



TBDP

**National Doctoral Programme of
Musculoskeletal Disorders and
Biomaterials**

TBDP Handbook

November 2013

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1. ADMINISTRATION

Practical matters in the Doctoral Program are run by the Board, under which the Dean and the Coordinator operate.

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Professor Juha Tuukkanen (Professor Petri Lehenkari)

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The name of TBDP should appear in the Acknowledgements section of your PhD thesis and also in individual publications and posters. This is common practice in many graduate schools. Students are also asked to send their thesis book to TBDP office.

Anna Haukioja, PhD is acknowledged for giving the handbook of Finnish Doctoral Programme of Oral Sciences (FINDOS) as a model for this handbook.

3. THE RIGHTS AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DOCTORAL STUDENTS

The following researcher training arrangements are to be applied in TBDP. By signing the supervision agreement you accept the following rights and responsibilities. Information about the practical matters will be available from our website ([Supervision agreement](#)).

3.1 The rights of the graduate student

- You have the right to consult your supervisory board in questions related to you PhD-work.
- Senior scientists/ group leaders will give you feedback about your oral presentation/ poster at annual TBDP meetings.
- TBDP will cover your travel fees to annual TBDP meetings. You may also apply for travel grants to other scientific meetings from TBDP, especially within the Nordic countries.

3.2. The responsibilities of the graduate student

- You will write and submit an annual progress report to TBDP.
- We expect that you participate in courses and annual meetings arranged by TBDP.
- Each graduate student needs to have a supervisory board (ohjausryhmä) that will annually report to TBDP about your PhD-work's progress.
- After consulting your thesis supervisor, contact the supervisory board members to obtain their agreement. You should send the information on your supervisory committee to TBDP.
- You are responsible for arranging an annual meeting with your supervisory board, after which you should submit the meeting memo to TBDP. According to the situation, you may meet the members of the Supervisory Board personally or the members may work through a teleconference or by e-mails before signing the memo.
- The name of TBDP should appear in the Acknowledgements of both your thesis and of individual publications and posters. This is common practice in many graduate schools.

4. THE RIGHTS AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESEARCH SUPERVISORS

The following researcher training arrangements are to be applied in TBDP. By signing the supervision agreement you accept the following rights and responsibilities. Information about practical matters will be available from our website ([Supervision agreement](#)).

- TBDP welcomes new applications from students and research groups involved in Musculoskeletal and/or Biomaterial research.
- All students have equal possibilities to apply for funding from TBDP.

- The group leader is the duly responsible person within the research group, concerning financing and supervision of the graduate student.
- You will forward TBDP-information to your students and back when necessary, and help us in collecting information about publications and dissertations.
- We expect all supervisors and group leaders to participate in annual TBDP meetings and in arranging courses for graduate students.

5. INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT THE SUPERVISORY BOARD

5.1. The composition and role of the TBDP supervisory board

Each student is expected to have a supervisory board of 3 senior scientists of whom at least one should not be included in the same research group. For practical reasons, the thesis supervisor is generally a member. The intention is that the supervisory board helps the student to finish his/her thesis rapidly. The senior scientists in the supervisory board can be consulted during the thesis work at any time in case of problems/questions. For the best of the student, the composition of the supervisory board is critical: the members should have enough interest and time to familiarize themselves with the student's project in order to be able to help. Therefore, please pay particular attention to how you put up your supervisory board

The supervisory board will meet with the student at least once a year, and give a short description of the progress of the student to the graduate school board. The student has the major responsibility of arranging this communication. The student is also responsible for sending the memo to the graduate school. The composition of the supervisory board should be informed to the coordinator.

5.2. Supervisory board memo

The supervisory boards may choose who will write the meeting memo, although we suggest that this remains a task for the student. The memo should be max. one A4, and describe shortly the name of the graduate student, supervisory board members and (when applicable) time of the meeting. The intention is, that the supervisory board estimates how the student has spent his/her year (productivity), what he/she has learned (graduate studies) and what the plans for the near future are. Also, direct suggestions on how the study could be strengthened or improved, are also welcome to the student. If negative feedback is needed, the board should point the weak spots out. The student should ensure that the memo is sent to the graduate school annually.

6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING YOUR RESEARCH PLAN

The length of the research plan is recommended to be 5 pages (excluding abstract and references). Write your research plan in English. The plan is to be made under the guidance of and approved by your supervisor. The research plan is not a mere formality; a well done plan is a substantial and necessary part of your PhD studies before a doctoral dissertation.

The research plan is required from all applicants. The research plan should include sufficient information needed for evaluation of the project, independent of any other document. Be specific and informative, and avoid redundancies. The research plan needs to cover the whole project and include the following:

6.1. Abstract (max. 200 words)

Clear and concise, the most important part of your report. Make the abstract self-explanatory!

6.2. Specific aims

List the broad, long-term objectives of your proposal. State the hypotheses to be tested. The aims have to be clearly defined and presented. The sub-projects need to be linked to one another. The recommended length is 0.5 - 1 page.

6.3. Background and significance

This section is intended to introduce the reader to the field of research, including the main problems as they are presented in the latest literature. Briefly sketch the background leading to the present plan, critically evaluate existing knowledge, and specifically identify the gaps which the project is intended to fill. State concisely the scientific importance of the suggested research and also evaluate its possible relevance for applied aspects (e.g. advancing human health, health of the environment, industrial production etc.). The recommended length is 1 - 2 pages.

6.4. Current state of the project

Summarize your previous results, describe ongoing studies, include preliminary results, and delineate forthcoming studies. Discuss in detail the experimental design, procedures and protocols to be used, and the means by which the data will be analyzed and interpreted. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims. Discuss the criteria that will be used to determine if feasibility has been demonstrated. The recommended length is 2 pages.

