

## International Research Training Group for Myology

### Basic information

**Keywords:** Myology | Cell Biology | Molecular Biology | Neurology | Gene Repair

**Program directors:** Prof. Simone Spuler MD (Berlin Spokesperson); Prof. Thomas Voit MD, Prof. Gisèle Bonne PhD, Prof. Helge Amthor MD (Paris Spokespersons)

**Program coordinator:** Susanne Wissler (susanne.wissler [at] charite.de; +49 30 450 540504)

**Program web link:** <http://www.myograd.org>

### Detailed program information

**Program summary description:** Muscle wasting and weakness are devastating problems in patients with muscular dystrophies, cancer, cachexia, critical illness myopathy, and in aging people. New findings and treatment approaches are becoming increasingly important. MyoGrad is the first structured PhD training in muscle sciences worldwide. Highly qualified international PhD students complete a bi-nationally supervised thesis in the field of muscle-related cell and molecular biology or clinical aspects of muscle diseases. Participating institutions are Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Freie Universität Berlin, Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris 6, and Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines.

**Systems medicine and/or translational highlights:** The MyoGrad program includes basic research (developmental biology, signal transduction with more applied (development of new therapies) and clinical expertise (muscle metabolism)

**Primary funding source:** Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), Université franco-allemande (UFA)

**Program start date:** 04/2010

**Number of students recruited per year (estimated):** 3

**Number of program funded positions/places (excluding third party funding):** 35

**Duration of program:** 12/2016

### Scientific training

In order to enable students to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of muscle sciences, to gain hands-on experiences in practical workshops, and to prepare for a scientist's life in career development courses without constant travel between the various locations in Berlin and Paris/Versailles, we offer onsite teaching in block schedules as well as single seminars via online conference technique:

#### Lecture series:

- MyoGrad Guest Lectures. Internationally renowned scientists are invited to give talks and discuss their research work with MyoGrad PhD students. The discussion round is led by one of

the students. Guest lectures are announced on the MyoGrad website at

<http://www.myograd.org>

- Interdisciplinary lectures at the Max Delbrück Center. Students are encouraged to attend lectures and seminars offered by the Max Delbrück Center (e.g. BIMS Seminar Series, Lunchtime Seminar Series, TRANSCARD Lectures, and Wollenberger etc.). For more information, please visit <http://www.mdc-berlin.de/events>
- The Ecole Doctorale “Complexité du vivant” of Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris 6 offers interdisciplinary seminars in French. For more information, please visit <http://www.ifd.upmc.fr/fr/organisation/ed/ed515.html>

### **Practical courses:**

- German-French Research Summer Schools Part I: Basic Muscle Science & Part II: Clinical Myology Each year in June (2 weeks). For more information, please visit <http://www.myograd.org>
- MyoGrad Journal Club. Each Wednesday 9.00 -10.00 a.m.

### **Mentoring & supervision offered**

Each doctoral student is jointly supervised by one scientist from Berlin and one scientist from Paris/Versailles. The details of the collaboration are laid down for each doctoral candidate in an individual cotutelle contract at the beginning of the thesis work. Together with the two thesis supervisors the doctoral student sets up a thesis committee consisting of

- Thesis supervisor in Paris
- Thesis supervisor in Berlin
- Scientific Expert (to be chosen with the help/suggestion of the thesis supervisors, should have professor-rank, extern of the laboratory and expert on the topic)
- Representative of Freie Universität Berlin, Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy
- Representative of Ecole Doctorale „Complexité du vivant“ (ED515), Paris

The thesis committee meets twice during the doctorate. The first meeting is conducted after one year (months 12-15), the second one after 2.5 years (months 28-33). This council is designed to support the doctoral student and give advice as to the orientation of the PhD project.

Apart from regular exchanges with the thesis supervisors and meetings with the committee, each candidate is allocated a tutor, usually a postdoc in the respective research group.

Every two years the MyoGrad faculty together with the doctoral students meets for a retreat, where students present and discuss current research results in talks and posters sessions.

### **Additional features**

A unique feature of MyoGrad is the cotutelle contract between Berlin and Paris based universities enabling a binational degree.

### **Soft skills training:**

- Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin: Courses on LabAnimal Science, Modul I and II

- Freie Universität Berlin: MyoGrad is member of the Dahlem Research School of Freie Universität Berlin, thus having access to the *Professional Development Program* offered by FUB.
- MyoGrad Courses: Biostatistics Course – Statistics basics: Introduction to experimental and clinical research, Good clinical practice, Scientific writing

**Support for conference visits:** MyoGrad covers travel costs for one national and one international conference per year. Moreover, students who spend time in their partner lab in Berlin or in Paris/Versailles receive a monthly mobility aid.

**Stipends/grants funded within your program:** On the Berlin side MyoGrad PhD students receive a monthly stipend of 1.365 EURO plus 103 EURO per month for research consumables. On the Paris/Versailles side MyoGrad PhD students receive a salary of 1.380 EURO per month which includes social insurance and retirement pension.