

International Max Planck Research School
“The Leipzig School of Human Origins”

PhD Student Guide

General Information

The International Max Planck Research School “The Leipzig School of Human Origins” (LSHO) is a joint PhD program of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (MPI EVA) and Leipzig University (LU). The LSHO teaches PhD students to take an interdisciplinary and integrative approach to the understanding of the evolutionary forces that have shaped the history of humans.

Three faculties of LU (Faculty of Life Sciences; Faculty of Medicine; Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Sciences) and four departments of the MPI EVA and two Max Planck Research Groups (core faculty: Departments of Human Behavior, Ecology, and Culture; Comparative Cultural Psychology; Evolutionary Genetics; Human Evolution) contribute to the LSHO and offer training in four disciplines:

Discipline	Focus
1. Human Behavioral Ecology and Developmental Psychology	focusing on a) the role of culture in human evolution and adaptation, b) early child development and culture, c) processes and architectures of voluntary and involuntary attention, perception, memory, learning, emotion, language and judgement.
2 - Evolutionary and Functional Genomics, Ancient DNA, Molecular Anthropology and Genome Bioinformatics	a) Evolutionary Genomics/Ancient DNA – focusing on the evolutionary and functional genomics of humans and the great apes, as well as the retrieval of DNA from paleontological remains. b) Molecular Anthropology - focusing on the origin, relationships, history, and migration patterns of human populations. c) Genome Bioinformatics - focusing on computational approaches to the management and analysis of gene expression data.
3 - Human Paleontology, Prehistoric Archaeology and Archaeological Science	focusing on the study of hominid fossils and archaeological sites. This includes comparative morphological as well as chemical (isotopic) analyses.

4 - Comparative and Molecular Primatology	focusing on the evolution of social and cultural systems in the great apes, as well as other relevant mammals.

Each LSHO PhD student belongs to one of the four disciplines and is affiliated with a research group either at the MPI EVA or the LU. Throughout their entire PhD studies, however, PhD students are encouraged to take part in seminars and workshops offered by the three other disciplines.

The LSHO is one of ten graduate programs that are embedded in the Graduate Center (GC) “Life Sciences” of the Research Academy Leipzig (RAL). The RAL provides additional networking and coursework opportunities. In addition, LSHO PhD students may benefit from taking part in the transferable skills seminars that RAL offers. URL: <http://www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/forschung/ral/>

Importantly, in the call for application in the fall/winter 2019 for positions starting in 2020, only the following departments and research groups at the MPI EVA or LU participate:

- **Department of Comparative Cultural Psychology, MPI EVA** (Director: Prof. Daniel Haun)
- **Human Behavior, Ecology and Culture, MPI EVA** (Director: Prof. Richard McElreath)
- **Max Planck Research Group “The Cultural Evolution of Reproduction”** (Dr. Heidi Colleran)
- **Behavioral Ecology, LU** (Director: Prof. Anja Widdig)

Curriculum

The interdisciplinary nature of the field of human origins requires PhD students to be educated and trained in a very broad range of topics. The goal of the LSHO is, thus, to provide PhD students with an extensive and comprehensive training while at the same time leaving them with sufficient time for doing research related to their thesis projects.

The core curriculum consists of a set of currently three core seminar weeks (“Perspectives on Human Origins”) which are spread over the academic year and are mandatory for all LSHO PhD students. PhD students are expected to attend the seminar weeks during their first, or in exceptional cases (e.g. field work), during their second year, and to pass a written examination that takes place after each core seminar week.

Furthermore, PhD students are expected to take part and give presentations in group seminars and journal clubs regularly throughout their entire PhD time. In addition, the LSHO offers a selection of supplementary seminars on statistics, programming and transferable skills, e.g. scientific writing and presenting, as well as German courses for PhD students from abroad.

Summary:

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Core Seminar Weeks 1-3	Group seminars Journal clubs	Group seminars Journal clubs
Group seminars Journal clubs	Supplementary seminars	Supplementary seminars
Supplementary seminars		

Year 1

- Core seminar weeks 1-3
 - Core seminar week “Human Evolutionary Ecology and Cultural Evolution”,
 - Core seminar week “Paleoanthropology”,
 - Core seminar week “Functional Genomics and Paleogenomics”
- Department/group seminars
- Department/group journal clubs
- Other supplementary seminars, if applicable

Years 2-3

- Department/group seminars
- Department/group journal clubs
- Other supplementary seminars, if applicable

Credit Points

LSHO PhD students are required to obtain **10 credit points** (ungraded) during their PhD time.

Typically, these credit points will be collected by a) participating in and passing a written examination in each of the core seminar weeks, and by b) attending research seminars/workshops and doing an assignment, e.g. a presentation, practical exercises (problem sets), graded homework, etc.; c) presenting your research at a conference (poster or talk).

