Guest lectures

Seminar rooms

The MD/PhD program is mainly using the HBRS seminar room (room 1140) and seminar room 1031 in building J4, Level 1.

In addition, there is the seminar room 1400 on ground floor (level S) of building J4.

Share Point

This is an internal online platform of MHH to share information/ documents and to facilitate team work.

Soft Skill courses

You have to attend at least 60 hours of non-scientific seminars/courses. HBRS is offering quite a number of different soft-skill courses throughout the year. You find a list in the curriculum. These courses are usually announced by email and you would have to register with Dr. Kruse. You can, of course, also do courses at other places, like LUH, TiHO or even at external facilities.

Sports

As a student you can join in a lot of sports activities for free, organized by Leibniz University Hannover. Some cost a little fee for the equipment, some want to have a list of the people who want to come to the courses. Therefore you have to book your course at the Zentrum für Hochschulsport

Am Moritzwinkel 6

30167 Hannover

Tel.: 0511 – 762 – 2192; Fax: 0511 – 762 – 4965

Email: mail@hochschulsport-hannover.de

For additional information about when and where, please take a look at the university sports program, which is updated every half a year or on the internet: www.hochschulsport-hannover.de

There is a sports hall behind house M, where a lot of courses take place!

MHH has its own Gym

Registration at: 3955 or 5499; or directly in building K8, level S0, room 1320

Cost: 15 € per month

Opening hours: <https://www.mhh.de/institute-zentren-forschungseinrichtungen/institut-fuer-sportmedizin/mitarbeitersport>

Stipend

A great number of students receive a stipend (usually 1500,- Euro/month). You receive the stipend end of the month. It is tax-free.

Please see the website for explaining the difference between stipend vs employment status:

<https://www.mhh.de/fileadmin/mhh/hannover-biomedical-research-school/HBRS/Struktur/Differencestipendposition.pdf>

Structure

The MD/PhD program structure can be for example found in the Curriculum on the first pages and also on <https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/hbrs/structure/-/regulations>. The program lasts 3-4 years. Students have to attend obligatory lectures/tutorials in the first two years and have to fulfil certain criteria in the whole PhD.

Student card/ ID

Perhaps already on your arrival you may obtain a provisional “student card”. This will mention your matriculation number (please note this down somewhere as you will need it for re-enrolment every semester). The card can be used as student ID in combination with your passport / ID card until you receive the official “multicard”, issued after enrolment. This is a plastic card.

You will need your student ID especially for eating at the cafeteria/mensa (discounted meals), for the MHH gym and for travelling. Your student ID will enable you to travel for free on all local Hannover transport (bus and tram). It also allows you to travel on regional trains throughout Lower Saxony for free (e. g. from Braunschweig to Hannover). However, you have to buy a ticket to travel within other cities (e.g. Braunschweig)! It can also be used to receive many discounts in Hannover like swimming pools, sights (e.g. museums, town hall, Hannover Zoo), theatres/concerts or cinemas. Link to AStA website with free train routes <https://www.mhh-asta.de/studium/semesterticket/>

Student number (matriculation number)

Every PhD student will receive his/her personal student number. You will receive it after enrolment (or shortly before). You need to state the number for example when you pay the semester fee every half a year and can find it on your immatriculation form. If you did a master program at MHH before, you can keep your student number.

You can download the matriculation certificate on: <https://sb.stud.mh-hannover.de/qisserver/rds?state=user&type=0>

Student representatives

See also **Class speaker**

Student secretary

The office of the student secretary is located in building J1, ground floor.

Opening hours:

Thursday: 9.00 to 12.00 a.m.

Study Books

There are study books for the first, second and third/fourth year. You will receive them from the MD/PhD office. You will have to document all lectures/tutorials, workshops, congresses etc. you attend. You will either receive a certificate of attendance or the lecturer or the main supervisor can sign in the student book.

Supervisors

Every student has got a main supervisor as well as two co-supervisors. They form the thesis advisory group. Your main supervisor is responsible for the scientific as well as administrative matters in the lab. Very often, the main supervisor is also responsible for financing his/her PhD student.

T

Teaching

PhD students usually do not have the possibility to do teaching in form of lectures. However, it might well be that you would have to take care of Medical Doctoral, Bachelor or Master students in your lab.

Telephone

You find all telephone numbers on the internal website of MHH: <https://webint.mh-hannover.local/telefonbuch/>

Within MHH you use only the respective four number code, from outside you have to dial (0511)-532- first, followed by the respective four number code.

See also **Directory**

Time of probation

There is a time of probation of six months for you and/or the supervisors to decide if collaboration works out well. A change of project is possible once, upon confirmation with the MD/PhD committee. Please refer to the guideline found on the HBRS website in the “downloads” section (<https://www.mhh.de/fileadmin/mhh/hannover-biomedical-research-school/HBRS/Downloads/VorgehenbeiProblemenenglisch.pdf>).

