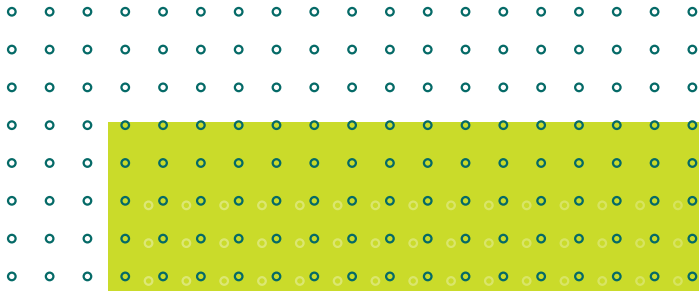



**IMPRS**  
of Marine Microbiology  
INTERNATIONAL MAX PLANCK  
RESEARCH SCHOOL



**PHD NAVIGATOR  
OF  
IMPRS MARMIC**





**„AN EXPERIMENT IS A QUESTION WHICH SCIENCE POSES TO NATURE, AND A MEASUREMENT IS THE RECORDING OF NATURE’S ANSWER.“**

**MAX PLANCK**

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## **VERSION**

Version as at 12.02.2025

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# O The International Max Planck Research School of Marine Micro- biology (IMPRS MARMIC) and the MarMic Coordination Office

## A warm welcome from the MarMic Coordination Office

### MarMic Coordination Office:

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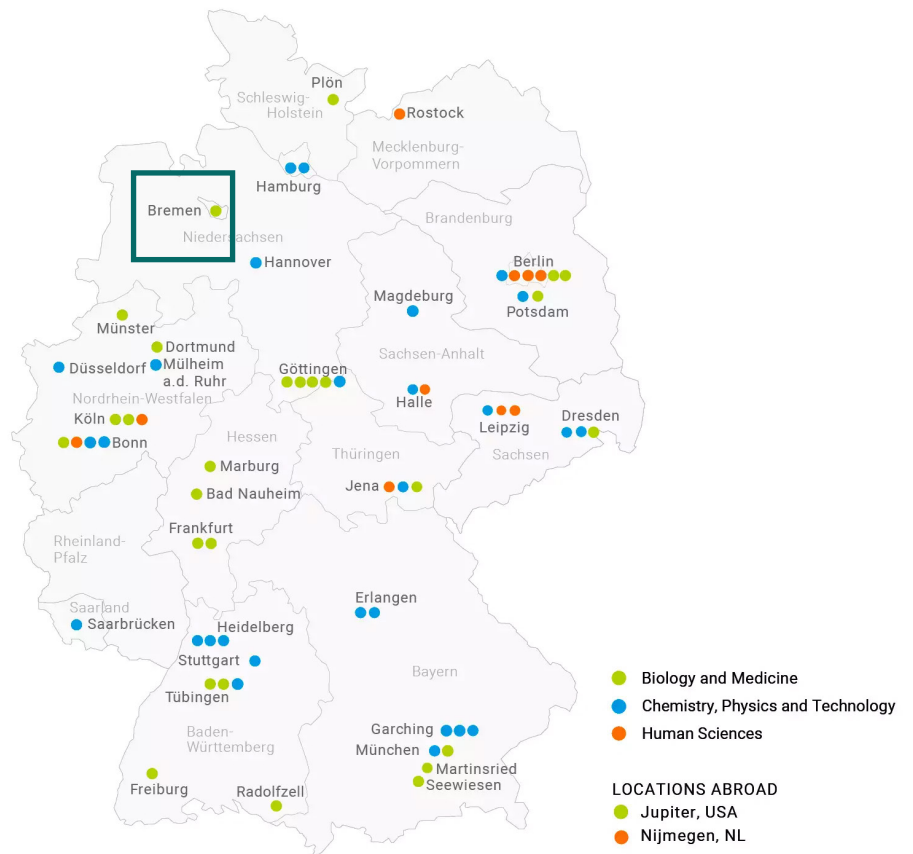
Welcome to the International Max Planck Research School (IMPRS) of Marine Microbiology (MarMic)! As your dedicated MarMic Coordination Office, we are thrilled to extend a warm welcome to all new MSc and PhD students embarking on their academic journey with us. Led by Dr. Christiane Glöckner, Dr. Tim Richter-Heitmann, and assisted by Dr. Laura Zeugner, our team is committed to supporting you every step of the way. We understand that starting your MSc or PhD is both a challenging and rewarding endeavor. This brochure is designed to help you navigate the process. However, our doors are always open, whether you have questions about the curriculum, need guidance, or seek opportunities to enhance your academic development.

The IMPRS MarMic is a joint training program of the Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology in Bremen (MPI-MM) together with the University of Bremen (Uni HB), the Constructor University Bremen (CUB), and the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Center for Polar and Marine Research (AWI) in Bremerhaven. MarMic has now been running since 2002, as a combined MSc/PhD program, offering the opportunity to obtain a doctoral degree within 4.5 years (Fig 1). The curriculum and training are highly interdisciplinary, with topics ranging from oceanography, molecular ecology, biogeochemistry, microbiology to symbiosis and bioinformatics.

Almost one third of the faculty and more than half of the students come from outside Germany. Therefore, the common language within MarMic and the MPI is English to ensure an integrative atmosphere. The core doctoral curriculum also ensures that students are well integrated into the local scientific and cultural community. Our vibrant academic community at MarMic and the MPI-MM fosters collaboration, innovation, and intellectual curiosity, creating a dynamic space for exploration and discovery.

At IMPRS MarMic and MPI-MM, our core values serve as the foundation of our academic community. We believe in fostering an environment where each individual is treated with respect, integrity, and honesty. As such, we prioritize transparent and respectful communication, both within our Insti-

Fig. 1:  
 You are now at one of many excellent International Max Planck Research Schools (IMPRS) in Germany, highlighting the collaborative network available to you as a PhD student within the Max Planck Society



tute and graduate program, and in our interactions with the broader academic community. We expect all of us to uphold these core values and to reflect the principles of the Max Planck Society in our actions (see MPS Code of Conduct: <https://www.mpg.de/14172230/code-of-conduct.pdf>). By adhering to these principles, we collectively contribute to a culture of excellence, collaboration and mutual respect that enriches the academic experience for all members of our community. As you embark on this exciting chapter of your academic journey, we encourage you to take full advantage of all that the IMPRS MarMic program has to offer. Explore new horizons, forge meaningful connections with fellow scholars, and embrace the spirit of discovery that defines our Institute. We're delighted to have you join our community and look forward to supporting you in achieving your professional goals.

Christiane, Laura and Tim

### MarMic partnering institutions



Universität  
Bremen



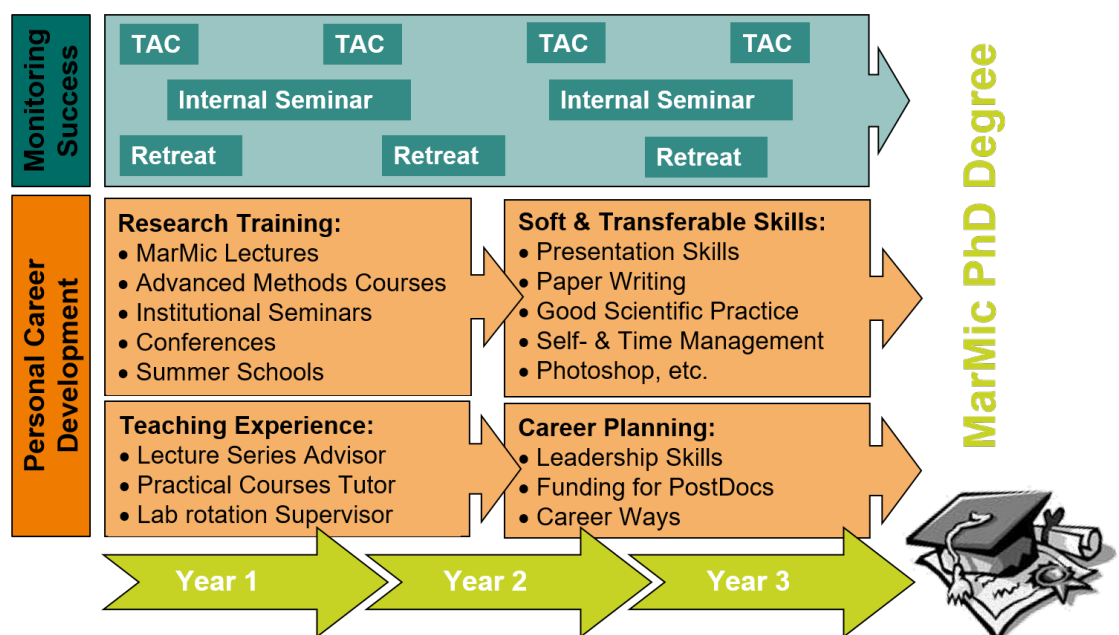
# 1 What you can expect from the MarMic PhD program

The MarMic doctoral program is designed to equip the PhD candidates with an in-depth and English-based education and research experience in the field of marine microbiology. The modular design of the doctoral program encourages PhD students to follow their own personal career plans, but also guarantees a high-quality education through mandatory monitoring elements like meetings with their Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC), the annual retreat and presentations of their research progress during MPI seminars.

