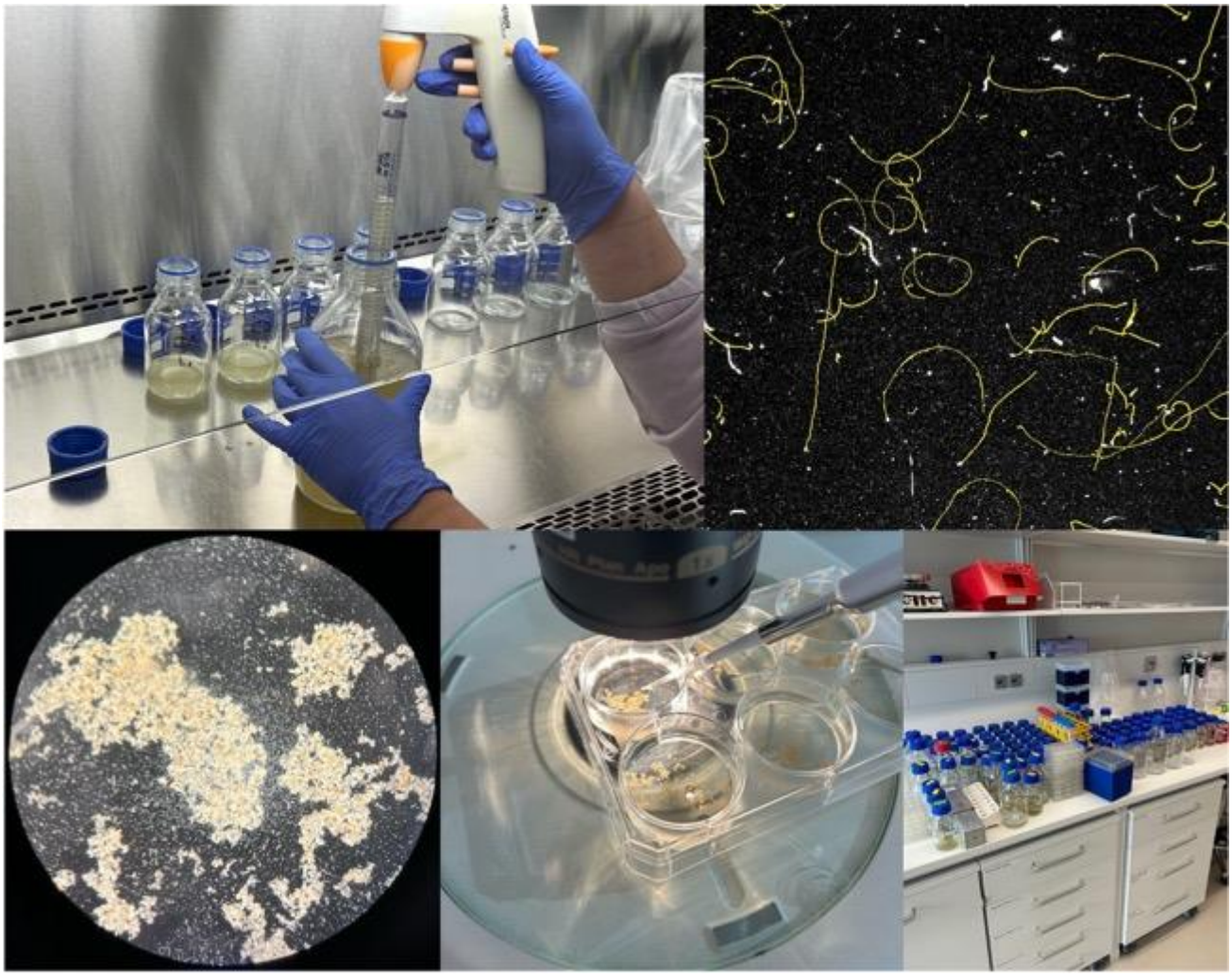
PhD Program in Ecology
Universität Zürich
Institut für Evolutionsbiologie
und Umweltwissenschaften
Winterthurerstrasse 190
CH-8057 Zürich
Telefon +41 44 635 47 73
Email phdecology@ieu.uzh.ch
https://www.ieu.uzh.ch/en/teaching/phd_ecology/links.html

PROGRAM SPRING TERM 2027



"The biosphere is a single, complex metabolism. If we poison one part, we poison the whole thing. There is no 'away' to throw things into."

