

Guidelines and information on modules BCH501 and BCH502

- Module BCH501 *Master's Thesis (Masterarbeit)* can be started only after completion and attestation of compulsory module BCH408 *Research Project* (see *Guidelines on the studies in biochemistry*, *Wegleitung zum Biochemie-Studium*, and VVZ, the course catalog). Students are responsible for finding a hosting group and organizing a project, according to their interests. The starting date is not fixed, and is determined in coordination with the hosting group leader and the direct supervisor. The hosting group and the starting date should be communicated to the module coordinator (currently Ilian Jelezarov, e-mail: iljel@bioc.uzh.ch, Tel. 044 635 5547, Office 44-K-07).
- The experimental work and the compilation of the thesis document should be finished within 9 months (approx. 6 months laboratory work + approx. 3 months writing up; see VVZ). In justified cases, an one-time extension of up to four weeks is possible. The extension should be requested before the end of the regular timespan (e-mail to the module coordinator, along with a short explanatory statement of the group leader). Master students are entitled to up to 3 weeks of vacation, which will not be counted towards the 9-month duration of the thesis project. The extent and exact time period should be discussed with and approved by the responsible group leader in advance.
- External Master's thesis projects can be carried out at institutions affiliated with the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (MNF) and the Faculty of Medicine (MeF), as well as at other Swiss universities. An application for an external Master's thesis must be submitted no later than 6 weeks before the anticipated starting date to the module coordinator. The application includes:
 - Motivation letter (reasons for the choice of research institution; reasons why the anticipated experimental work cannot be accomplished in any research group at BCI).
 - Brief description of the project: scientific background, planned experiments, expected outcome, experimental techniques that will be used, provisional time schedule.
 - Written confirmation of the hosting group leader. *Note that the hosting group leader must be holder of the right to confer PhD degree (Promotionsrechte an der MNF/MeF).*

The application is assessed at BCI. Approved external Master's theses are supervised by qualified members of BCI. The modus of the BCI-internal supervision is a matter of negotiation between the student and the BCI supervisor.

- External Master's theses are conducted according to the rules defined by BCI UZH (see above), and not according to the rules at the hosting institution.
- External Master's theses are graded by the internal supervisor at BCI upon consultation with the external supervisor/group leader, who provides a justified suggestion. In the case of grade 6.0 or grade 4.0 a second opinion of a qualified person is required, and must be provided by the external group leader.

- The final grade is communicated to the module coordinator by the group leader (e-mail).
- The thesis document (graded final version) must be deposited as a PDF file at the Institute's Office (Mrs. Gunda Dresler; e-mail: institut@bioc.uzh.ch).
- As part of the module a master seminar will be given by the student (20-25 minutes oral presentation of the topic and the results of the Master project + discussion). The seminar will be organized by the group hosting the Master's project.¹ The time slot is not *a priori* fixed.² The seminar will be advertised at BCI. At least 10 days before the seminar the student should provide the following information (e-mail to Mr. Daniel Egloff, seminars@bioc.uzh.ch): title, a short abstract (1/3 page), date, time, venue, contact person.
- The accepted MSc leads to acquisition of 45 ECTS.
- Registration for module BCH502 *Biochemistry: An Overview* (final MSc exam) is done by e-mail to the module coordinator. The following information is required: student matriculation number, the exact title and the abstract of the Master's thesis, specification of a time span (10-14 days) in which the exam is intended.
- The exam is conducted by two qualified persons who are appointed by the module coordinator.
- The module coordinator organizes the examiners and notifies the candidate. The candidate arranges the exam date and the exam venue directly with the examiners. Submission of a copy of the thesis to the examiner is not mandatory, unless they do explicitly ask for a copy.
- The successful Master's examination (grade > 4.0) leads to acquisition of 10 ECTS. This generally corresponds to a workload of 300 hours. A preparation of 8 to 12 weeks is estimated to be necessary for successful passing of the final exam.
- The exam can be cancelled up to 10 days before the scheduled date (e-mail to the module coordinator and the two examiners). The candidate is responsible for scheduling a new date upon agreement with the examiners.
- After the exam, the examiners notify the module coordinator about the score. The protocols are deposited at the Institute's Office.

¹ External Master students are responsible for the organization of the seminar at the corresponding institution. If necessary, the Master student fosters the communication between the external supervisor and the internal supervisor at BCI.

² One possibility is the integration of the seminar with the regular group meetings. However, the group makes the decision on this matter.

- On successful completion of modules BCH501 and BCH502, as well as all other mandatory modules within the Master's program Biochemistry (total of 90 ECTS) the candidate fills out the electronic form to be found at:

<https://studentadmin.mnf.uzh.ch>

and notifies the module coordinator by e-mail, attaching also the title page of the thesis document. All subsequent steps leading to official graduation are executed by the Dean's Office of Student Affairs.³

- The registration (matriculation) is mandatory for the semester in which the exam takes place. For exams taking place in the lecture-free periods the following rules apply.

Exam before the start of week 8	Required registration for the fall semester
Exam after the start of week 8	Required registration for the spring semester
Exam before the start of week 38	Required registration for the spring semester
Exam after the start week 38	Required registration for the fall semester

Information on module BCH502 (Biochemistry: An Overview)

The final exam is oral, in the form of free discussion of approximately one hour duration. Exam language is German or English; the candidate has the choice to specify the language. Prerequisite for a successful passing of the Master's examination is recapitulation of the contents and deepening of the knowledge acquired in the following modules, which represent the core of the biochemistry curriculum at UZH:

BCH201: Biochemistry I
 BCH202: Biochemistry II
 BCH252 RNA and Proteins
 BCH310: Biochemistry III
 BCH301: Molecular Cell Biology
 BCH304: Protein Biophysics
 BCH306: Biochemical and Biophysical Methods
 BCH420: Advanced Protein Engineering
 BCH630: Protein Crystallography and Electron Microscopy
 BIO390: Bioinformatics

Furthermore, expected is understanding of the theory, application area and informational content of experimental methods which have been instructed during the studies of biochemistry (lectures and practical units). Scripts and lecture notes distributed by the lecturers form the basis in the preparation for the exam. However, the usage of appropriate textbooks is highly recommended.

- Starting from fall semester 2023, the list of seminars attended as part of module BCH405 *Research Seminars* must be presented to the examiners in the final exam. The basic content of the attended seminars may be subject of examination.

³ Shortly after submission of the electronic graduation request form the Dean's Office will issue **upon request** a provisional document certifying the completion of studies at UZH.