While pursuing PhD research at MPI is the core focus, it is equally important to acquire additional skills to be fully prepared for the next career steps, both within and outside the scientific community. MarMic's training and supervision model prepares its students for competitive scientific, professional careers at the international level in and outside of academia. Professional development beyond research projects is attained through various course offers: soft skill training, scientific workshops, career development and opportunities to teach and mentor. This comprehensive development ensures that you are well-equipped to navigate diverse professional paths and opportunities.

Fig. 2: Success monitoring during your PhD and the tools for your career development.

## Educational life of a MarMic PhD student



# THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) & DOCTORAL SUPERVISION

Supervision in MarMic involves direct, primary supervision by a faculty member and additional supervision by postdocs or senior scientists that are experts to the research field. They form the Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC), which is appointed soon after the start of the PhD thesis and consists of 3-5 members of at least two different research fields. The TAC is an essential part of the PhD thesis supervision to monitor the scientific progress of the doctoral thesis, give advice to improve research strategies and provide expertise and suggestions for individual training and career development. Try to plan the first TAC within six months after starting your PhD project and then to implement them at least annually. Keep in mind that it is YOUR responsibility to organize the TAC meetings with guidance from the supervisor. At the end of your PhD thesis, four such TAC meetings should have been held.

TAC meetings are closed to the public to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence in which the members of the TAC and the candidate can openly discuss questions and concerns about the candidate's research. At each TAC meeting, at least ten minutes in the end need to be allocated during which the primary supervisor(s) is/are absent, to discuss issues that the candidate does not feel comfortable discussing in front of their primary supervisor(s).

The students are responsible for writing a protocol of each TAC meeting. They should describe the proceedings, outline agreed actions, and list unresolved concerns. The protocol must be approved by the TAC, and the final version together with a PDF-copy of the research presentation shown during the TAC need to be uploaded to your PhD studybook on the MarMic Intranet ([https://marmic.mpg.de/marmic2/marmic\\_cms2/internal\\_studybook.php](https://marmic.mpg.de/marmic2/marmic_cms2/internal_studybook.php)).

Please find detailed information on, e.g. setting up your Thesis Advisory Committee, its meeting structure and scope in our "MarMic Guidelines for Thesis Advisory Committees" in Appendix 1.

## DOCTORAL AGREEMENT

The doctoral agreement outlines the expectations, responsibilities, and commitments between the doctoral candidate and their advisor(s).

This agreement is crucial for several reasons:

- It clarifies mutual expectations and rights/obligations of both parties.
- It helps avoid misunderstandings by establishing a clear framework for the research process.
- It ensures regular communication and feedback on research progress.
- It provides a basis for addressing potential conflicts or issues that may arise.
- It helps set realistic timelines and goals for completing the doctoral degree.

By formalizing the supervisory relationship, the doctoral agreement promotes transparency, accountability and effective collaboration throughout the PhD journey. It serves as a roadmap for both the student and supervisor, contributing to a more structured and successful doctoral experience.

As mandatory part of your first TAC meeting you have to finalize your doctoral agreement and to upload the signed document to the PhD Studybook. A draft version is enclosed as Appendix 2.



## REQUIREMENTS FOR A MARMIC PHD

THEESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE	Meeting ideally every 9-12 months (minimum of 4)
RESEARCH LECTURES / INTERNAL SEMINAR	1 at beginning of PhD 1 towards end of PhD
SUPERVISION OF LAB ROTATIONS	3 offers in total 1 - 2 lab rotations held
ASSISTANCE IN PRACTICAL COURSES	Minimum of 2 weeks
TUTOR IN LECTURE SERIES	Minimum of 3 weeks
SCIENTIFIC WORKSHOPS	Minimum of 2 courses
SOFT SKILL TRAINING	Minimum of 3 courses

## PRESENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

MarMic students are actively engaged in the weekly MPI seminars in all aspects – as listeners, presenters and conveners. It is mandatory for all MarMic doctoral students to attend and to give **two oral presentations of their research**. The first formal presentation takes place after approximately 12 months and the emphasis of the talk is on the research goals of the student for their doctoral thesis. Towards the end of the PhD thesis, they give their second presentation that describes their research results and prepares the students for their thesis defense. You can invite your TAC members to the presentation and use it as the status update/ progress report for your TAC and then meet after the talk to discuss the progress and problems that may have arisen.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Acquiring teaching skills is an essential aspect in the MarMic education to qualify the doctoral candidates for their next career steps. Students gain these skills by giving **tutorials (3 weeks)** and acting as teaching assistants in **practical courses (2 weeks)** in the MarMic MSc program. The MarMic MSc program is an unique fast-track program, which is mostly run in and by the MPI. Thus, about 10 - 15 internal master students will be present at any given time. The lab rotations, which form one of the cornerstones of the MSc program, are designed and supervised by PhD students. **1-2 lab rotation supervisions** are mandatory and offer an unparalleled chance to mentor MSc students over a six week period in experiment design, methods, data analysis and presentation skills. Advanced PhD students are also encouraged to propose and lead methods courses for their peers.

## SCIENTIFIC LECTURES

Students with non-MarMic MSc degrees are encouraged to participate in selected MarMic MSc lectures and tutorials. The accompanying slides are available on the MarMic Intranet.

## SCIENTIFIC WORKSHOPS

To advance the methodological skill set scientific workshops are offered. **At least two courses** of them have to be attended throughout the PhD.

Topics include

- programming
- image analysis
- chemical analytics
- handling high-end instrumentation.

The PhD representatives usually organize a set of scientific courses to transfer knowledge within the MPI-MM and MarMic partnering institutes. These workshops are often led by advanced doctoral students, younger postdocs and group leaders.

## SOFT SKILLS AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

MarMic offers a series of transferable skill courses for the personal and professional development of doctoral students. Students must take **at least three courses** in topics such as

- presentation and communication
- basic and advanced scientific writing
- time management
- leadership skills.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

MarMic PhD students have the chance to envision perspectives and career paths inside and outside academia by participating in job fairs and alumni meetings. Every two months the online seminar series “Career insights online” is offered for marine early career scientists on the MSc, PhD and postdoc level. During this seminar series, the alumni of the Marine Graduate Schools in Bremen, Bremerhaven, and Oldenburg give an inside view into their current job field, application strategies, salary expectations, work-life balance, etc.

To prepare students for their next career step, MarMic also offers courses on application training or funding possibilities.



Fig. 3:  
MarMic students and  
faculty at the retreat in  
Visselhövede in 2023

## ANNUAL RETREAT

MarMic events combine science with educational and social aspects, such as poster presentations, a mini-symposium on lab rotation results, and **the annual 2-day MarMic Retreat**. During talks, final year doctoral students summarize the work they did in the MarMic framework and additionally, faculty members give insights into current marine research topics. All other doctoral students present their progress in a poster session, discussing the research with their peers and the MarMic faculty. For several years now, prizes have been awarded for the best lecture, the best practical course and the best tutors based on the students' evaluations of lectures and courses.

## CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

In addition to talks held at the MPI, students are strongly encouraged to participate in national and international meetings at least once a year, where they present their work either as a poster or as an oral presentation.

The IMPRS MarMic can provide dedicated travel funds, offering doctoral students in certain cases financial assistance to support their attendance at academic conferences.

## GERMAN CLASSES

Free German language courses are available for MPI-MM members, jointly organized by the MPI-MM, ZMT, and MARUM. Course schedules and levels are available on the MPI-MM intranet (search for ‚language classes‘, ‚Sprachkurs‘, or ‚Deutschkurs‘ in the maxnet).

The A1.1 course for absolute beginners must be attended from the beginning, while other levels can be joined at any time. If you know your level, you can simply attend the appropriate class. For further information or questions, please reach out to Dr. Anke Meyerdierks (ameyerdi@mpi-bremen.de).

## FURTHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Besides courses in-house, you can also participate in training offers from the **MPS Planck Academy** within the learning platform LMS:

<https://max.mpg.de/Career/Planck-Academy/Pages/Digital-Learning.aspx>

In addition, MarMic members have full access to courses offered at the Helmholtz Graduate School for POLar and MARine Research (POLMAR), the Bremen International Graduate School of Marine Sciences (GLOMAR), and the Graduate School Science and Technology (OLTECH) at the University of Oldenburg. Search the links below to find the right offer for you!

**BYRD/University of Bremen:**

<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/byrd>

**Data Train:**

<https://www.bremen-research.de/data-train/>

**MARUM:**

<https://www.marum.de/en/research-training/career-development.html>

**University of Oldenburg:**

<https://uol.de/en/graduate-academy/courses>

**ZMT Academy:**

<https://www.leibniz-zmt.de/en/work-study/zmt-academy.html>

---

# 2 You as a MarMic PhD student – start, study, document, stay connected

The IMPRS program welcomes doctoral candidates through two pathways: either as a continuation from the MSc program or through direct entry at the PhD level, for which they either applied through MarMic or have been project-recruited on a specific research topic. Regardless of your entry point, all MPI-MM PhD candidates are required to apply via the MarMic online application tool, making this process mandatory for everyone joining our research community.