— Kim Stanley Robinson, The Ministry for the Future

Dear Members

We would like to warmly welcome our new students; **Henry Broadbent, Leah Gaillard Festa, Francesco Grossi** and **Loesje Janssen** who recently joined our PhD program.

A warm welcome too for **Florian Gschwen** and **Eliane Meier** who joined the PhD Program in Ecology as PI's.

Our PhD's were very busy successfully defending their PhD theses. Congratulations to **Francesca Cerroti, Anna Sofia Görlich, Oluwadamilola Ogundipe, and Jan Vigues**!

Thank you to **Martina Jelić** for our featured PhD project.

We are excited to introduce the new course program.

We continuously update our list of offered courses and seminars and are open to suggestions.

Students:
We would like to remind you to keep updated about changes to the regulations for PhDs (Appended to this document and visit the website for more information https://www.ieu.uzh.ch/en/teaching/phd_ecology.html).

PI's:
We can assist you to find a qualified graduate student as we are the access point to all international students that apply for a PhD in Ecology within the Life Science Zurich Graduate School. The next recruiting round is June 2027.

Please let us know about your *successes* which we can celebrate!

Please contact Debra Zuppinger-Dingley (phdecology@ieu.uzh.ch) directly for any questions, feedback or suggestions.
With best regards





Prof. Dr Jordi Bascompte
Program Director

Dr Debra Zuppinger-Dingley
Program Manager

Cover: *Medium pipetting under sterile conditions during evolutionary experiment (top left), trajectories of protists swimming under a microscope, reconstructed from videos (top right),* Dexiostoma campylum *clustering around alfalfa medium particles, observed under a dissecting microscope (bottom left), manual catching of protist predators (*Spathidium spp.*) using a pipette (bottom center), and used lab materials ready for cleaning after a day of work (bottom right) © Martina Jelić.*

Gradients, Interactions, and Evolution: Towards a Multidimensional Understanding of Ecological Responses to Environmental Change

Martina Jelić

Ecosystems are increasingly exposed to multiple environmental drivers, such as rising temperatures and salinity, whose combined effects can be difficult to predict. These effects may depend on the specific environmental conditions considered, the evolutionary history of organisms, and how changes in individual species influence their interactions with others. In my PhD research, I investigated these complexities combining laboratory experiments with a microbial predator-prey system and mathematical modelling. By measuring biological responses across combinations of temperature and salinity, I constructed response surfaces that reveal how the interactive effects of environmental drivers vary across environmental conditions. I found that interactions between temperature and salinity influenced predator feeding parameters across most environments, but only occasionally changed the qualitative population dynamics predicted by mathematical models. I also investigated how approximately 300 generations of exposure to different environmental conditions shaped prey responses to subsequent environmental change. These experiments revealed that evolutionary history influenced prey growth, morphology, and movement, and that evolutionary differences in growth varied across environmental gradients, sometimes emerging in unexpected conditions. Exploratory analyses further suggested a possible link between prey movement speed and predator feeding rates. Overall, my research demonstrates how response-surface approaches can reveal ecological and evolutionary patterns that simpler experimental designs may overlook. These findings highlight the importance of considering environmental context and evolutionary history when seeking to understand and predict how ecological systems respond to multiple environmental drivers.

