



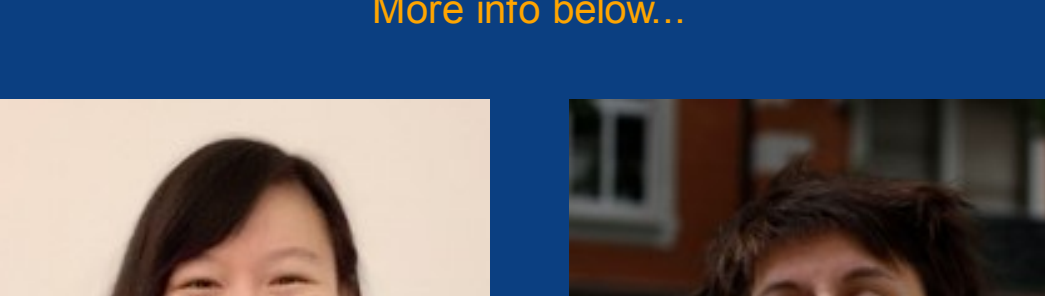
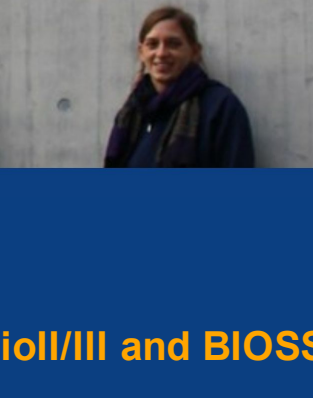
Welcome to the PhD-Bio Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter!

In this space, we aim to keep you up to date with **what's happening** across the institutes in Freiburg (Biology Faculty, MPI-IE and Uniklinik), **alumni news**, **job opportunities** and so much more!

We invite contributions from everyone in our community and hope to create a strong network of Biology PhDs in Freiburg.

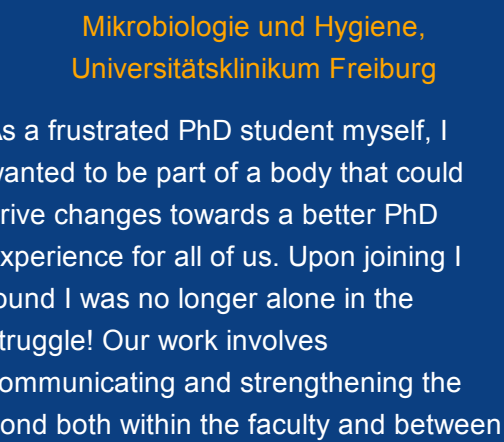
Your PhD Reps



We represent you!

You can find us at the **Uniklinik, ZBSA, Bioll/III and BLOSS**.

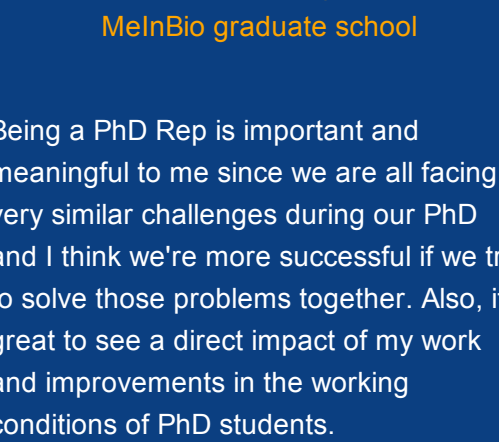
More info below...



Lin Ng

AG Hacker, Institut fur Medizinische Mikrobiologie und Hygiene, Universitatsklinikum Freiburg

As a frustrated PhD student myself, I wanted to be part of a body that could drive changes towards a better PhD experience for all of us. Upon joining I found I was no longer alone in the struggle! Our work involves communicating and strengthening the bond both within the faculty and between faculties of the university and affiliated institutions where PhD students or alumni can be found. Meeting every two weeks, we discuss issues reported to us by PhD students; at times this requires presentation of the issue to higher councils to seek action for change. We also take this time to brainstorm on social activities to provide a safe space for our PhD colleagues to connect as well as bring up any concerns related to their PhD experience. It has been wonderfully rewarding to be part of such a talented team facing those challenges together, working to make that leap from good to better!



Ute Hoffmann

AG Wilde, Biologie III; MeInBio graduate school

Being a PhD Rep is important and meaningful to me since we are all facing very similar challenges during our PhD and I think we're more successful if we try to solve those problems together. Also, it's great to see a direct impact of my work and improvements in the working conditions of PhD students.