6.5. Timetable

Estimate the finishing time of each specific sub-project and the suggested date for defending your thesis. A good way to present timetable is in a tabular or linear format. The recommended length is half a page.

6.6. Funding

Write a short summary for the funding of the project. The recommended length is half a page.

6.7. References

Each reference must include names of all authors, the title, book or journal, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. The references should be limited to relevant and current literature. The recommended length is 1 page.

If you have any questions concerning the research plan, discuss with your supervisor or contact the TBDP coordinator.

7. APPLICATIONS

7.1 Applications for PhD student positions with salary

TBDP will inform open positions. The lengths of individual contracts depend on the status of the project and available funding, but they cannot exceed maximum 4 years/ student. The detailed application guidelines will be available with the call and should be followed carefully.

7.2. Applications for TBDP student membership

Outside the application rounds for PhD student positions with salary, TBDP student membership can be applied at any time, by sending in the application to TBDP office. Membership application should include the following documents:

1. Application letter in a free form, including suggestion of supervisory board members.
2. Research plan (see the instructions)
3. CV.
4. Personal study plan (see the example)
5. Career plan (see the example)
6. Supervision agreement form ([Supervision agreement](#))

These so called matching fund student positions have equal rights and responsibilities but their salary is paid by another source.

8. TRAVEL GRANTS

TBDP students can apply for travel grants to work abroad in another laboratory, as well as attending meetings and courses abroad. Travel grants can also be applied for national research courses organized by other Finnish Graduate Schools or Doctoral Programs (announced at FinBioNet). However, a limited amount of travel money is available annually and in most cases TBDP will not cover all the travel costs. In order to apply for travel grant,

your need to fill in the application form (found in our webpage) and send it to the Coordinator.

Travel grants for conferences/meetings should be applied by two deadlines annually. Usually, the deadlines for travel grant applications will be in January 31st and August 31st (follow our webpages). However, travel grants for lab visits and courses can be applied at any time.

Before the trip, the student needs to fill in the travel plan (matkasuunnitelma) at the host university. This will ensure that your travel insurance will be valid! For the domestic trips the written consent of the supervisor is adequate.

Note, that no daily allowances (päiväraha) or use of own car will be covered.

9. THEORETICAL STUDIES

Besides the publications, it is important to accomplish the **theoretical studies**. TBDP advises to start collecting those already during the early phases of your PhD project. Participation in training courses and Journal Clubs, presentations in national/international meetings, as well as taking written exams are usually accepted for study points. Check the rules and regulations from your own faculty!

Be aware that **all the doctoral students need to register their thesis** in their host university and follow the rules and obligations of their host university!

9.1. Study Plan

Here are some general guidelines of how to progress with your studies during your PhD examination (Turku Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (TuBS) Curriculum has been used as a model for these guidelines, <http://www.tubs.utu.fi/students/curriculum.html>).

First year

- Basic courses related to your field
- PhD related theoretical studies (bioethics, science theory, statistics etc.)
- Transferable skills courses (writing, presentation, language courses, economics etc.)
- TBDP courses and Annual meeting

Second year

- Intensive courses related to your field
- PhD related theoretical studies (bioethics, science theory, statistics etc.)
- Transferable skills courses (writing, presentation, language courses, economics etc.)
- International laboratory visits
- TBDP courses and Annual meeting

Third year

- Advanced courses (EMBO, Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory Meetings and Courses, Cordon Research courses, Keystone Symposia, etc.)
- International laboratory visits
- Presentations in research group and international meetings
- Career development courses etc.
- TBDP courses and Annual meeting

Fourth and subsequent years

- Advanced courses (EMBO, Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory Meetings and Courses, Cordon Research courses, Keystone Symposia, etc.)
- Career development courses etc.
- Laboratory visits to potential post doc –laboratories
- Presentation in international meetings
- TBDP courses and Annual meeting
- Finalising the thesis project
- Writing the thesis
- Dissertation

10. CAREER PLAN

Every student will make a career plan at the beginning of their PhD studies that the supervisor will approve. This will be updated yearly and is sent to TDBP with the Annual Progress Report. Here is an example of how to make a career plan:

Career Plan 2013

Goal: Your specific, ultimate career goal. This goal should be focused and clear.

Current Education: Your current education.

Required Education: Any education (formal or informal) needed to reach ultimate goal.

Current Skills/Experience: Any skills or experience you possess that are relevant to your ultimate goal.

Required Skills/Experience: Any additional skills or experience you need for your ultimate career goal.

Target for the year 2013: The first step you need to take to reach your ultimate career goal.

Education:

Skills:

Signatures

Doctoral Student

Supervisor

11. DISSERTATION

Thesis requirements and practical things involved in handing in your thesis are different between different universities and faculties.

Some general information can be found e.g. from the following web pages:

University of Helsinki: <http://www.helsinki.fi/tohtoriksi>

University of Turku: <http://www.utu.fi/fi/Tutkimus/tutkijan-ura/Sivut/home.aspx>

University of Tampere: <http://www.uta.fi/opiskelu/tohtoriopinnot/index.html>

Tampere University of Technology:

http://www.tut.fi/public/oppaat/opas2010-2011/opas3_2010-2011.pdf

University of Jyväskylä: <http://www.jyu.fi/opiskelu/tohtorikoulutus>

University of Eastern Finland: <http://uef.fi/uef/ohjeet-vaittelijalle>

University of Oulu: <http://www.oulu.fi/tutkijakoulu/>

Remember to always check the latest information from your own faculty!