Credit points are awarded for:

Task	CP
Attending and passing one written examination per core seminar week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60h including 30h of course time per core seminar week problem sets written examination 	1 CP
Presenting your work at a conference (poster or talk) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> national conference international conference 	1 CP 2 CP
Attending and presenting your work in research seminars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seminar must comprise 30h including 15h of course time presentation 	1 CP
Attending and presenting your work in workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> workshop must comprise 30h including 15h of course time presentation, problem sets or homework 	1 CP
Giving a talk outside the MPI/LU	1 CP
Attending classes at Leipzig University which include an assignment (i.e. presentation, written examination, etc.)	1 CP (up to 3 CP in total)
Receiving a scientific award	1 CP (once)

Please note:

- All IMPRS LSHO PhD students are expected to take part in and give presentations in their respective department's/group's seminars and journal clubs regularly during their entire PhD time (even if they have already collected 10 credit points).
- PhD students are encouraged to take part in supplementary courses and workshops that are organized by the IMPRS LSHO, the MPI EVA, the Research Academy Leipzig or other institutions.

Faculty

Speaker: Prof. Dr. Svante Pääbo, MPI, leipzig-school@eva.mpg.de

Vice speaker: Prof. Dr. Anja Widdig, LU, leipzig-school@eva.mpg.de

Discipline 1

Prof. Dr. Anja Widdig (LU)

Dr. Federica Amici (LU)

Dr. Catherine Crockford (MPI)

Dr. Martha Robbins (MPI)

Dr. Brigitte Schlögl (LU)

Prof. Dr. Marc Schönwiesner (LU)
Dr. Linda Vigilant (MPI)
Dr. Roman Wittig (MPI)

Discipline 2

Prof. Dr. Svante Pääbo (MPI)
Prof. Dr. Torsten Schöneberg (LU)
Prof. Dr. Peter F. Stadler (LU)
Prof. Dr. Mark Stoneking (MPI)
Dr. Janet Kelso (MPI)
Dr. Matthias Meyer (MPI)
Dr. Benjamin Peter (MPI)

Discipline 3

Prof. Dr. Jean-Jacques Hublin (MPI)
Dr. Sarah Freidline (MPI)
Dr. Philipp Gunz (MPI)
Dr. Tracy Kivell (MPI/Uni Kent)
Dr. Bernd Kromer (MPI/CEZ)
Dr. Tobias Lauer (MPI)
Dr. Adeline Le Cabec (MPI)
Dr. Shannon McPherron (MPI)
Dr. Stephanie Melillo (MPI)
Dr. Simon Neubauer (MPI)
Dr. Matthew Skinner (MPI/Uni Kent)
Dr. Sahra Talamo (MPI)

Discipline 4

Prof. Dr. Richard McElreath
Prof. Dr. Daniel Haun
Prof. Dr. Erich Schröger
Dr. Bret Beheim
Dr. John Bunce
Dr. Heidi Colleran
Dr. Lauren Fogarty
Dr. Anne Kandler
Dr. Elspeth Ready

Coordination

Coordination of the LSHO is distributed between:

Sabrina Walter (sabrina_walter@eva.mpg.de)

Administrative framework

- general information about the program,
- advertising and inviting applications for the LSHO,
- helping the applicants throughout the application process,

- collecting, sorting and distributing applications to the research groups,
- informing PhD students about new seminars and workshops by e-mail,
- informing PhD students about administrative formalities,
- issuing course certificates/transcripts of records.

Rocco Buchholz (buchholz@eva.mpg.de)

International Office

- guidelines for visa application,
- support for spouses and children of PhD students,
- housing in Leipzig,
- registration at the local registration office,
- visa extension procedure and contacts with the foreigners office,
- liaison officer for PhD students who experience problems, e.g. due to discrimination or racism.

Julia Cissewski, Behavioral Ecology (cissewski@eva.mpg.de)

Viola Mittag, Genetics (mittag@eva.mpg.de)

Silke Streiber, Human Evolution (streiber@eva.mpg.de)

Day-to-day PhD student support

- introducing new PhD students to the way the department or group works and to administrative processes,
- providing support with administrative paperwork,
- informing PhD students about health insurance in Germany, preparing the necessary paperwork together with the PhD students,
- booking accommodation and transportation for PhD students who do field work and/or attend meetings, conferences and workshops in Germany or abroad,
- guiding PhD students through the process of registering at a faculty at LU (or another university) and the process preceding the submission and defense of the thesis.

Viola Gruendemann (viola.gruendemann@uni-leipzig.de)

Link to the Research Academy Leipzig and the GC "Life Sciences" of the LU

- providing information about the Research Academy Leipzig and the Graduate Center "Life Sciences" by e-mail,
- providing updates on transferable skills courses the Research Academy offers.

