

ART. 1 – ADMISSIONS TO THE COURSE IN FUNCTIONAL AND STRUCTURAL GENOMICS

The admissions to the Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) Course in Functional and Structural Genomics (hereafter *the Course*) take place through a selection based on academic and scientific qualifications and a written and oral examination, according to the Statute of the School (<http://www.sissa.it/main/?p=statute>).

Exceptionally qualified non EU-students can be admitted to the course only through evaluation of their academic and scientific qualifications.

For the admissions, candidates must hold an Italian Laurea (Laurea Specialistica, Laurea Magistralis or the old Laurea Quadriennale) in a scientific subject, or an equivalent University degree gained abroad (i.e. M.Sc.), which appropriateness is approved by the School Senate, after having received the approval from the Faculty Members Council of the Course (hereafter *FMC*, see General Rules governing the PhD Course at SISSA). This degree must have been obtained before the PhD courses official starting date.

The Admissions Committee (hereafter *AD*) for the entrance examination is composed of – in accordance with the Statute of the School – at least three members: two belonging to the FMC and one member from another institution (the external AD member), proposed by the FMC and nominated by the Council of the Neuroscience Area (hereafter *the Area*).

The entrance examination is aimed at verifying the candidate's aptitude for scientific research and her/his level of knowledge of the basic molecular biology and neuroscience. For the evaluation, the AD disposes of 100 points, 10 of which are for the academic and scientific qualifications, 40 for the written examination and 50 for the oral examination.

The following achievements are considered valid for evaluation:

Academic qualifications: i.e. final score from the Laurea Degrees, B.Sc., M.Sc., equivalent diplomas, and participation in post-degree courses, scholarships;

Scientific qualifications: i.e. publications, manuscripts and original scientific results.

The written examination consists of the elaboration of three topics of the Course chosen among a list proposed by the AD. Are admitted to the oral examination only candidates that have passed the written test with a score equal or higher than 28/40 points.

The examination may be lead either in Italian or in English.

The oral examination is a discussion on topics of the written test, of basic molecular biology and neuroscience, on the previous experience of the candidate in relation to her/his academic curriculum (including the thesis project), on the research work carried out so far, on the research interests of the candidate. Also in this case, the exam may be carried out either in Italian or in English. If the candidate decides to carry out the exam in Italian, she/he will need to prove her/his knowledge of the English language by reading and translating a short scientific text.

The candidate passes the selection by reaching a score equal or higher than 70/100. At the end of the examinations a list of the admitted candidates (starting from the highest score) is displayed by the AD. The Council of the Area examines the proceedings of the examination presented by the AD and decides the admissions to the PhD courses.

ART. 2 – STUDENTS' OBLIGATIONS

The teaching activity starts in either the fall or in the winter terms and it is structured into courses and seminars held by the FMC and by external lecturers. Students are expected to attend all suggested courses and if a student is not able to attend a given course she/he is expected to provide a justification to the PhD coordinator. It is up to the FMC to decide how the final exam will be structured.

Students are required to participate actively in group's discussions, in internal and external seminars and in the weekly Journal Club either run within the Area or the FMC laboratories.

At the beginning of each PhD course the students receive information about the available research projects, which constitute the fundamental element of the PhD course.

Each new student will start, at the latest within the month of January after the beginning of the Course, working on a research project under the supervision of one of the FMC. The choice of the available projects aims at matching the student's own experience and research interests with the needs of the research programs of the Course. A student refusing all the PhD projects proposed to her/him is inevitably excluded from the PhD program.

The assignment of a student's supervisor must be approved by the FMC. Only under exceptional circumstances a student can ask for a change of her/his supervisor. The change must be approved by the FMC.

Required forms to be filled and submitted to the FMC during the Course are the following:

Yearly Progress Reports (all students except 4th year students).

Final Report (for all 4th year students).

The deadline for the forms submission and their content is as follows:

Yearly Progress Report must be submitted by the end of August. The Yearly Progress Report should include an up-to-date reporting of the experimental project; a list and description of trainings/schools/seminars/courses attended during the year; the number of meeting held with the supervisor.