As soon as you have started your PhD, contact the PhD coordinator Dr. Christiane Glöckner (cgloeckn@mpi-bremen.de) and make an appointment with her to find out about:

- the MarMic PhD program and all the exciting upcoming events
- the registration of your PhD topic at the University in order to obtain your doctoral title (see section ?add interactive link!)
- access to the MarMic Intranet with lots of useful information.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION AT THE MARMIC INTRANET

The MarMic Coordination Office collects all important information about the program on its webpages and the MarMic Intranet:

<https://marmic.mpg.de/marmic2/>

Under the section Life & Science in Bremen, you find a lot of information of how to get started and settled in Bremen. A download of the latest version of the Max Planck Society booklet “Living and working in Germany: A guide for international guest researchers” is also available.

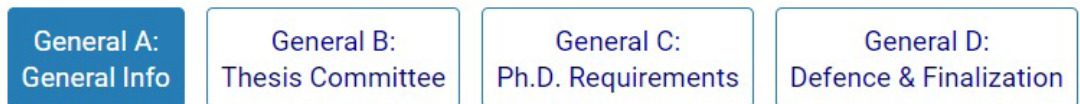
If you log into the internal section with your email address and password that you have created when first meeting with Christiane, you will have access to even more information about how to get started, your PhD and events.

For example, check out the folder: MarMic general > Get started. Amongst other topics, you will find information about the health system in- and outside Germany, salary and liability insurance.

## YOUR PHD STUDYBOOK

Within the MarMic Intranet, you also gain access to your PhD Studybook. Whenever you have accomplished one of your PhD requirements, you must update your PhD Studybook accordingly.

When you first enter the “PhD Studybook” section, immediately check the box that you have been accepted into a PhD program at the very top of the studybook page.



In Section A, you need to fill in your personal information, direct advisor(s), and general information about your thesis and registration. Section B is about your Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) and its meetings. In Section C, you have to record all of the doctoral requirements you have completed so far, as well as information about your attendance at conferences, field trips, and other electives. In Section D you need to record the final composition of your Thesis Defense Committee, as well as information about your completed thesis, defense, and (co-)authorships. In order to stay in touch after you have successfully completed your PhD, it is also very important that you provide an e-mail address that is used independently of the institute.

## THE MARMIC PHD CERTIFICATE

After you have finished your PhD, you will receive a MarMic PhD certificate that is based on what you have written in the PhD studybook profile. The PhD certificate is your Transcript of Records (ToR) for the IMPRS MarMic and documents your accomplishments during your PhD studies (courses, workshops, conferences, soft skills, teaching and student supervision, etc.). It also contains information about the MarMic program structure and regulations. Keeping your PhD studybook up to date ensures that you can track your progress and that the coordination office can give you the certificate in a quick and efficient manner soon after you finish.

## MARMIC ALUMNI NETWORK

Over its many years of operation, MarMic seeks deeper engagement with its exceptional network of alumni. MarMic has produced a diverse community of graduates who have pursued careers in academia, industry, science management, conservation, and beyond. The anchor of MarMic’s alumni concept is the personal contact between alumni and current students in formats such as alumni meetings, career fairs or the online seminar series “Career insights online”.

The LinkedIn group “MarMic network of alumni and active students” allows you to keep contact with former class mates, find out about their personal careers after leaving MarMic, get job offers or advertise open positions to current MarMics or introduce your job field.

Join the group on LinkedIn with this QR code:





# 3 Earning your PhD degree – mandatory formalities at university

To earn a doctoral degree in Germany, you must be formally accepted as a PhD candidate at a university. The Max Planck Society or its International Max Planck Research Schools are not allowed to award scientific degrees such as PhD, MSc or BSc. Depending on the affiliation of your main supervisor the entitling unit might either be the University of Bremen (Uni HB) or Constructor University Bremen (CUB).

## PHD CANDIDATE AT UNIVERSITY BREMEN

*In case you have more questions, you can also contact the respective office of the doctoral commission:*

**FB2:**  
Frauke Ernst  
+49 421 218 62802  
fernst@uni-bremen.de

**FB5:**  
Alicja Ostrowski  
+49 421 218 65013  
alicja.ostrowski@vw.uni-bremen.de

### Registration of PhD topic and acceptance as doctoral student

The registration procedure is explained in the doctoral degree regulations (“Promotionsordnung”) of the respective faculty at the department of Biology and Chemistry (FB2) or Geoscience (FB5). The latest documents required for acceptance can be found on the homepages listed below.

<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/fb2/organization/doctoral-studies>

<https://www.geo.uni-bremen.de/page.php?pageid=429&langid=EN>

### List of main documents:

- CV
- documentation of previous university degree diplomas and transcripts (for foreign degrees please see below)
- description of doctoral project with work and time schedule
- statement of supervisor confirming scientific support, financial aid and availability of lab and office space
- survey for statistics on doctoral candidates

Please complete the survey for statistics on doctoral candidates at the University of Bremen. You will automatically receive an e-mail with a copy of your answers. Please include this copy with your application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate and submit it to the relevant doctoral commission.

---

Unfortunately only a few information is available in English. Therefore we strongly recommend that you make an appointment with the PhD coordinator Dr. Christiane Glöckner to go through the documents in detail.

Be aware of the strict deadlines for handing in the documents for acceptance as PhD student which are two months for FB2 and one year for FB5!

## **Recognition of Foreign Academic Certificates for Doctoral Students**

Educational certificates from outside of Germany have to be officially recognized for admission to doctoral studies. If you hold an international MSc degree, please contact the PhD coordinator Dr. Christiane Glöckner. She will pre-check all required documents and help you with all organizational issues including financial support to get your degrees recognized.

Further details about what you need to bring along can be found here:

<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/studies/orientation-application/enrollment-as-a-doctoral-student/recognition-of-foreign-academic-certificates-for-doctoral-students>

## **Submission of your PhD thesis, your PhD defense committee and defense date**

At your last TAC meeting, the final timeline, thesis structure and the thesis defense is determined.

After 3-4 years of research you need to present your results to the PhD defense committee. Therefore you need to submit a printed version of your PhD Thesis. Dissertations are commonly written in cumulative form and consist of thematically complementary articles published in international journals.

The regulations of how to submit your PhD thesis at the Uni HB can be found in the doctoral regulation ("Promotionsordnung") of the respective faculty of Biology and Chemistry (FB2) or Geoscience (FB5):

<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/fb2/organization/doctoral-studies>

<https://www.geo.uni-bremen.de/page.php?pageid=885&langid=EN>

If you have any questions regarding the process, the details of submission or the members of your PhD defense committee, speak to your main supervisor first and then with the PhD coordinator Dr. Christiane Glöckner.

## **Exemplary check list for finishing your PhD within FB2 at Uni HB**

### ***Invite reviewers (Gutachter )***

Two reviewers evaluate the written thesis (PromO section 8, one may be your supervisor) and three are necessary if your thesis is recommended for a "summa cum laude".

### ***Invite 6 members for your PhD defense committee (Promotionsverteidigungsausschuss) and set the date for your defense***



---

The PhD defense committee evaluates the oral defense and contains four voting members (who must hold a doctoral degree) and two non-voting members:

- The chair of the committee must be a university professor from FB2, but cannot be the supervisor or one of the reviewers.
- Two must be professor or associate professor from FB2 at Uni HB (<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/fb2/organization/teaching-staff>) The chair is generally one of these two.
- The other two members could be your supervisor and reviewer, etc.
- Two non-voting members representing staff and students of Uni HB, one must be either a current BSc or MSc student (for example a MarMic MSc student), the other can be a PhD student or other scientific staff

Remember to book the auditorium for your defense on the reservation system in MaxNet!

### **Contact FB2 administration**

The person handling the thesis submission is Ms Frauke Ernst (fernst@uni-bremen.de). Suggestion: Have a first meeting to check that you have all the required documents and that your choice on reviewers and commission members is feasible, and then schedule an appointment to hand in the thesis.

### **Print and submit your thesis**

Download the following forms from FB2 webpage (<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/fb2/organization/doctoral-studies>):

- Setting up examination committee
- Approval and appointment of reviewers
- Affirmation in lieu of oath (has to be bound in each copy of the thesis, usually at the end, and signed)

Please keep in mind that if you want the MPI-MM to pay for the printing of your PhD thesis you need to get an eProcurement approval **before** you go to the printing shop. The TAs in your group or department know how to create a shopping cart if you tell them how many pages your thesis will approximately have and how many printed versions you need. It's best to get this eProcurement approval about three weeks before you are planning to print since the approval from your group leader or department head might need some days to be confirmed. Then, make an appointment with the printing shop to print and bind the thesis. You'll need printed and bound copies of your thesis in A4 format, one for each member of the examination committee and the reviewers, and additionally one copy for the FB2 administration. (To be on the safe side, print one extra.)

### **What to submit**

Make an appointment with Ms Ernst to submit the following:

- Printed and bound copies for all examination committee members, the reviewers and one extra for the administration office
- 1 CD/USB stick with PDF version of your thesis, in an envelope, attached to the inside back cover of one of the above printed copies.

- The forms “Setting up examination committee” and “Approval and appointment of reviewers”

When you submit, she will check that all the forms are filled out correctly and signed, and stamp and sign each copy of the thesis. She will retain one copy (containing the CD) for the administration and distribute the other copies.

### **PhD defense**

When you submit the thesis you should already have agreed on a date for the defense with the prospective examination board. Two weeks before the defense, the FB2 administration will send an email to you, the examination board, the doctoral committee, and the faculty of FB2 announcing the defense, stating that your thesis and its reviews are available for public viewing. You can view the reviews in person during their office hours.