1. Course Overview

Subject- specific matters

Department	Course	SH	ECTS
IEU	ECO 400 Foundations in Ecology	30	1
IEU	BIO 402 Philosophy of Science with a Focus on Biology	90	3

Methods

Department	Course	SH	ECTS
IEU	ECO 331 General linear and linear mixed models in R	60	2

Transferable skills

Department	Course	SH	ECTS
IEU	ECO 303 Teaching Science at University	60	2
LSZGS	Transferable and Methodological Skills Courses		

Research seminars

Department	Seminar	SH	ECTS
IEU	ECO 401 Presentation/Organization at Zurich Interaction Seminar (or equivalent)	-	1
IEU	BIO 605 Seminar for evolutionary biology and environmental studies	-	-
IEU	BIO 606 BEEES Seminar (Behaviour, Ecology, Environment and Evolution)	-	-

IEU: Department of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies
EM: Institute of Terrestrial Ecosystems, EE: Experimental Ecology
14 LH (lesson hours) = 1 ECTS = 30 hours of work (including preparation, participation, homework). ECTS credits are given according to the standards of the European Credit Transfer System. BIO605 & BIO606 are not bookable and are recommended to be attended by all PhD students.

2. COURSE DESCRIPTION: SUBJECT-SPECIFIC MATTERS

ECO 400	**Foundations in Ecology 3**
Course tutors	Dr. Debra Zuppinger-Dingley
Date / Time	16 – 18 February 2027. 9:00 -12:00, 13:00 -16:00
Place	University of Zurich.
Content	This course explores the foundations of modern ecology by examining the intellectual and conceptual developments that have shaped the field. We focus on classic ecological papers that generations of scientists have recognized as foundational, introducing key concepts and defining many of the core questions that continue to drive ecological research today. Through a workshop-based format centered on discussion of these seminal readings, participants will develop an understanding of how ecological ideas have emerged, evolved, and influenced one another over time. Particular attention is given to how advances in theory, methodology, data collection, and analytical tools have shaped the development of ecological knowledge. By covering some of the historical papers in ecology, participants will gain a broader perspective on ecology and an appreciation for how modern ecological research has evolved through a progression of ideas that continues to shape the discipline today. Each course focuses on one or two foundational topics. Foundations of Ecology 3 examines resources and productivity. We will focus on classic papers that trace the progression of the concepts of resource partitioning and the role of productivity in shaping ecological communities.
Goals	The goals of this course are to: a) deepen your understanding of classical ecological topics ; b) provide some of the knowledge to enable you to improve your interpretation and critical analysis of current publications; c) give you experience in leading discussions related to broader ecology concepts.
Registration	Module booking phdecology@ieu.uzh.ch, include your Surname, Name, student number, email address, PhD program and your institution. Registration by: 10 February 2027. Cancellations for Course until 01 January 2027.

BIO 402	**Philosophy of Science with a Focus on Biology**
Course tutor	Dr. Anna Deplazes Zemp
Date / Time	Mondays. 16.02.2027 - 18.05.2027, 14:00 - 16:00
Place	TBA
Content	The lecture starts with a reflection on the discipline of biology. We address questions such as: What is the aim and achievement of this discipline? What kind of question does it address? What methods does it use to address them? How do biological explanations work? What are the basic assumptions on which biological research builds? How is it different from other sciences such as physics? We will look at the particular role of the theory of evolution in biological explanations and analyze key concepts in biology such as 'life' or 'gene&apos of the lecture, we will also address the connection between biology and ethics in the contexts of the difference between facts and values, evolutionary ethics and the transition from science to technology. Learning Outcome: On successful completion of the lecture, students should: • Know central concepts and theories in the philosophy of science. • Understand the particular lens through which biology studies the world and be aware of background assumptions and limitations. • Understand the role of evolutionary theory for research and explanations in biology. • Understand the connection between biology and ethics.
ECTS credits	Form, duration and timing of the assessment(s): (if several, define how the final grade is composed). Written answers to different tasks, final examination is needed to obtain 3 ECTS credit.
Registration	Module booking online. The allocation of places: priorities defined by the students will be considered. .