See also **Problems**

Theatre visits

Cultural events like theatre visits, opera, ballet or concerts are organized at least twice a year in cooperation with the MHH International office. You would have to pay a reduced price. Events are announced via Email.

Thesis

You can either write a cumulative thesis if you have first-author publications (should be original papers and peer-reviewed; preferably two, if the impact factor is above 10, one paper would be enough) or a monograph. Please ask at the PhD office for the detailed final exam guidelines.

See also **Final exams** or **Rules and Regulations**

Thesis Advisory Group

A thesis advisory group is assigned to every student. It consists of the main supervisor, the two co-supervisors (from different departments) and the student. The whole group meets at least once a year, preferably before the annual retreat. A short protocol written by the supervisor or student needs to be handed in at the PhD office afterwards.

The form for the protocol can be found on the HBRS website in the “downloads” section

(<https://www.mhh.de/fileadmin/mhh/hannover-biomedical-research-school/HBRS/Downloads/supervisormeeingprotocol.pdf>).

See also **Supervisor** or **Co-supervisors**

Transcript of records

Usually, we do not hand out transcripts of records. We only do it upon request in case it is absolutely necessary for you to have. But we are providing, of course, certification letters or letters of reference.

Tutorials

The 2-hour Monday seminars are usually combined with a 1-hour tutorial in the following week. Beginning of the first year, the tutorial can be either a method seminar or basic seminar on a particular topic. From second semester onwards (so also in third and fourth semester), a tutorial is conducted usually in form of a “journal club”. You will receive a paper by the lecturer latest one week before the tutorial. One student of the class (in turns) will present the paper in the first 10-15 minutes, followed by a discussion with the whole class. So, every student should read the paper as well.

Sorting out the list of “presenters” is coordinated by the **class speakers**.

See also **Seminars** or **Curriculum**

U

UNIWIND/ GUAT

HBRS is member of the German University Association of Advanced Graduate Training (GUAT), in German: Universitätsverband zur Qualifizierung des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses in Deutschland (UniWiND). This is a network of 72 universities that share the common objective of advancing the quality of academic education for early stage researchers in Germany. More information on <https://www.uniwind.org/>

V

Vacation

Students are entitled to go on vacation (30 working days per year, applying to both employees and people receiving stipends) in agreement with the main supervisor. It is not favored to take holidays during lecture times (October to end of February; April to beginning of July).

Verification of certificates

Final PhD certificates can be verified by MHH authorities (please ask at the PhD office). For all other verifications please use alternative institutions, e.g. the “Bürgeramt”. If you are going to be employed with MHH, it is sufficient to show your original certificates once when you sign the contract.

Visa

You should apply for visa in your home country. Depending on the status you would like to have here, you can either apply for student visa or in addition - if you know already that you are going to be employed with MHH – for a working permit. Once you are here in Hannover you need to register with the German authorities and probably need to extend your visa if you are coming from a non-EU country.



Welcome

We usually organize international students to be picked up at the train station or airport when they arrive in Hannover. We sometimes assign also senior student mentors. We conduct orientation weeks (and an informal welcome party) as well as we prepare a “welcome pack” including a lot of useful information, which is distributed on the first day of the orientation weeks.

Week

You regularly have to attend the lectures on Monday afternoons from 3 to 6 p.m. The English conversation course is taking place Tuesdays from 5.15 to 6.45 p.m. The German classes are on Tuesday 3.30 p.m. (beginners A1), 5.15. p.m. (advanced A2) Full-day soft skill courses are very often organized for Wednesdays or Fridays (2-day courses Tuesday/Wednesday). The Career Day and Final exams are usually on Fridays.

Website

The website of the MD/PhD program is found here: <https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/mdphd>.
For download of useful documents please refer also to the section on the HBRs website <https://www.mhh.de/hbrs/hbrs/links-downloads>

WIFI

There is free wifi at many locations at MHH (e.g. building J1, J2, J6, main entrance hall, K20), including the HBRs seminar rooms. It is the “hotspot 1”, password: mh-hannover. Of course, you will be registered by your department/institute as a MHH member. You will receive an MHH Email address and will be able to use the computers.

Women in Science

There is a network of female scientist (from PhD student status onwards) working in Lower Saxony. It is coordinated by the University of Göttingen <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/203891.html>
In addition, regular meetings and symposia are organized by two professors here at MHH: Prof. Stripecke (Stripecke.renata@mh-hannover.de) and Prof. Christine Falk (falk.christine@mh-hannover.de).

Workshops

See **Soft Skill** courses, **Retreat** or **Curriculum**.

X

Xmas

Students usually organize a Christmas party. There are no lectures for about two weeks over Christmas and New Year.

Y

Year

The study year runs from beginning of October (start of orientation weeks and lectures) to middle of July (end of lecture period). We have approximately two weeks holidays over Christmas and no lectures for about four to five weeks from beginning of March. **Soft Skill** courses, though, are taking place around the whole calendar year.

Z

Nothing fits here, apart from Hannover **Zoo**, which is one of the best in Germany....😊