Also remember to:

- Book the auditorium for your defense on the reservation system in MaxNet
- Check that the projection equipment, computer, etc. are working properly, and that your presentation looks the same on the PC there as on your own computer.

The defense consists of a presentation of your main results that may last half an hour, and a question and answer session, which may last up to an hour.

### **Earning your doctoral degree**

Without the official publication of your PhD thesis you will not get your final PhD degree and you will not be allowed to call yourself a PhD/ Dr. rer. nat.

After the defense the examination committee may request that specific parts of the thesis have to be revised. According to PromO section 12 para. 2, changes have to be recorded in a list that is signed by you and the chair of the examination commission.

Make an appointment with the printing shop and give them your thesis as PDF on a USB stick. Final print versions should be either A4 or A5 format. It is tradition to print a few extra copies for supervisors, colleagues, friends, etc. Give the printers information on whether there are any color pages within the thesis and whether you want a special cover. If you tell them the number of pages, the printing shop staff can estimate the thickness of the spine. They can also tell you the dimensions for the cover, and you can email the design afterwards when it is ready. The number of copies you need to supply depends on the format of publication, and are specified in the PromO section 12 para. 1.

There are several ways to submit the thesis to the university library SuUB, but the one chosen most often is the electronic submission: For this „E-Publishing“, follow the instructions on the library webpage: <https://suub.uni-bremen.de/home-english/refworks-and-publishing/publishing-documents/publishing-digital-dissertations/>. After you uploaded the file, the library will check that the file format is correctly converted to PDF/A format and you will receive an email notification telling you to hand in the printed copy when it is ready.

After the physical copies are printed, make an appointment with Mr. Kaum at the SuUB library to deposit the thesis and the signed declaration that you can download from the library website. He will give you another signed form, stating that the library has received the archive copy of your dissertation.

To receive your doctoral degree certificate (Urkunde) from the university, you'll need to hand in this confirmation from the library that you have deposited your thesis to Frau Ernst at the FB2 administration. She will notify you by email when your certificate is ready. This may take some time (weeks to months), as the certificate has to be signed by various university officials.

*Remember to get the eProcurement approval **before** printing the final version of your thesis!*

*In case you have more questions, you can contact Mr. Heiko Kaum at the SuUB library:*

*+49 421 218  
59476/59485  
kaum@suub.uni-  
bremen.de*

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# PHD STUDENT AT CONSTRUCTOR UNIVERSITY BREMEN (CUB)

If you have further questions, you can reach out to Dr. Svenja Frischholz:

sfrischhol@constructor.university

Once you apply for a PhD at CUB by filling out the web form on there are some documents you need to have at the ready but the web form walks you through it and you can save and come back later to fill in gaps.

## Enrolling as a PhD Student at Constructor University Bremen

PhD students must register and must remain enrolled at Constructor University throughout their PhD studies. To enroll as a PhD student at Constructor University Bremen, follow these steps:

### **Application and Admission:**

Review **the admission and enrollment policy** to understand eligibility criteria, required documentation, and deadlines: [https://constructor.university/sites/default/files/2023-08/Admission\\_Enrollment\\_Policy%20v2.4.pdf](https://constructor.university/sites/default/files/2023-08/Admission_Enrollment_Policy%20v2.4.pdf)

Submit an **online application** with necessary documents including academic transcripts, a CV, and your PhD proposal: <https://constructor.university/admission-aid/application-information-graduate>

After initial approval, applicants must pass an oral examination.

### **Forming the Dissertation Committee:**

Once admitted, establish a dissertation committee comprised of faculty members and external experts as described in detail in **the PhD policies**: <https://constructor.university/student-life/student-services/registrar-services/phd-students>

### **PhD Proposal:**

Prepare a detailed PhD proposal in English, adhering to **specific formatting guidelines** that can be found here: <https://constructor.university/student-life/student-services/registrar-services/phd-students>

This proposal must be publicly presented and approved by the dissertation committee **latest nine months after enrollment into the PhD program**

### **Submitting the PhD Thesis**

Follow **the rules and regulations** ([https://constructor.university/sites/default/files/2023-01/PhD\\_Policies\\_v1.5.pdf](https://constructor.university/sites/default/files/2023-01/PhD_Policies_v1.5.pdf)) to ensure your thesis meets all formatting and content requirements. The document must be in English and include all necessary sections as stipulated by the university.

Submit the required number of printed copies of your thesis to the Registrar's Office. An electronic copy must also be uploaded as per the university guidelines.

### **PhD thesis defense and publication**

Schedule your thesis defense, which is a public event where you present your research findings.

After a successful defense, publish your thesis within one year to receive your diploma.

## PHD CERTIFICATE FROM IMPRS MARMIC

While MarMic rules and regulations do not supersede the rights and duties of the affiliated universities with regards to examinations and awarding of degrees, upon graduation, MarMic reserves the right to certify the successful completion of the program with a MarMic PhD certificate.

At the very end of your PhD journey, please complete the MarMic PhD study book with details of your defense, publications and other relevant achievements. Make sure you upload your thesis as a PDF, along with a photo of you wearing your PhD hat at the defense. Additionally, we'd like to encourage you to provide an email address for future contact regarding alumni meetings and other updates.

If everything is filled out, contact the MarMic Coordination Office and send them the degree certificate from University. They will prepare your MarMic PhD certificate. That certificate is separate from the degree certificate issued by the University. The MarMic PhD Certificate contains information about the program structure and regulations, as well as a detailed record of your achievements during your PhD studies, including workshops, conferences, soft skills development and student supervision. Thus, the MarMic certificate is a very detailed report of your PhD journey and very helpful for future applications.

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# 4 Enrollment as a doctoral student at University of Bremen

While the acceptance by the PhD Examination Board (Promotionsausschuss) of the respective faculty at Uni HB is mandatory, enrollment as a PhD student (“Immatrikulation”) is optional. However, it may be useful to do so, as enrolment gives you student status and a student ID, which gives you access to social benefits, such as reduced prices at the university mensa and cafeteria. In addition, you will receive the „Semesterticket“, which is at the moment the Deutschlandticket and valid nationwide on all local public transport. Enrolment is subject to a semester fee of around €350. Remember that you can deduct the semester fee from your taxes. Keep in mind that if you are not a frequent user of public transport and regional trains, it may be worth not enrolling as a student at Uni HB.

**Forms for the enrolment** can be found here:

<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/studies/orientation-application/enrollment-as-a-doctoral-student/> .

More information **about the semester fee** can be found here:

<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/studies/starting-your-studies/formalitaeten/re-registration-and-semester-fee>

More information on the semesterticket is also provided by the ASTA:

<https://www.asta.uni-bremen.de/service/semesterticket/>

# 5 Structural elements inside and outside of the IMPRS MarMic

## MARMIC SPEAKER AND VICE SPEAKERS

*Speaker – MPI  
Prof. Dr. N. Dubilier  
ndubilie@mpi-  
bremen.de*

*Vice Speaker – Uni  
HB  
Prof. Dr. M. Friedrich  
michael.friedrich@  
uni-bremen.de*

*Vice Speaker – CUB  
Prof. Dr. M. Ullrich  
mullrich@cons-  
tructor.university*

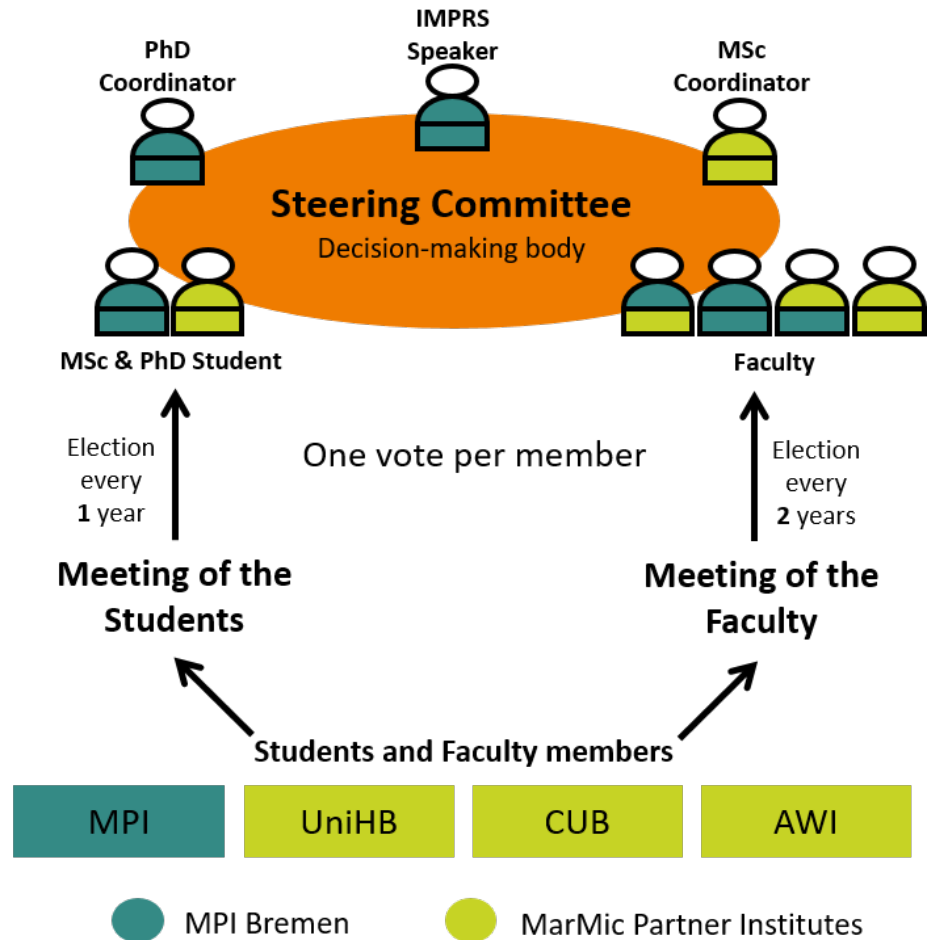
The IMPRS is headed by a Speaker (MPI Director), who along with two Vice-Speakers from the University of Bremen and the Constructor University, will represent the interests of MarMic within and outside the partner institutes and lead the faculty meetings. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding of the German Rector's Conference, the MarMic Speaker together with university officials signs the degree forms awarding the titles 'Master of Science' and 'Dr. rer. nat.' of the University of Bremen as well as 'Doctor of Philosophy' of Constructor University Bremen. The Speaker also signs the MarMic certificate, the academic transcript and the certificate supplement referring to the degrees awarded.