COURSE DESCRIPTION: METHODS

ECO 331	**General Linear and Linear Mixed Models in R**
Course tutor	Prof Dr. Pascal Niklaus
Date / Time	Mon 05.04.2027, Wed 07.04.2027, Fr 09.04.2027, Mon 12.04.2027, Wed 14.04.2027, Fr 16.04.2027
Place	TBA
Content	In this course, the participants will learn to analyze experimental and observational data with general linear and linear mixed models. The course will be held as a workshop, with lecture-type parts introducing important concepts and exercises in which the participants will work on their own datasets. A key goal will be that participants learn to recognize the essential structure of data sets and to implement them adequately in statistical models with fixed and random effects. Specifically, the course will deal with issues of experimental design, analysis of variance, hypothesis testing, variance components, models with multiple error terms as well as balanced and unbalanced data. (*Note: it is important to understand that this course is not about generalized linear mixed models [GLMM, non-normal data], although it is possible to deal with such data in the projects)* Day 1, Introduction Day 2, Important concepts Day 3: presentation of projects by participants Day 4: assisted work on own data Day 5: assisted work on own data Day 6: Presentation of results
ECTS credits	Active participation in the course is needed to obtain 2 ECTS credit points.
What you need to know	This is an advanced course that covers complex topics in a limited time. It therefore is essential that the participants have a good understanding of basic linear models (as modelled in R using e.g., lm and aov), and that they are experienced applying these models to their own datasets outside of a course setting. The course participants must bring their own laptop with a working recent installation of the R software (http://www.r-project.org) including the libraries nlme, lme4, and lmerTest.
Registration	Please provide a short statement about where you are in your studies, about the data you will use during the course and what basic stats courses you have attended. Module booking phdecology@ieu.uzh.ch, include your Surname, Name, student number, email address, PhD program and your institution. Registration by: 25 March 2027. Cancellations until 25 February 2027.

ECO 303	**Teaching Science at University**
Course tutor	Sara Petchey
Date / Time	Online course runs from 04 February 2027 for six weeks. In person lectures 04.02.2027 9.00-12.00 and 22.04.2027, 9.00-12.00
Place	TBA
Content	Your first teaching experience should be effective, enjoyable, and personally beneficial. This course gives you the basic knowledge, tools, and practice to have such an experience. You will learn to make your scientific expertise accessible to your students and build a repertoire of evidence-based strategies for teaching abstract science topics to your students and making them active and successful learners. We will show you how to communicate science to novices as well as advanced students in science. The course blends in-person and online learning which allows you to learn as a cohort of peers while maintaining the flexibility to learn at convenient times. We start with an in-person, half-day course followed by a 5-week online course involving videos and a weekly assignment (average of 3 hours of work per week). We meet in-person again for a half day at the end of the course. Based on up-to-date findings from research into teaching and learning science you will be able to: - implement evidence-based strategies into your own teaching, - use students everyday-conceptions for the development of courses, - prepare analogies and models to teach in your field, - implement problem-based teaching, - set up experiments and teach the nature of science.
ECTS credits	Active participation in the course is needed to obtain 2 ECTS credit points.
Registration	Module booking phdecology@ieu.uzh.ch, include your Surname, Name, student number, email address, PhD program and your institution. Priority will be given to students registered in the PhD Program in Ecology, however other PhD students may attend if there are available places. Booking until 25 January 2027, cancellations until 01 January 2027.

RESEARCH SEMINARS

ECO 401	**Zurich Interaction Seminar** **Current research in ecology and evolutionary biology**
Organization	The current semester ZIS organizers please go here
Duration and time	Every second week, on Monday 17:15. For details and an overview of the running program see: https://pe.ethz.ch/education/courses.html
Place	For the current situation please see here
Content	PhD students will receive a credit point for active participation (including a talk) at the Zurich Interaction Seminar or an equivalent series. Credit points will also be given to students who organize a seminar series or a conference themselves.
ECTS credits	1
Registration	ETH students register at myStudies for the course number 551-0740-00L. UZH students: ZIS is officially registered in the PhD program in Ecology under the name of ECO401.

