



Welcome as a new PhD-student of the Center for Systems Neuroscience!

To make your start a little smoother, we would like to introduce you to a couple of things and answer a few FAQ.

Your group of supervisors

Additionally to your main supervisor you'll have two more supervisors to ensure and enforce the interdisciplinary idea of the ZSN for your own benefit. The members of your group of supervisors will be announced by the study commission soon after the start of the program. Approx. 4 weeks after you officially informed about your supervisor group you should arrange a first meeting to talk about the aims of your projects as well as your personal goals. The overall aim of this meeting is to get to know each other and to develop your individual course of study (which electives to select, which conferences to go to, etc.).

Thereafter you'll officially meet your group of supervisors once a year to discuss your project and further substantiate your course of study and career plan. Obviously you're free to contact your supervisors or any other member of the ZSN or the coordination office any time you need assistance or a scientific discussion. **Please note that arranging the official meetings is your responsibility.** Protocol forms for the supervisor meeting and intermediate exam are available on the ZSN homepage. **The original protocols have to be sent to the coordination office.**

The course of study

You'll see in your course catalogue that there are obligatory classes (look for 1st year's courses and those which do not state a year) and elective classes (they apply for all students). During the 3-year program you will have to cover 150 hours in each category, which usually turns out not to be a problem. Please print out the course catalogue and get the lecturer's signature after attending a course. For an overview of the course of study see table 1.

Obligatory classes

Every other week there are obligatory **interdisciplinary seminars**. Senior scientists from the ZSN or invited speakers present up-to-date neuroscientific knowledge. Each seminar is closed by an informal get-together of the ZSN members and students as well as the speaker for exchange of ideas and social interaction.

Every student has to participate regularly in the public events (interdisciplinary seminars, colloquia, congresses...) of the ZSN even when the student has already achieved the minimum number of hours (300) of seminars and courses.

As the need arises we'll have a **meeting of the PhD-students** chaired by Prof. Baumgärtner and myself. On this platform general matters are discussed, problems can be addressed and hopefully solved. Please let us know whether there are any specific issues you would like to see addressed during the meeting. We will arrange a meeting in time.

During the first four semesters you'll attend **interdisciplinary tutorials** (organized as continuous lecture series). In your first year of study you'll hear key-note lectures on superordinated subjects of neuroscience. The lecturer will announce two topics that will have to be worked on in groups and presented in your second year. Each presentation should be prepared for ca. 30 minutes.

We want to point out that PhD students are supposed to have collected 40 hours credit for continuous lectures during the 1st and 2nd year, at the latest by end of their study.

Missed continuous lectures have to be repeated at another time!

During the first three semesters of the program you'll attend three **laboratory classes** (five full days each) covering the general topics "Cellular Biology", "Molecular Techniques" and "The Senses, Emotions and Motor Functions". The courses include a general introduction to the methods on the first day, followed by three days in the laboratory you decided for in advance (groups of up to four people). On the 5th day all participants come together and present their work to each other. A discussion with the conducting scientists completes the classes.

In the case of the compulsory courses of the ZSN (currently three) a course can be substituted by an **external course** after consultation with the PhD Commission (e.g. a course of the Neuroscience Society).

A **seminar in statistics** is carried out in the first semester. You have already been registered for this seminar of Prof. Kreienbrock 2010.

After the first and the second year of study (usually in October) you'll give a **presentation of your thesis work** that is evaluated by the members of the PhD-commission. After the first year it will be an oral presentation, a poster after the second year.

Each year of students during their course of study organizes a joined **project of choice**. This can be e.g. an international congress (which is what was done the first two years and will be done next year) or editing a book, etc. The aim of this project is mainly to develop management and teamwork skills and to gain valuable experiences that become increasingly helpful while developing a career in sciences. The project will be discussed during the meetings of PhD-students.

Elective classes

Check the course catalogue for classes offered the up-coming semester and register if necessary.

If you like to attend courses offered by other institutions, you can apply to the study commission (send an official letter to the coordination office) for acknowledgement of those hours as elective courses. The courses should be either neuroscientifically orientated or of general scientific interest. Conferences can be acknowledged as long as you contribute a poster or oral presentation. No more than 8 hours can be acknowledged for one course or conference. Please always provide a written approval of your main supervisor.