## MARMIC STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee represents the interests and diversity of the member institutes and various status groups (students, faculty, coordination, member institutes as shown in Figure 2). The Steering Committee is the decision-making body of MarMic and its main duty is the operational oversight of the graduate program. The members of the Steering Committee will be elected to reflect gender and seniority balance. Bi-annual meetings will provide a forum for discussion and decision-making. The Steering Committee, together with the Thesis Advisory Committees (TAC) for graduate students, monitor the progress of students to ensure that they receive the full benefit of the MarMic program.

Active engagement of the students with the Steering Committee and faculty is greatly encouraged in that students not only have a voice within their own peer group, but also in the Steering Committee.

Fig. 4:  
The Steering Committee of the IMPRS MarMic is the decision-making body of the graduate school and meets at least twice each year.



## PHD REPRESENTATIVES AT THE MPI-MM

If you have any question, problem or doubt during your PhD, please contact the PhD reps:

phdreps@mpi-bremen.de

PhD representatives are elected each year to represent the doctoral researchers within the Institute. Such a position allows you to broaden your perspectives and help with the following tasks:

- Organisation of regular events, e.g. monthly movie nights, thirsty Thursday, pumpkin carving, BBQs, secret santa
- Organisation of „It Ma(t)Ter(s)“ - PhD conference for environmental microbiology together with PhD representatives from MPI Marburg
- Organisation of scientific courses in collaboration with scientists of the Institute that like to share their skills
- Representation of PhD students in director meetings, work council meetings and with other committees
- Pass on information from the PhDnet and the general administration that are relevant for PhD students
- Be there for you!

For more information about their work, check out the PhD students' board in the main foyer of the MPI MM and the website:

<https://www.mpi-bremen.de/en/PhD-Student-Representatives.html>

## IT MA(T)TER(S) CONFERENCE



The It Ma(t)Ter(s) conference is organized together with the MPI for terrestrial Microbiology in Marburg by the local PhD representatives and is a 2-day conference with talks and poster sessions. In 2017 the first It Ma(t)Ter(s) conference took place at the MPI Marburg. Since then the conference is organized annually by turns in Bremen and Marburg. The conference is addressed to PhD and master students and is a perfect opportunity to get first conference experience in a smaller familiar atmosphere and discuss different research approaches and to exchange experiences with other PhD students.

## MAX PLANCK PHDNET

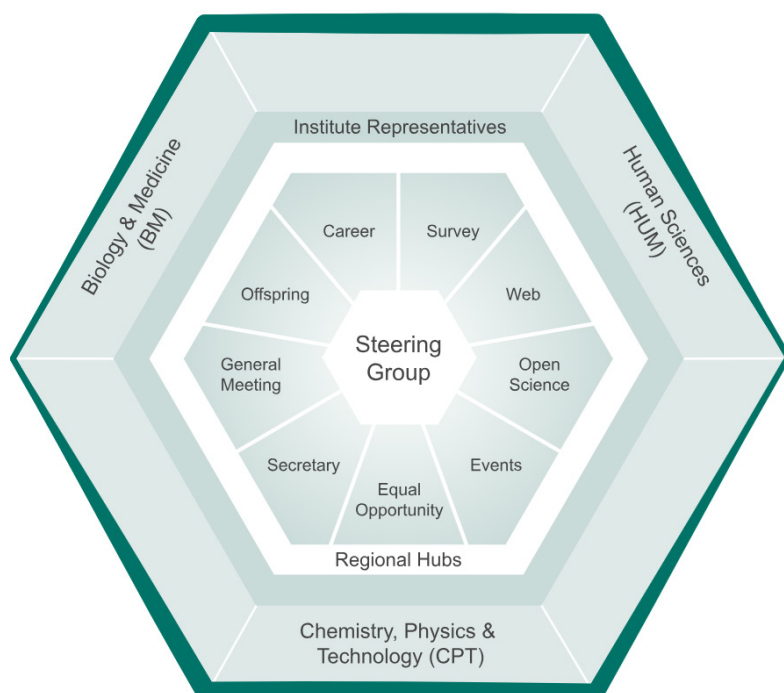
The Max Planck Phdnet is a platform for exchange among the approximately 5000 PhD students at 83 MPIs in all three sections Biology & Medicine (BMS), Chemistry, Physics & Technology (CPT), and Humanities & Social Sciences (HS). The aim of Phdnet is to improve interdisciplinary cooperation, optimize doctoral training and scientific exchange, and strengthen academic solidarity. Each institute elects an external PhD representative who passes on information from Phdnet and the general administration that is relevant to PhD students. At the annual meeting, the external PhD representatives of all institutes elect the steering group consisting of representatives of the sections Biology & Medicine (BMS), Chemistry, Physics & Technology (CPTS), and Humanities & Social Sciences (HS), a secretary general, a finance officer and the spokesperson (SP). At these annual meetings, they discuss common goals and strategies to further improve working conditions for PhD students at MPIs, and form working groups in which any PhD student can participate. MarMic students also benefit from strong networking opportunities through events organized by MPI Phdnet, such as the 'Visions in Science Conference' and the associated Max Planck Career Fair. These events provide another opportunity for PhD students to learn about career opportunities outside academia and to meet potential employers.

For more information check out the website: <https://www.phdnet.mpg.de/home>

and their facebook page:

[https://www.facebook.com/maxplanckphdnet/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/maxplanckphdnet/?ref=page_internal)

Fig. 5:  
Logo and structure  
of Phdnet





## MPG CITY

MPG City is an interactive platform that offers a unique way to discover the groundbreaking research, vibrant networks and valuable resources of the Max Planck Society. As a PhD student, MPG City provides you with an engaging website to access innovative projects, services and collaboration opportunities within the MPG. Take a virtual tour of this engaging space, click on buildings and discover hidden gems that highlight the Society's achievements. Explore MPG City today and enjoy discovering all that the MPG has to offer:

<https://mpgcity.mpd.l.mpg.de/>

Fig. 6:  
We are excited to introduce MPG City, a dynamic and engaging new way to explore the Max Planck Society (MPG) that was created by the Max Planck Digital Library (MPDL).



## BYRD – BREMEN EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT

BYRD is the support center for early career researchers at the University of Bremen (<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/byrd>). It is a central point of contact for doctoral students, postdocs, and established researchers seeking information and support for continuing education, networking, and advice.

BYRD also organizes courses and workshops in English language for doctoral students, which are grouped under the headings of „networking“, „independent research“ and „personal development“. A detailed list of upcoming events can be found here:

<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/byrd/events>

## U BREMEN RESEARCH ALLIANCE

The U Bremen Research Alliance (UBRA) is a collaboration between the University of Bremen and twelve federal and state-financed non-university research institutes in Bremen. It includes research institutes from major German science organizations like the Fraunhofer Society, Helmholtz Association, Leibniz Association, and Max Planck Society, as well as the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence. UBRA focuses on enhancing research and higher education through joint projects, funding proposals, and resource sharing. It emphasizes research data management and data science, ensuring data is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR). The alliance organizes events like Research Data Day, which includes lectures, workshops, and networking opportunities to foster collaboration among researchers. UBRA also supports the development of a National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) and has established a data competence center for the Bremen region. UBRA promotes international cooperation and aims to enhance the global visibility of its members. It also offers joint appointment procedures and doctoral programs, integrating non-university researchers into the academic environment.