Furthermore, the IT, multimedia and library groups of the MPI EVA support PhD students in their daily work by providing the necessary IT infrastructure, library workstations, etc. and by helping with the layout and print of posters.

PhD Student Representatives

Please contact your PhD student representatives with your ideas and suggestions for additional supplementary seminars or topics for the PhD lecture series that may be of interest for many PhD students.

- Julia van Beesel (Human Evolution, MPI): julia_van@eva.mpg.de
- Anne-Céline Granjon (Primateology, MPI): celine_granjon@eva.mpg.de
- Leonardo Iasi (Evolutionary Genetics, MPI): leonardo_iasi@eva.mpg.de
- Ilaria Pretelli (Human Behavior, Ecology, and Culture, MPI): ilaria_pretelli@eva.mpg.de
- External PhD Representative is Han Tran (Human Behavior, Ecology, and Culture, MPI): han_tran@eva.mpg.de

To contact all MPI EVA PhD representatives at once you may send an e-mail to phd_representatives@eva.mpg.de

Supervision

In addition to the day-to-day supervision, PhD students typically have a Thesis Advisory Committee which consists of the leader of the group in which most of the thesis work is being carried out and two other advisors who guide the student during thesis work.

Irrespective of whether the thesis work is being carried out predominantly at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (MPI EVA) or Leipzig University (LU) one of the three thesis advisors is a Professor at LU responsible for awarding the PhD degree, another one of the thesis advisors is a group leader at the MPI EVA.

If a PhD student is registered at another university through which he/she is going to obtain his/her degree one of the three thesis advisors is a Professor at that other university. After three to six months PhD students typically prepare a written initial report of their thesis project and discuss it with their supervisors. At the end of each year of the thesis PhD students report on their work by giving a seminar within the context of their respective department's seminar series.

Financial Support

PhD students who are affiliated with a group at the MPI EVA are supported with a PhD contract ("Max Planck support contract") or, in exceptional cases, within the context of a third-party project. PhD students who are affiliated with a group at the LU are typically supported with a PhD contract provided by the LU or within the context of a third-party project.

MPI EVA PhD contracts:

Funding can be awarded for a total of three years. An extension for a fourth year can be granted by the director of the department the PhD student is affiliated with. An extension for a fifth year can only be granted by the directors of the MPI EVA (in the directors' meeting) and requires a written application. Reasons for an extension include:

- long-term breakdown of laboratory and special equipment,
- detrimental effects of the weather on outdoor experiments,
- disturbances during the observation of animals,
- learning of an unusual foreign language is absolutely imperative,
- time-consuming field research etc.
- unexpected developments in the respective research field, such as new scientific findings, for example, a new legal situation which, for scientific reasons, requires a longer processing time,
- additional, particularly time-consuming duties within the framework of a graduate program,
- management function in the PhD-Net.

Please note: Before applying for an extension for a fifth year with the directors meeting, PhD students are expected to ask their main supervisor for approval.

PhD students in LU groups:

PhD students who are affiliated with a research group at the LU, please contact their main supervisor at the LU with questions regarding financial support in general and financial support in case they need to interrupt the research on their thesis project in particular.

Criteria for a Successful Program Participation and Graduation

Each LSHO PhD student joins a research group and composes his/her thesis proposal shortly after joining the PhD program. PhD students collect and analyze the data necessary for their thesis project. In regular intervals of time PhD students discuss their progress with the supervisor/s and other members of the research group and present the research on their project to the research group and, if applicable, at international conferences.

Furthermore, LSHO PhD students obtain 10 graded credit points during their PhD time. They attend the currently three core seminar weeks and pass a written examination after each course week. PhD students participate and present their research in department, group or lab seminars and journal clubs. Supplementary seminars on transferable skills, statistics, programming and other key skills are also offered and PhD students are encouraged to attend.

At the Faculty of Life Sciences of Leipzig University PhD students compose a dissertation that is monographic or cumulative. The latter comprises a summary and an introductory chapter that explains the context of (at least) two publications that the respective PhD student is the first author of. Both publications must have been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal by

the time the thesis is submitted. If there is more than one author, each author has to state and sign for his/her contribution to the study. PhD students may also choose to compose a monographic dissertation incorporating unpublished papers. The PhD commission, consisting of an MPI EVA director or LU Professor (head of the commission) and four commission members, evaluates the defense (30-minute-presentation and discussion).

The requirements and rules for submitting and defending the thesis differ slightly from faculty to faculty and from university to university. The PhD degree is awarded to the PhD student by the university he/she is registered at. Typically, PhD students will obtain their degree from the LU where they are awarded one of the titles 'PhD', 'Dr. rer. nat.' or 'Dr. phil.'. Under some circumstances PhD students may be registered at and obtain their degree through a different university.

(as of: September 30, 2019)