Final Report must be submitted two-and-half months before PhD completion and it should include an abstract of the proposed thesis and a list of publications (if applicable).

ART. 3 – ADMISSION TO THE FOLLOWING YEAR

To be admitted to the following year each student must pass a qualification exam called Progress Report. The Progress Reports are usually held in September each year. They consist of a presentation of the scientific activity carried out by the student during the last twelve months discussed in front of the FMC. The FMC will then evaluate the scientific and didactic progresses of each student and decides if she/he is eligible to continue the PhD program the following academic year.

The Council of the Area deliberates the admission of a student to the following year, before the end of each academic year. The FMC decides if, in occasion of the annual Progress Report, the work carried out by each student is of sufficient quality to lead to a future PhD thesis.

ART. 4 – MAGISTER PHILOSOPHIAE

Under motivated circumstances – and having discussed the issue with the FMC – the supervisor may suggest that the student sits the examination to obtain a Magister Philosophiae (Master). The request to obtain a Master must be approved by the Council of the Area.

In case of approval of the above request the student will present a thesis that will be discussed in front of a Master Committee nominated by the Council of the Area, following FMC suggestions. Generally, a student receiving a Master degree does not continue her/his studies to obtain a PhD.

ART. 5 – COURSE DURATION

A student can spend from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 4 years to complete her/his PhD project. The enrolment of a student to the fourth year must be approved by the Council of the Area and by the School Senate, which will imply the extension of the scholarship within the possibilities of the School's budget.

Only in exceptional and motivated cases - and following the Council of the Area's approval - it is possible for a student to present her/his PhD thesis after the fourth year, even though she/he no longer maintains the status of SISSA student.

ART. 6 – EXAMINATION

The Thesis to be defended for the PhD title should contain original and published results (or results considered suitable for publication by the FMC) on well-established scientific journals.

The thesis should contain an abstract (max 500 words), an introduction in which the aim of the research project is clearly identified, a description of the methodology, a clear account of novel data and a systematic discussion followed by the bibliography of the authors cited in the text. In the event in which a number of publications are produced by the student during her/his PhD course, those publications may be included in the thesis in their entirety or at least as a list of publications. In the event in which a number of publications have originated, the candidate needs to specify her/his direct and original contribution to each one of them.

The candidates who intend to take the exam to obtain the title of PhD should present a Final Report to the FMC and if the report is approved a written request addressed to the Director of the School at least two months before the established examination date.

The Council of the Area nominates the Committee for the PhD exam. The PhD Examination Committee (hereafter *EC*) is composed of up to 5 examiners, at least two from SISSA and at least two external. The external examiners, chosen according to specific scientific competences and complete non-involvement with the candidate and with the supervisor, will be given the task to evaluate the thesis (which they should receive at least two months prior examination). These external examiners will be also required to indicate corrections to be made to the thesis within a month after reception.

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure rapid printing and binding of the Thesis. The final version of the Thesis is to be distributed to all the Members of the nominated EC at least two weeks before the examination date.

The exam to obtain the title of PhD consists in a public seminar followed by a discussion during which the examiners can ascertain the background knowledge in the field of research or in neurobiology in general.

The EC may:

Approve the Thesis and confer the PhD. In case of an outstanding project, the PhD may be awarded “cum laude”.

Or

Not Approve the Thesis, in which case the student may be invited to withdraw and present the Thesis at the next session, after having implemented her/his work where required.

ART. 7 – DISPENSATIONS

In case of serious personal reasons or in case of maternity/paternity leave, students can ask the FMC and the Council of the Area for her/his position to be held for up to a maximum of 15 months.

ART. 8 – CODE OF CONDUCT

Students, like any other member of the SISSA staff, must respect the Code of Conduct, to safeguard the dignity of female and male employees and students of the School. The Code of Conduct can be found at the following link: <http://www.sissa.it/main/?p=statute>, where a list of Consultants nominated by the Director is available. These Consultants have been selected to help and/or deal with matters related to the Code of Conduct. Students are required to respect the rules of ethic and behavior also in the lab. These rules are indicated in a document *ad hoc* prepared by the Council of the Area and handed in to the newcomers at the beginning of each academic year.