<https://www.bremen-research.de/en/research-alliance>

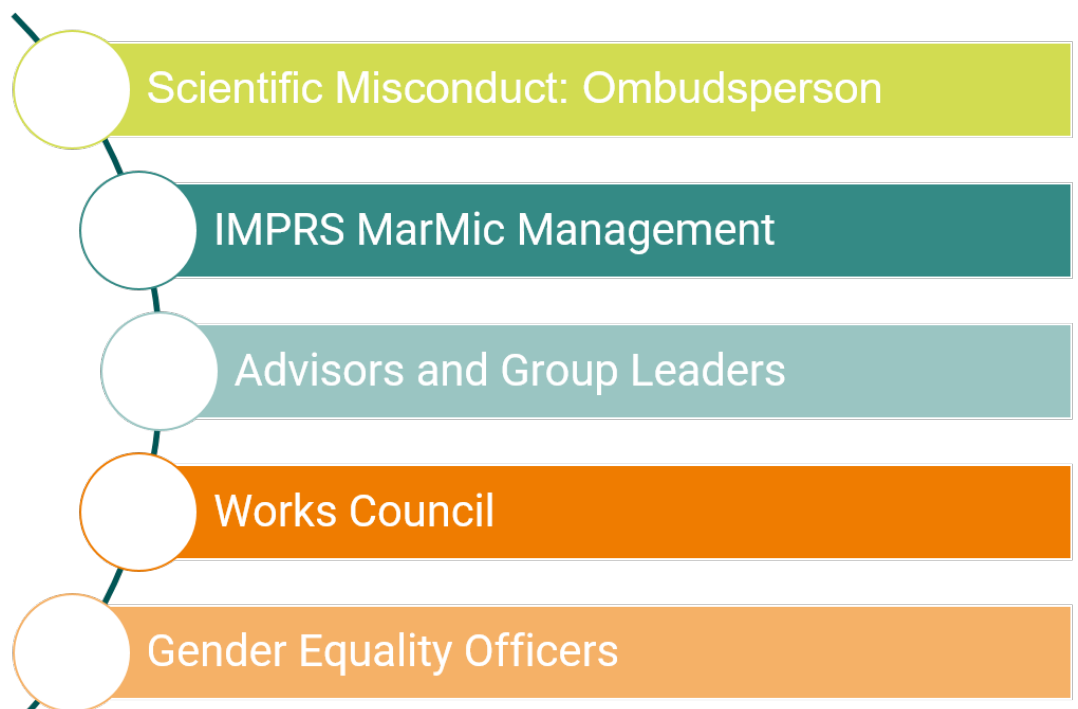
# 6 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is a critical aspect of maintaining a productive and harmonious academic environment, particularly within the context of doctoral research. Conflicts may arise due to various factors, including differences in expectations, communication breakdowns, or interpersonal dynamics.

Addressing these conflicts proactively is essential for the well-being of individuals involved and important for fostering a collaborative research environment of respect, openness, and professional integrity.

To assist PhD students of the IMPRS MarMic (and all employees of the MPI-MM), several resources are available for conflict resolution:

Fig. 7:  
The Conflict Resolution Map outlines the resources available to help you address and resolve conflicts at various levels, from everyday misunderstandings to serious concerns.



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To assist PhD students of the IMPRS MarMic (and all employees of the MPI-MM), several resources are available for conflict resolution:

- **Ombudsperson for Scientific Misconduct:** If you encounter violations of good scientific practice and scientific integrity, such as concerns about data handling, authorship disputes, or research misconduct, **the Ombudsperson** offers a confidential forum for discussing these concerns.

<https://max.mpg.de/sites/mpimm/Beauftragte-und-Vertretungen/Ombudspersonen/Seiten/Ombudsperson-EN.aspx>

- **IMPRS MarMic Management:** The MarMic Coordination Office serves for all MarMic PhD students as a primary point of contact for initial guidance in addressing conflicts. It provides a confidential and supportive environment to discuss concerns and identify possible solutions. If no consensus can be reached, the (Vice-) Speaker of the IMPRS or the MarMic Steering Committee can be consulted to resolve the issue.

- **Advisors and Group Leaders:** Often, conflicts can be resolved directly within your research group. Supervisors and group leaders are typically the first line of support, providing mentorship and facilitating communication. Engaging in an open and constructive dialogue with them can often clarify misunderstandings and align expectations.

- **Works Council:** For broader workplace-related issues, the **Works Council** serves as a representative body that upholds employees' rights and interests within the Institute. This council is available to mediate conflicts related to institutional policies, work conditions, or other work-related concerns.

<https://max.mpg.de/sites/mpimm/Betriebsrat/Seiten/Works-Council.aspx>

- **Gender Equality Officers:** Conflicts that relate to gender or other diversity-related matters are addressed by the **Gender Equality Officers**, who support a respectful, inclusive environment and ensure that issues are handled sensitively and in accordance with institutional policies.

<https://max.mpg.de/sites/mpimm/Beauftragte-und-Vertretungen/Gleichstellung/Seiten/Equality.aspx>

- **PhD reps and PostDoc reps:** For **PhD students** and PostDocs their respective representatives can offer a unique peer perspective on conflicts and provide informal support, share advice based on their own experiences, and guide you to relevant resources or offices.

<https://max.mpg.de/sites/mpimm/Beauftragte-und-Vertretungen/PhD%20Stu%C2%ADdent%20Rep%C2%ADres%C2%ADent%C2%ADat%C2%ADives/>

This multifaceted approach to conflict resolution underscores the commitment of the IMPRS MarMic and the MPI-MM to uphold a supportive and equitable academic environment, ensuring that all PhD students and employees have access to the necessary resources for resolving conflicts effectively.

# 7 Getting along and staying healthy during your PhD

## INTERNATIONAL OFFICE AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

If you have further questions, you can reach out to Anita Tingberg:

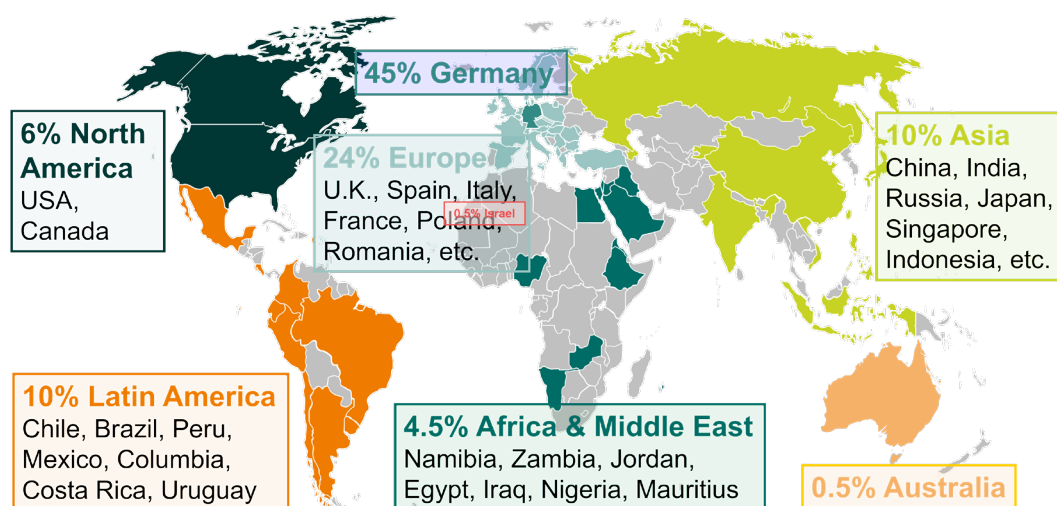
+49 (0)421 2028 5230

atingber@mpi-bremen.de

The International Office at the MPI MM can help you with formalities, such as visas, health insurance, bank accounts, and housing. You can find a lot of information on the website of the International Office: <https://www.mpi-bremen.de/en/International-Office-2.html>

English is the common language within MarMic and the MPI to foster an inclusive environment. At the MPI, German classes are offered at various levels to facilitate cultural integration into life in Germany. Additionally, MarMic organizes events blending social and educational elements, including a welcome reception for new students at the beginning of the school year with poster presentations, a one-day mini-symposium on lab rotation results, a MSc graduation ceremony, and the annual MarMic retreat. Furthermore, events such as movie nights, barbecues, pumpkin carving, tram parties, and board game nights are organized by the PhD student representatives and provide an informal environment for socializing and integrating new members into MarMic.

Fig. 8: MarMic students come from all over the world.



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# SPECIAL NEEDS AND WORKING WITH A HANDICAP - NACHTEILSAUSGLEICH

*If you have further questions, you can reach out to KIS – Office for Students with Disabilities or Chronic Diseases*

*Dr. Ingrid Zon-  
dervan*

*+49 (0)421 218  
61050*

Students with disabilities or chronic illnesses, whether physical or psychological, often face direct challenges in their studies. To counteract these disadvantages, a system of disability accommodations (Nachteilsausgleich) is provided by the University of Bremen. These accommodations apply to the form of examination, without affecting quality standards. The aim is not to simplify exams but to modify the framework conditions.

All students whose studies are impacted by a disability or impairment can claim these accommodations, regardless of whether the disability is visible or invisible, physical or psychological, and whether it's officially recognized or not. This includes students with learning disabilities (like dyslexia or dyscalculia) or attention disorders (like AD(H)D).

The Office for Students with Disabilities or Chronic Diseases (KIS) provides confidential support and advice on various aspects of studying with visible or invisible physical or mental impairments that is free of charge. This includes guidance on academic adjustments during your studies, financial support, and hardship provisions for university applications. You can find more information on their website: [kis@uni-bremen.de](mailto:kis@uni-bremen.de).

## MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is vital to our overall well-being, and we want to ensure you have the resources and support you need.