BEEES **BIO 606**	**Behaviour, Ecology, Environment and Evolution Seminar**
Organization	Department of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 190, CH-8057 Zurich
Duration and time	Every Thursday from 12:15–13:00
Place	University of Zurich Irchel, room TBA
Content	For an overview of the running program visit: http://www.ieu.uzh.ch/seminars.html Attending the BEEES is **mandatory** for all students of the PhD Program in Ecology. For information about speaker invitations contact Maja Weilenmann.
ECTS credits	None
Information	M. Weilenmann (maja.weilenmann@ieu.uzh.ch)
Registration	No booking is required

3. USEFUL LINKS

Useful links	A selection of links that offer additional information about your PhD and cross institutional courses that are offered at University of Zurich and ETHZ:
PhD program in Ecology	https://www.ieu.uzh.ch/en/teaching/phd_ecology.html
Other courses LSZGS	The LSZGS offers a variety of inter-disciplinary or soft skill courses. Students may attend these courses for free. For more information and for registration visit the website: http://www.lifescience-graduateschool.ch/index.php?id=96
ZGSM	Courses of the Zurich Graduate School in Mathematics can be attended for free (excluding courses where additional payments to all participants apply). For more information, visit: https://www.zgsm.ch/index.php?id=current_course_progr0
PhD Programs	Courses of all LSZGS PhD programs, such the partner programs Plant Science Centre and Evolutionary Biology. Students are free to take courses of other programs; however, the number of participants might be limited, and availability based on priority given to own members. Plant Science Centre: https://www.plantsciences.uzh.ch/en/teaching/coursecatalogue.html
UZH/ETHZ	Students can take courses offered by their respective host institution where they are matriculated, for example the Graduate Campus UZH offers transferable skills for PhD candidates: https://www.grc.uzh.ch/en/skills or the courses offered by ETHZ https://ethz.ch/students/en/doctorate/transferable-skills.html
External courses	Courses from external institutions can be attended in agreement with the thesis committee and the program coordinator.

4. Regulations of the PhD Program in Ecology

These regulations govern the program-specific requirements for the doctoral program in Ecology.

They are based on the Doctoral Regulations (PVO) and Part A of the MNF Doctoral Regulations

4.1 General Information

Mission Statement

The aim of the PhD Program in Ecology is to develop strong research competence in the interdisciplinary field of ecology and to equip PhD candidates with transferable skills that support future careers within or outside an academic institution.

Organization

The program is led by the program director with members of the associated research groups. The program is managed by the program coordinator. The associated research groups are experts in the field from the University of Zürich (UZH), the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich (ETH) and the affiliated organizations Eawag, Agroscope and WSL. The management is responsible for the strategic and scientific direction of the program, quality assurance of the education, organization of courses and program activities, representation vis-à-vis the LSZGS, MNF, and ETH Zurich

Certificate

UZH and ETH PhD students take part in the program for four years and, alongside their doctoral diploma, receive a certificate recognizing their successful completion of the PhD Program in Ecology.

Further information

All documents, including the semester course program are available on the homepage: https://www.ieu.uzh.ch/en/teaching/phd_ecology/links.html

4.2 Acceptance

Admission

—Master's degree or equivalent university degree in a relevant discipline (ecology, biology, environmental sciences, life sciences, or a closely related field).

– Additional requirements

Demonstration of good communication skills in English during the interview.

All applicants must apply for admission and enrolment at the University of Zurich or ETH Zurich and meet the requirements of the respective host institution.

UZH: https://www.mnf.uzh.ch/en/studium/informationen-f%C3%BCr-phd-studierende/Anmeldung.html

ETH: https://ethz.ch/de/doktorat.html

PhD students who successfully passed the acceptance interview must submit their interview form to the program coordinator: phdecology@ieu.uzh.ch

Application

Applications may be submitted in the following ways:

a) directly through the homepage of the Life Science Zurich Graduate School (LSZGS: http://www.lszgs.ch/) for admission to the PhD Program in Ecology (track 1). The official LSZGS interviews are organized in twice a year towards the end of the spring and fall semesters.
b) Candidates who already hold a PhD position are recruited directly by a supervisor and follow the Track 2 procedure outside the official interview schedule, a process that runs independently of the official interview schedule. Please contact the coordinator of the PhD Program in Ecology directly to apply to the program (phdecology@ieu.uzh.ch).

Acceptance interview

Acceptance to the program via track 1 is granted based on an interview. The interview includes a presentation by the candidate, followed by questions on the candidate's scientific competences. At least three official representatives of the PhD Program in Ecology are present.