In the three years you have to attend at minimum **three elective classes outside** your own department.

Please note that **at least 50% of the elective classes** must be covered within the ZSN!

Exams

After admission of a PhD student on the program after a year (“**probationary year**”) it is checked whether the student and his/her project have evolved as planned. For this, alongside the public presentation of the project by the student, a short report on the project and the supervisor’s statement on the student have to be submitted for assessment by the PhD Commission. In the case of a negative outcome the PhD Commission can discontinue the studies.

An **intermediate exam** is carried out by your group of supervisors after approximately 18 months in the program covering 3 main topics: your individual subject as well as your general neuroscientific knowledge achieved in the attended classes and courses and topics from the literature. Your annual meeting with your three supervisors have too be 4 months in advance to set a date for the intermediate exam and to determine the topics of the examination. In case of failure the exam can be repeated once after at least 3 but not more than 6 months after the first attempt. To pass the exam it is necessary to continue with the program.

Please note that arranging the date of your intermediate exam is your own responsibility.

Subsequently to submitting either a written thesis or at least two publications in peer-reviewed journals as first author and after completion of the course (150 obligatory and 150 elective hours - usually after 3 years; see conditions of study), you are admitted to the **final examination**. Your group of supervisors as well as an external referee submits a written evaluation of your thesis to the PhD-commission. For the examination, you orally present your thesis and defend it to the scientific public. After the defense the PhD-commission determines the overall evaluation of your examination.

Every student when registering for the PhD examination at the end of the PhD study has to provide evidence of having **two publications** in scientific journals. In at least one of these publications the student has to be the first author. When a manuscript has been submitted for publication this also counts as a publication

Quality management

This semester we continue with a regular evaluation of obligatory courses by the students and the evaluation of the students’ performance by the lecturers. Therefore, you will get the evaluation sheet from the lecturer after a course. Please fill in the form and bring it to the coordination office or give it to us at one of the next seminars / meetings. After the end of the semester we will summarize the results and adjust the courses if necessary and possible.

Administration

The communication is mainly via email. Therefore, please regularly check your inbox!

You can download all mentioned forms and regulations from the ZSN website:

<http://www.zsn-hannover.de/>

Please read carefully the Statement of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) on the Principles of Good Scientific Practice and send the respective declaration signed by you and your main supervisor to the coordination office.

Please read carefully the Conditions of Study to know your rights and duties.

If you intend to receive the degree “Dr. rer. nat.” instead of “PhD”, please let us know at the beginning of the program. It might influence the composition of your group of supervisors.

The semester fee includes the so called “semester ticket”. You can use all sorts of public transport in Hannover and local trains within the state of Lower Saxony. You’ll have to **re-register online** every semester as long as you are in the program.

At the end of the term please come to the coordination office so we can transfer the information about your lessons in your study book to your personal file.

If you have any questions or problems please, do not hesitate to contact us or Prof. Baumgärtner!

Best regards

Dagmar and Manuela

**You can call or can visit us Monday to Friday between
9.00am and 13.00 pm;
Or we can make an appointment for a meeting;**

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Table 1: Course of Study of the ZSN-PhD-program

	Obligatory Activities (50% of credit hours, year-project and presentation of thesis project excluded)							Elective Activities (50% of credit hours)
	Thesis project	Interdisciplinary Seminars	Student Meetings (once a month)	Year-project of choice	Interdisciplinary Tutorials	Laboratory Classes (5 full days each)	Complementary Activities	specialized lectures, seminars, laboratory classes offered by the ZSN as well as training courses and conferences elsewhere on proposal
1. Sem.	intermediate exam after 18 months, submission of thesis and final exam after 36 months	on current topics of systems neuroscience	for constant exchange of information amongst students and with officials	e.g. international congress or book	Part I (lectures on superordinated subjects of neuroscience)	Cell Biology	Statistics	
2. Sem.						Molecular Techniques		
3. Sem.					Part II (presentations of announced topics in small groups)	Senses, Emotions, Motor Functions	Evaluated Presentation of Thesis Project to Public	
4. Sem.								
5. Sem.							Evaluated Presentation of Thesis Project to Public	
6. Sem.								