The MarMic internal website offers a lot of information on the topic, you can find it within the folder Marmic\_General/Mental\_Health on the MarMic Intranet:

<https://marmic.mpg.de/marmic2/marmic cms2/login.php>

The PhD reps have done an incredible job in creating a road map for mental health and gathering information on how to navigate the mental health system in Germany, please check out their website:

<https://www.mpi-bremen.de/print/Doktorandenvertreterinnen.html>

And there is the **Employee and Manager Assistance Program (EMAP)**, the immediate counselling service of the MPG that is free of charge for employees and their family members living in the same household. They have a hotline that is manned 24h/day (**0800-387 78 36**) and you can find detailed information in the max net if you search for „EMAP“: From October 1, 2024 the Fürstenberg Institut is our service provider for EMAP.

[https://max.mpg.de/Service/Beratungsangebote/Pages/EMAP\\_EN.aspx](https://max.mpg.de/Service/Beratungsangebote/Pages/EMAP_EN.aspx)

Apart from that, the University is offering **mental health support services**, summarized here:

<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/workplace-health-management-whm/services-of-the-whm/mental-health>

and also the **psychological counseling service**, which is free of charge for students: <https://www.stw-bremen.de/en/counselling-social/psychological-counselling>



## PHYSICAL HEALTH

The University of Bremen offers a great variety of sports. Everybody can sign up for courses but as an enrolled student at the university, you pay a reduced prize. Unfortunately, the description of courses is only available in German. Under the tab “current courses”, you can find the registration with the currently available courses and the preview and dates for future semesters.

<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/hospo/>

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, CAREER AND FAMILY

Our goal is to ensure that everyone, regardless of gender, can achieve scientific qualifications and be prepared for careers in and outside academia, free from gender barriers. While the participation of women in MarMic is high (60-65%) at the graduate level, their numbers decline beyond the doctoral level. To support and empower women, MarMic funds mentoring programs, transferable skills courses, management training, and coaching.

MPI-MM and MarMic also support student parents with reserved childcare spaces at the Kindergarten “das Entdeckerhaus”, technical staff support for laboratory work, remote work resources, a parent-child office, and financial support for family-related expenses such as childcare during conferences.

Gender Equality, Career and Family - Links	
<b>MPI</b>	<a href="https://mpi-bremen.de/en/Equal-Opportunities-Representative.html">https://mpi-bremen.de/en/Equal-Opportunities-Representative.html</a>
<b>Family &amp; Career</b>	<a href="https://max.mpg.de/sites/mpimm/Beauftragte-und-Vertretungen/Gleichstellung/Seiten/Family-and-work.aspx">https://max.mpg.de/sites/mpimm/Beauftragte-und-Vertretungen/Gleichstellung/Seiten/Family-and-work.aspx</a>
<b>University meets family</b>	<a href="https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/familie">https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/familie</a>
<b>Plan-m Mentoring Program</b>	<a href="https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/chancengleichheit/services/plan-m-mentoring-in-science">https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/chancengleichheit/services/plan-m-mentoring-in-science</a>
<b>University of Bremen child care</b>	<a href="https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/familie/students-1/childcare-services">https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/familie/students-1/childcare-services</a>
<b>“Das Entdeckerhaus” child care</b>	<a href="https://entdeckerkinder-bremen.de/das-entdeckerhaus/">https://entdeckerkinder-bremen.de/das-entdeckerhaus/</a>
<b>PME Family Services child care</b>	<a href="https://www.familienservice.de/home">https://www.familienservice.de/home</a>

## GENDER EQUALITY OFFICE

The Gender Equality Officers at MPI-MM are dedicated to stand up for your concerns, from the compatibility of family and career to gender justice and protection against sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace. They are committed to upholding the Max Planck Society’s principles of promoting all employees regardless of gender, nationality, religion, disability, age, cultural origin, and sexual identity. Our diverse community is the cornerstone of the innovative research that we carry out at the IMPRS MarMic and the MPI-MM. The office actively supports young women in their professional development, encouraging them to pursue their scientific careers with confidence and determination. You can find more information on the webpage: <https://mpi-bremen.de/en/Equal-Opportunities-Representative.html>.

## DIVERSITY COUNCIL

The Diversity Council knows that issues often do not neatly fit into existing support systems like the gender equality officers or the worker's council. Diversity, equity, and inclusion matter to everyone, yet they often resonate primarily with those who have faced discrimination. The council aims to bridge these gaps and seeks to bring these topics to the forefront and create a space for constructive dialogue and ongoing learning.

Their objectives include not just addressing immediate issues but also fostering long-term changes to ensure equal opportunities for all, which requires collective participation. Stay informed by joining the #Diversity-Council on MPI rocket.chat or contact them at [diversity\\_council@mpi-bremen.de](mailto:diversity_council@mpi-bremen.de).

They also emphasize the importance of supporting neurodivergent PhD candidates, aiming to destigmatize neurodiversity and create an inclusive environment where all can thrive. Workshops and mentoring are available to promote understanding and acceptance.

By working together, we can ensure that everyone at MPI-MM has the support and opportunities they need to succeed.

## HOUSE HOLD ITEMS

If you have recently moved to Bremen and are in need of a few basic things, we are pleased to inform you that we have a small selection of household items that you can pick up free of charge and do not have to return. These items include towels, glassware, bed linen, cups, plates and more.. If you are interested, please contact the MarMic Coordination Office and we can arrange a time to sort through the items.

## MPS CODE OF CONDUCT

The Max Planck Society is a non-university institution dedicated to fundamental research, predominantly publicly funded. We are a highly diverse group of scientists, students, administrators, technical and support staff, and guests.

Our core values are:

- We treat each other with respect.
- We act honestly, ethically and with integrity.
- We communicate transparently and respectfully both internally and externally.

We expect all visitors and partners to reflect the Core Values of the MPS in their actions.

If you are interested in the full version of the code of conduct, please check out the following link:

<https://www.mpg.de/14172230/code-of-conduct.pdf>



## Thesis Advisory Committee Guidelines

### for PhD students of the International Max Planck Research School of Marine Microbiology (IMPRS MarMic)

#### Purpose of the Thesis Advisory Committee

The Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) guides and supports students throughout their PhD, reviews the progress of the PhD student and their training, provides guidance throughout the PhD and advice for the student's career.

#### The TAC members:

- provide constructive feedback and advice
- offer their expertise, experience, and guidance
- monitor the progress of the research project
- advise on additional training, workshops and other professional development
- advise on the timeline of the experimental work and thesis writing
- support the PhD student in planning their career where relevant

The presentation by the student at TAC meetings provides a basis for an open, supportive and fruitful discussion with the TAC members. It is not about presenting results as one would for a scientific meeting or symposium, but rather about discussing openly what has worked, what hasn't, and how to move forward.

Regular TAC meetings are obligatory and must be held at least once a year (timeline below). The PhD student is responsible for organizing TAC meetings and entering these in their PhD Studybook. The MarMic Coordination Office is responsible for keeping track of TAC meetings, and providing fair notice to the PhD student and their advisor of their status.

#### Composition of the TAC

Note that universities and faculties may have additional requirements for the composition of TACs.

The TAC consists of at least three members, who are ideally members for the duration of the thesis. At least two members must be independent of the thesis advisor. Changes to the first three TAC members must be agreed on by the thesis advisor and PhD student, and noted in the PhD Studybook.

- 1<sup>st</sup> member: Thesis advisor, who must be an IMPRS faculty member and have permission to graduate PhDs from a university
- 2<sup>nd</sup> member: External researcher from a different institute than that of the thesis advisor

- 3<sup>rd</sup> member: Researcher that is independent of the thesis advisor and the 2<sup>nd</sup> member
- 4<sup>th</sup> member: Direct advisor, if applicable
- Other members: Researchers with additional expertise, colleagues that take notes, etc.

### Timeline for appointing the TAC

- The thesis advisor together with the PhD student identify the second and third TAC members before holding the first TAC meeting. Additional TAC members are chosen as needed.
- The PhD student enters the names of their TAC members in their PhD Studybook within six months after beginning their PhD.

## TAC meeting organization

### Before the TAC meeting:

The student is responsible for organizing the TAC meetings. This includes:

- Finding a date and time for the meeting, and booking an appropriate room and/or setting up a virtual meeting
- Updating all members by sending the protocol of the previous TAC meeting at least one week before the meeting
- Preparing a progress report to be shared with the TAC in the first part of the meeting in the form of an oral presentation with slides

### Suggested structure of the TAC meeting:

- Progress report of the PhD project by the PhD student in the form of an oral presentation with slides
  - The report should focus on the research project, a timeline and working plan for the upcoming months, publication plans, which meetings, workshops, symposia and other forms of training are planned, and an overview of where the student stands with the IMPRS MarMic PhD requirements (teaching, lab rotation offers, soft skill courses, etc.)
- Discussion of the student's report with all TAC members, including
  - an appraisal of the scientific aspects of the thesis
  - a discussion of the student's progress with the research project
  - suggestions for career development (meetings, workshops, symposia, soft skills training, etc.)
  - in the last year of the PhD at the latest, the student's future career plans including plans for writing grant proposals and applications
- At the end of the meeting:
  - A closed session in which the student has the opportunity to talk to TAC members without their thesis advisor

### After the TAC meeting:

- Within seven days after the meeting, the PhD student sends their protocol of the meeting to all TAC members including the slides from their presentation
- TAC members send their requests for revisions or approval of the protocol within 14 days of receiving the student's report. If a TAC member does not respond within 14 days, their approval is assumed.
- The PhD student updates their PhD Studybook at the latest one month after their TAC meeting by uploading a PDF version of the research presentation shown during the TAC and the protocol that was approved by all TAC members  
([https://marmic.mpg.de/marmic2/marmic cms2/internal\\_studybook.php](https://marmic.mpg.de/marmic2/marmic cms2/internal_studybook.php)).