I'm elected PhD representative in the Faculty Council. Together with regular PhD Reps meeting, my commitment for PhD Reps work takes up approx. 10 hours per month.



Klara Lesch

AG Hiltbrunner & AG Ulbrich, Biologie II / BLOSS; SGBM graduate school

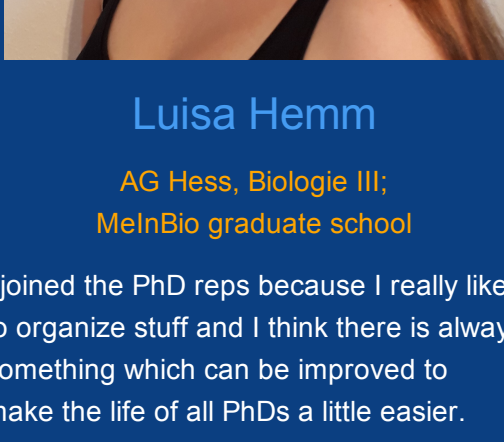
Last year I joined the PhD representatives because I wanted to see what the needs and issues of other PhD candidates were. Along with having a productive environment came the opportunity to connect to other PhDs from different fields and a lot of fun. I hope during the time as PhD representative, we will be able to make PhD life better for future generations, while facilitating the exchange of knowledge and joy!



Ellen McAllister

AG Jellusova, BLOSS/CIBSS

I got involved with the PhD reps because I wanted to work on the issues we all face as doctoral candidates. It's been a great experience, from meeting friendly and interesting people to learning more about how change is made. The workload is flexible and sometimes you have more time, sometimes experiments and a big presentation mean you can dedicate less time. The key is time management and good communication. Both are great skill to practise for the PhD and beyond. The possibility to work on projects with the Reps is really open to your creativity and capacity to take on the challenge. I encourage everyone who's interested to have a go and get involved!



Luisa Hemm

AG Hess, Biologie III; MeInBio graduate school

I joined the PhD reps because I really like to organize stuff and I think there is always something which can be improved to make the life of all PhDs a little easier. Additionally, it is quite nice to improve your soft skills and meeting interesting people with an overall small time dedication and effort.



Ebrahim Hamed

AG Hettmer, Kinderklinik

I jumped at the opportunity to be a student representative for some reasons. Many students who pursue a PhD at the Medical faculty are quite far from what happens or going on in the Faculty of Biology. I was trying to serve worthy connections between both and trying to consolidate new ideas. Moreover, I've picked up skills that are not often learned, such as how to motivate people and tackle challenges in a team. During that time, I have met many wonderful people, launched new initiatives, and we tried to improve our PhD Bio Uni-Freiburg.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Quiz night

Join us for a night of fun! Meet new people! Great prizes for the winning teams!

This Friday 19th March, from 6pm

Online. Register [here](#)



Seminars

The first **KTUR** Lunch-Session "From Science to Startup" Thur 18th March 13.30 (online, English)

From SGBM: the first summer school on **Transcription, Epigenetics and early Development (TED course)** July 12-23, 2021. Limited places. [More info](#)



Doc on!

IGBA Outstanding Event for Doctoral Candidates

Friday 16th April, from 10:00-12:00 am via ZOOM. Learn more about the services of the International Graduate Academy and get to know other doctoral candidates?

Registration: before 6th April for this event preferably in HISinOne or via email: kursprogramm@frs.uni-freiburg.de

Summer Semester IGA courses

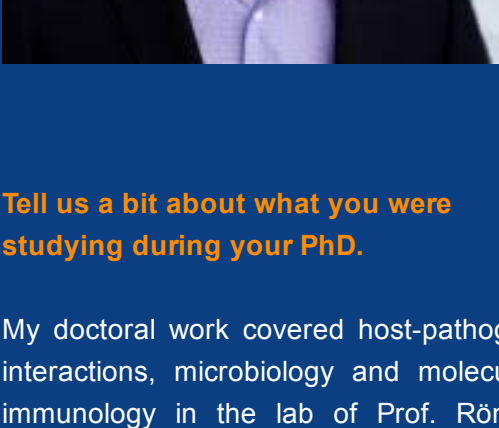
Coming up soon: Registration for International Graduate Academy (IGA) courses. Starts on Monday 22nd March at 2:00pm. Please register for the courses via the campus management

portal HISinOne. More info [here](#)

Events calendar

If you know of interesting seminars/workshops etc that are open to PhDs, we would like to include them in our newsletter. Let us know via email: phd-bio@biologie.uni-freiburg.de

Alumni News: where are they now?