A detailed description of the application and admission procedures can be found on the following web pages:
UZH: https://www.mnf.uzh.ch/en/studium/informationen-f%C3%BCr-phd-studierende/Anmeldung.html
ETH: https://ethz.ch/de/doktorat.html

4.3 Thesis Committee

Supervision

Supervision is governed by Sections 9–10, Part A.
The members of the thesis committee are selected jointly by the thesis supervisor and the student at the start of the PhD, but no later than 6 months after the official date of employment. The thesis committee consists of 3-4 persons:
– The direct thesis supervisor (must be a member of the PhD Program in Ecology)
– The official thesis supervisor (must be a member of the Science Faculty (MNF) of the UZH or of the ETHZ or hold “Promotionsrecht)”.
This function is not required if the direct supervisor meets these criteria.
¬– At least one additional member of the MNF UZH / ETH (or a person with “Promotionsrecht”).
– At least one external member. An external person is defined as someone who has the right to confer a doctoral degree at their home institution and is institutionally independent of the university where the doctoral candidate is registered (such as the University of Zurich or ETH Zurich).
The doctoral committee meets for the first time within the first 6–12 months after the start of the doctoral program. After that, it meets at least once a year, but at least three times in total during the course of the doctoral program.

The committee selects a chairman for the thesis committee meeting, who must not be the PhD student's supervisor. The chairman checks that all committee members received the student reports and that both—the PhD student and the supervisor—can talk to the committee in absence of the other party.

The PhD student organizes a meeting with the thesis committee. The PhD student distributes the relevant documents two weeks before the meeting to all members. The results of the meeting will be protocoled and signed by the committee members. After the thesis committee meeting, the PhD student uploads the thesis meeting and progress report to the milestone admin platform.

Two weeks prior to the first meeting, the PhD student must submit a research proposal of ~2000 words (excluding references) describing his/her proposed project to all committee members.

For the second and all subsequent meetings, results and evidence of progress must be presented in a report submitted two weeks before the meeting to the committee members.

At the first meeting, PhD's must get the committee meeting form, doctoral agreement form and the Pflichtenheft (UZH PhD's only) signed. After the thesis committee meeting, the PhD student uploads the thesis meeting and progress report to the milestone admin platform.
UZH PhD's: Present teaching activities and get approval and recommendations.
Doctoral agreement: https://www.ieu.uzh.ch/en/teaching/phd_ecology/links.html

The thesis committee ensures that PhD students receive the best possible supervision during the PhD and good mentoring for the academic or non-academic career beyond the PhD. It supports the PhD student with expertise and advice throughout the thesis work, particularly in areas where it complements the expertise by the supervisor. For emerging problems or concerns that cannot be resolved directly between the student and the supervisor, the Program Coordinator should be the first point of contact and will handle the matter in strict confidence. The program coordinator will provide support to the student /supervisor in addressing the concern. Thesis committee members may also be approached for support. If the problem cannot be resolved with the agreement of the student/supervisor, the Program Director will be contacted to facilitate resolution.
LSZGS PhD Program in Ecology Thesis Meeting Report:
https://www.ieu.uzh.ch/en/teaching/phd_ecology/links.html

Research plan
Two weeks prior to the first meeting, the PhD student must submit a research proposal of ~2000 words (excluding references) describing his/her proposed project to all committee members.
UZH: The research proposal should include:
– title or working title of the dissertation;

– a description of the research project, including the background of the research field, preliminary results, planned experiments, potential pitfalls and solutions;
– a timeline of the thesis, including milestones and a roadmap.
ETHZ PhD's: The research proposal must follow the Doctoral plan template

Progress report
UZH: the committee progress report should be up to 1000 words in scientific writing. The progress report can be substituted by a manuscript, provided that the PhD contribution is significant and clearly identifiable.
ETHZ: Possible template for the progress report. Please check whether your department uses a specific template or has different requirements. If this is the case, follow the instructions of your department.