### Timeline for TAC meetings:

The first meeting must take place within the first year of the PhD (note that some faculties require the submission of relevant documents within the first two months, for more details see the MarMic PhD Navigator (MarMic intranet under: [marmic\\_general/PhD/PhD\\_Navigator](#)). Thereafter, TAC meetings must be held at least once a year. The PhD student and their advisor can agree on additional TAC meetings. The student can contact TAC members to discuss their research or other relevant matters at any time during their PhD.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> TAC meeting (0-12 months after beginning the doctoral thesis)

##### Before the meeting

The PhD student prepares the proposal required by most universities and faculties at the latest within the first 12 months of the PhD (see above - some faculties require these documents earlier), and their Doctoral Agreement. These are discussed and agreed on with the advisor before the TAC meeting.

##### At the meeting

- Presentation of the PhD proposal for the university
- Evaluation of the proposed research project regarding:
  - Feasibility, risks and time frame
  - Evaluation of the student's expertise and which additional training would be needed or valuable
- If not already done, signing of the Doctoral Agreement

##### After the meeting

As described above under '[TAC meeting organization](#)'

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> TAC meeting (12-24 months and 24-36 months after PhD begin)

- To be held as described above under '[TAC meeting organization](#)'
- 2<sup>nd</sup> TAC meeting must be held 6-18 months after the PhD begins
- 3<sup>rd</sup> TAC meeting must be held 18-30 months after the PhD begins
- Timeline for writing and revising manuscripts and thesis

- Scientific backup plans
- Future career plans

#### 4<sup>th</sup> TAC meeting (36-48 months after PhD begin)

- To be held as described above under '[TAC meeting organization](#)'. In this often final TAC meeting the focus should be on
  - Timeline for writing and handing in the PhD thesis
  - Timeline for writing and revising manuscripts
  - Future career plans, timeline for writing postdoc proposals and applications

If you have any questions, please contact the MarMic Coordination Office, specifically Dr. Christiane Glöckner as the PhD coordinator (+49 421 2028-9340, [cgloeckn@mpi-bremen.de](mailto:cgloeckn@mpi-bremen.de)).

## Doctoral Agreement of IMPRS MarMic

This document describes the agreement between IMPRS MarMic PhD students and their thesis advisors on doctoral supervision.

Scientific research for the PhD project, culminating in the PhD thesis, forms the core of the scientific training for IMPRS MarMic students. Additionally, students engage in a comprehensive curriculum that complements their research training and includes advanced scientific training, teaching, transferable/soft skills, as well as career development and networking. This supervision agreement is concluded in the interest of productive cooperation, and to ensure a high-quality scientific education and best possible support of the PhD student during their project. By jointly planning and executing the project in a transparent and well-structured fashion, the student and their advisor(s) share the common goal of successfully concluding the PhD project within an appropriate timeframe.

This doctoral agreement is mandatory for all IMPRS MarMic PhD students and their thesis advisors. The thesis advisor must be an IMPRS MarMic faculty member with permission to graduate students in accordance with university regulations. If the student has a second, co-advisor or direct advisor (co-advisor in the following), both advisors should agree to and sign this Doctoral Agreement. If the co-advisor changes during the PhD project, the new co-advisor signs this Doctoral Agreement (revisions to this agreement should be agreed on by the student, the advisor and the new co-advisor).

The PhD student \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Co-advisor (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

agree on the following for the student's PhD training.

The PhD project is conducted under the guidance of a thesis advisor, a co-advisor where applicable, and a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) (see TAC Guidelines for details on composition, organization, content and timelines).

All IMPRS PhD students must be enrolled as doctoral students with a university that awards the PhD degree. The graduation criteria specified in the university's Examination Regulations are applied in full.

Three copies of the Doctoral Agreement are signed by the PhD student and their thesis advisor(s). One copy stays with the PhD student, one with the thesis advisor, and the third is submitted to the MarMic Coordination Office after the first TAC meeting, together with an electronic version that the student uploads to their PhD Studybook.

### 1. PhD thesis topic

Beginning \_\_\_\_\_, the PhD student will work on a dissertation with the topic:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Changes to the dissertation topic are made by mutual agreement between the PhD student, their thesis advisor and TAC members, and documented in the PhD Studybook.

## 2. The Thesis Advisory Committee

The Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) was established in: (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_

The following persons have confirmed their participation in the TAC (name, email address):

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (thesis advisor)
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Acceptance as a PhD student at a university

The PhD proposal with a timeline has been prepared for the first TAC meeting and was / will be submitted to the University \_\_\_\_\_  
Department/Faculty of \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ as the PhD thesis advisor.

## 4. Compliance with good scientific practice

The PhD student and their advisor(s) agree to adhere to the principles of good scientific practice in accordance with the ethics guidelines of the MPG and all other institutions involved in IMPRS MarMic. The student's and advisor(s)' participation in a training course on good scientific practice is mandatory. In case of any questions or concerns regarding good scientific practice, the elected ombudsperson should be consulted.

## 5. Working conditions of the PhD student

The PhD student is provided with the working conditions needed for the PhD project. This includes access to laboratories and equipment, consumables, and computer resources including a workplace with computer. The advisor(s) ensure that the student has sufficient opportunities to engage in the IMPRS MarMic curriculum that complements the PhD research training (advanced scientific training, teaching, transferable/soft skills, and career development and networking).

## 6. Funding of the PhD project

The work on the dissertation is financially supported by

- an academic employment  
contract type: \_\_\_\_\_ funded by: \_\_\_\_\_ duration: \_\_\_\_\_
- a PhD scholarship  
funded by: \_\_\_\_\_ duration: \_\_\_\_\_

The terms and conditions of the grant or scholarship and the resulting contractual obligations remain unaffected by this document and must not conflict with it or state/federal laws.

## 7. Conflict resolution, cancellation of the supervision relationship, substitute advisor

For conflicts that cannot be amicably solved between the PhD student and their advisor(s), mediation should be solicited. If violations of good scientific practice are indicated, the responsible ombudsperson of an IMPRS partner institute is to be consulted. For other conflicts, detailed information is available in the MarMic PhD Navigator (MarMic intranet under: [marmic\\_general/PhD/PhD\\_Navigator](#)).

The supervisory relationship can only be terminated by the thesis advisor on substantial grounds, and the IMPRS MarMic Steering Committee must be informed in advance. If the PhD student is not responsible for the cancellation of the supervisory relationship, they will be supported by the Faculty and Coordinators in the search for a suitable substitute advisor. Any interruption or termination of the doctoral project on the part of the thesis advisor or student requires a written declaration.

### **8. Meetings, communication, feedback:**

Regular meetings and feedback, as well as clear communication about expectations and ensuring respectful interactions form the basis for a supportive and motivating environment in which productive research can thrive.

The thesis advisor(s) commit to regularly providing the PhD student with advice and take part in meetings discussing the progress of the PhD student's work and time schedule. The advisor(s) support the PhD student by actively promoting the student's scientific independence and career development.

Examples of topics that could be discussed are noted below and can be described in more detail in an addendum. These topics and agreements can be revised throughout the PhD project as needed.

- Meetings will be held weekly / monthly/.... in person / virtually etc.
- Format of PhD student's report on their progress, level of detail, etc....Frequency of these reports....
- Format of feedback from the advisor on the PhD student's work will be in person, written, via Slack, etc....Frequency of this feedback will be....
- Persons to contact when the advisor(s) are unavailable, persons who provide assistance regarding a specific task, etc. are.
- Communication outside scheduled meetings

## **9. Signatures**

By signing below, the PhD student and their advisor(s) confirm that they agree to the above and are familiar with the following documents that will form the basis of their actions:

- IMPRS MarMic PhD Navigator, especially MarMic PhD requirements
- TAC Guidelines of IMPRS MarMic
- MPG Guidelines on the Training of Doctoral Students at the Max Planck Society
- MPG Code of Conduct
- DFG Code of Conduct Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice
- MPG Policy against sexualized discrimination, harassment and violence
- Guidelines for thesis submission and graduation of the respective university and faculty

### **Acknowledgement of PhD student**

I hereby

1. confirm that I have co-signed this Doctoral Agreement with my advisor(s),
2. confirm that I have received a copy of the current TAC Guidelines of the IMPRS MarMic,
3. acknowledge and understand the requirements for IMPRS MarMic PhD studies and the applicable rules, regulations and policies as outlined above.

I understand that I may contact the IMPRS Coordination Office if I have any questions about the IMPRS MarMic, the agreement or my records.

PhD student \_\_\_\_\_  
Place, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### **Acknowledgement of the advisor(s)**

I hereby

1. confirm that I have co-signed this Doctoral Agreement with the PhD student,
2. confirm that I have received a copy of the current TAC Guidelines of the IMPRS MarMic,
3. acknowledge and understand the requirements for supervision of IMPRS MarMic PhD students and the applicable rules, regulations and policies as outlined above.

I understand that I may contact the IMPRS Coordination Office, if I have any questions about the IMPRS MarMic, the agreement or my records.

Official thesis advisor \_\_\_\_\_  
Place, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Co-advisor (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
Place, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_