This issue we feature

Dr. Marco Frensch, Medical Advisor and Writer at **Coliquio** and alumnus of CIBSS/BLOSS where he studied the activation mechanisms and responses of B cells.

Tell us a bit about what you were studying during your PhD.

My doctoral work covered host-pathogen interactions, microbiology and molecular immunology in the lab of Prof. Romer (CIBSS/BLOSS). In particular, I studied activation mechanisms and responses of B cells to a bacterial protein.

What was your experience with the job market during/after your PhD?

Lots of frustration in the beginning: What are my chances to succeed in a research career (in or outside academia)? What sacrifices would this involve? Are there other things I enjoy and which I would like to emphasize in the future? What other jobs exist? I started applying for research-associated jobs because this was what I knew, but didn't really feel comfortable with the job ads I found. I then applied for trainee programs in pharma companies because they could have allowed me to experience different branches in a rotation program, but unfortunately didn't land a position. However, with every job I looked up and every conversation I had with friends and family, my view on the job market changed. Other jobs were beginning to spike my interest. When I then prepared my application for my current position, it just felt right. Sure, I was struggling with the question whether I should really leave science, if I would miss research, if I would lose any chance of returning to a research position should I not like my job. However, that job also offered many other aspects that were important to me: A place I liked living at, the prospect of having a family instead of moving from one post-doc position to the next, a focus on research communication and presentation rather than late-night lab work, and the chance to cooperate with many different companies and get to know more job opportunities.

By the way: The whole process of my job search took about a year. This includes starting to look into job descriptions outside academia, taking a first application workshop, drafting my first application and so on for half a year (the frustrating part). The situation became more and more pressing because my girlfriend was applying for jobs, too, and I couldn't ignore the job search any longer (even more frustrating). However, being forced to read through trainee program descriptions and job options, I also started to understand what types of jobs exist (like what the regulatory department in a pharma company does) and what job titles I should be looking out for. In the end, I applied for only a handful of positions, really, but I had drafted many more application letters and CVs before (both underwent huge developments during that time).

Where are you now and what do you do?

I am now a Medical Advisor and Writer for Coliquio, a German medical communication platform based in Konstanz. The position used to be called Medizinredakteur before the company adopted the English job title. Coliquio is a physicians-only platform and has three major divisions: A. common medical news; B. sponsored medical news; and C. a forum for physicians. I work in the second division, in which pharma companies pay to host a so-called info center with articles circling around a particular disease or indication. Some of these articles are product-oriented (that's why the companies are interested to pay), but most articles discuss the disease in a broader context (that's what the physicians are mostly interested in). It's important to point out that Coliquio is not an extended marketing agency for the pharma companies! Instead, our job as medical writers is to review clinical study reports, interviews, case reports etc., understand the information requirements in different areas from surveys and activity analyses, and sum up the important aspects in a compressed, informative, entertaining but scientifically accurate way. So, I read a lot, I talk to people (both company representatives and physicians), and I write and prepare data illustrations. Is my work related to my academic education? Partly. The scientific depth of the articles I write for physicians is nothing compared to the molecular details of my doctoral thesis. However, I first need to understand the disease and treatment background before I can write about it. And I'm currently writing articles for 4 different topics I had not worked on before! I also had to realize that physicians care more about the practical usability of research than whether an enzyme turns this way or that. Some topics go more into molecular details (like oncology), some more into usability (like ADHS). My scientific education is certainly necessary for my job, but I'd say any molecular biology background would fit. The important part is to be curious about medical biology in general, because new company projects will come and others will end.

What message would you like to give to new or current PhD students at the faculty?

If you're like me, you will only gradually understand what you really want (the frustrating and scary part, remember?) => so, the earlier your start to look out and read job posts, the more confident you will become. There are sooo many jobs outside academia I had no idea existed. Also, there are jobs that sounded super boring initially but turned out to be quite interesting (like regulatory and medical approval). Every time I tried to prepare an application letter I learned more, and I also noticed whether I felt comfortable or out of place. Whether the style of my application (cover letter & CV) developed a lot over time. This process may also teach you that you want to pursue a research career after all.

Talk to many people who have already made the transition. Ask them what their jobs are like, whether they miss research or if they found other challenges that are equally motivating. Every conversation will give you new ideas and you'll learn more than job descriptions can teach you!

Don't take all job titles too seriously, because they can differ a lot between companies. "Medical Advisor" is certainly such an example: it can involve many different job profiles and degree requirements depending on the company.

Alumni news

Are you going to graduate soon or know someone who has? We would like to profile recent PhD graduates to inspire and encourage all those who are still in the process of obtaining their PhD. Contact us to see how you can be involved!