4.4 Thesis Defense

Registration
The PhD student must submit and defend a thesis describing his/her original research carried out during the PhD studies. The thesis defense complies with the rules of the host institution: https://www.lifescience-graduateschool.uzh.ch/en/PI/requirements_end_PhD.html
The thesis committee decides whether the PhD student has passed their doctorate based on the exam and the thesis. In exceptional cases, the committee can recommend the students for distinction to the UZH/ETH. This recommendation has to be accompanied by two letters of reference from external reviewers. Distinction is intended for top ~5% of PhD students. The final degree is conferred by either the UZH or the ETH, depending on the academic affiliation of the research group.

The date and title of the defense must be communicated to the program manager no later than two weeks in advance.

Data backup
Together with the registration for the doctoral examination the PhD student has to hand over the thesis and the complete data used to produce the thesis, including meta information and where necessary analysis scripts, on a data storage medium to the thesis supervisor.

4.5 Curriculum

5.1 Structure
PhD students attend program courses for a minimum of 12 ECTS credit points during their PhD; these are subdivided into four categories (see table below). The internal courses are communicated to all members of the program before semester start and they are listed in the UZH online semester plan "Vorlesungsverzeichnis":

PhD students in the program must first register for mobility at UZH and ETHZ to

book courses directly. Registration at UZH:
https://www.uzh.ch/en/studies/application/chmobilityin.html
Registration at ETHZ: https://ethz.ch/en/studies/non-degree-courses/special-students/special-students-university-of-zurich.html

Scientific Integrity Course:
A Scientific Integrity course is compulsory for all Life Science Zurich Graduate PhD students. The course must be completed in the first year of their PhD. This regulation is in effect from 1 February 2016.

5.2 *Categories*
The curricular requirements are divided into the following categories:

Categories	ECTS
Subject-specific matters (incl. special lectures)	3
Methods	3
Transferable skills	3
Research seminars (incl. oral/poster contributions)	2
Free choice	1
Total	(min. 12)

5.3
PhD students must obtain a certificate for courses that are not registered through the institutional systems of UZH ("Modulbuchung"; see above) or ETH (myStudies) and have these courses credited to their student account by the respective faculty (UZH) or department (ETH). In case of doubt, the thesis committee will decide whether a course is eligible for credit and how many ECTS credits it should receive.

One ECTS credit corresponds to a total workload of 30 hours, including preparation and homework. Oral and poster presentations can each be awarded one ECTS credit and must be certified by the PhD supervisor and the home university.
Additional courses the program accepts:
– Graduate School courses
The LSZGS offers a variety of interdisciplinary and soft-skill courses. Students may attend these courses for free. For more information and for registration visit the website. Courses of the Zurich Graduate School in Mathematics can be attended for free (excluding courses where additional payments to all participants apply).
– Courses of all LSZGS PhD programs, such as the partner programs Plant Science Centre and Evolutionary Biology. Students are free to take courses of other programs; however, the number of participants might be limited, and availability based on priority given to own members.
– Courses offered by UZH/ETH
Students can take courses offered by their respective host institution where they

are matriculated, for example the Graduate Campus UZH offers transferable skills for PhD candidates or the courses offered by ETH.
– Courses from external institutions
In agreement with the thesis committee and the program coordinator.

4.6 Teaching hours

Participation in teaching is governed by §15 Teil A (100–420 Hours) as well as the guidelines of the respective home institution. The PhD student and the supervisor list the planned teaching hours in the doctoral agreement. PhD students at MNF UZH must report planned and absolved teaching hours to the "Fachbereich Biologie / Geowissenschaften". Teaching hours include the support of lectures on the Bachelor/Master level, exam supervision and correction, and others. Total hours is between100-420 hours.
Teaching hours form: https://www.biologie.uzh.ch/de/Studium/Doktorat.html

4.7 Program specific additional requirements

Research plan
Two weeks prior to the first meeting, the PhD student must submit a research proposal of ~2000 words (excluding references) describing his/her proposed project to all committee members. ETHZ PhDs follow the research proposal requirements of their department.

UZH: The research proposal should include:
– title or working title of the dissertation;
– a description of the research project, including the background of the research field, preliminary results, planned experiments, potential pitfalls and solutions;
– a timeline of the thesis, including milestones and a roadmap.
ETHZ PhD's: The research proposal must follow the Doctoral plan template

UZH: the committee progress report should be up to 1000 words in scientific writing. The progress report can be substituted by a manuscript, provided that the PhD contribution is significant and clearly identifiable.
ETHZ: Possible template for the progress report. Please check whether your department uses a specific template or has different requirements. If this is the case, follow the instructions of your department.

8. Doctoral Degree

Submission, review, defense, and the doctoral examination are governed by the doctoral regulations of the respective home institution (UZH or ETH Zurich).
The program is conducted in English.

Additional information:

Research proposal general outline (+/- 2000 words in scientific language).

Introduction.

Provide only the necessary information to motivate your research and show how it fits into the broader field. What is the problem you are trying to solve? By the end of the introduction, your committee should understand the basics of what you will do and why you will do it.

Background/Methodology.

Detail the current state of research and related research fields. The goal is to provide just enough detail to give a sound understanding of the current limitations and the need for new work. Do not go into detail that does not directly help in understanding your project.

Objectives.

This section summarizes the goals of your work - a list of concrete (quantifiable) goals that you want to accomplish.

Proposed Work.

Explain how your work will solve the problems that you have identified. How will you address the objectives above? Provide just enough information to provide a firm grasp of what you will do.

Provide a set of time-structured goals and deliverables.

Provide a 4 year timeline of when you plan to achieve the goals, such as setting up the experiment, literature reviews, analysis and writing.

References

ETHZ: The research proposal must follow the Doctoral plan template

Annual Progress report general outline (+/- 1000 words in scientific language).

Abstract

Present the background of your research project, list its main goals, describe the methods to be used and the expected results as well as their impact for the field and beyond.

Progress to date

Present the research work you have undertaken since your last progress report, describe the results obtained (including publications) as well as the relevance of these undertakings for your project. Link your work and results to the feedback and steps you had agreed on in your last doctoral committee meeting and annual status conversation.

Significant changes from the research project described in the doctoral plan

Describe shortly if there have been significant changes from the original project plan and explain why.

Potential next steps

Describe which next steps you plan to do in your research work.

References

List the sources of all work

Please do not forget to get the committee meeting signed

ETHZ PhD additional information ECTS recognition for Conferences and External courses:

For external courses:

- Choose the category meant for external work. Depending on your department, it will be labeled "External academic achievements", "Third-party courses", or "Other achievements".
- Click "Add study achievement".
- Type the full, exact name of the host university or institute (e.g., *Paul Scherrer Institute*, *University of Copenhagen*, etc.).
- Course Title: Type the exact title of the course as it is written on your certificate.
- Date: Enter the completion date or the semester it took place.
- Enter the exact number of ECTS stated on your certificate.
- *If the certificate only shows hours*: Calculate 1 ECTS per 30 hours of work, enter that number, and add a note in the comments section explaining the math.
- Locate the document upload field.
- Upload your consolidated PDF containing your Certificate of Completion/Attendance and the official Course Syllabus/Program.
- Submit the Request.

For Conferences:

- Create a single, consolidated PDF proof package for each conference presentation, a presentation package.
- Include the Certificate of Attendance, the Official Program Booklet Page showing your name/presentation title, your Accepted Abstract, and a brief signed confirmation from your ETH supervisor stating the number of credits awarded (typically 1 ECTS per active contribution).
- Click "Add study achievement" Select your department's specific category for external achievements (e.g., *Transferable Skills Courses / External Conference Participation*).
- Manually enter the details of your presentation and upload the presentation proof package

For UZH Courses if they are not in your transcript in mystudies:

- Log into the standard UZH Student Portal.
- Download your official, digitally verifiable UZH Transcript of Records (Leistungsausweis) reflecting your mobility course grades.
- In ETHZ myStudies, navigate to Credit Transfer.
- Log into the ETH myStudies Portal.
- Go to the Matriculation section and select "Requests to transfer authorized study achievements.
- Log the UZH Mobility Courses.
- Click "Add study achievement".
- Input the course code, exact course title, and the number of ECTS exactly as they appear on your UZH Transcript of Records.
- Upload the digital UZH Transcript of Records as the mandatory supporting evidence.