

# Doctoral Candidates' Handbook



A joint initiative between the  
Max Planck Society and leading German Universities  
together with  
Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Helmholtz Association,  
and University College London

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# Table of Content

## 0 INTRODUCTION

## 1 THE MAX PLANCK SCHOOL OF COGNITION (MPSCog)

- 1.1 MPSCog: A doctoral program in Germany
- 1.2 Structure of the MPSCog
- 1.3 Fellows and research institutions involved

## 2 PART I – ORIENTATION YEAR

- 2.1 Onboarding steps – Before arrival in Germany
  - 2.1.1 Submit documents necessary for scholarship agreement
  - 2.1.2 Register with Leipzig University
  - 2.1.3 Choose labs for rotation
  - 2.1.4 Application for an entry visa (if applicable)
  - 2.1.5 Application for fast-track master's program (if applicable)
  - 2.1.6 Look for housing
- 2.2 After arrival in Germany
  - 2.2.1 Register with a city
  - 2.2.2 Open a bank account
  - 2.2.3 Health insurance
  - 2.2.4 Application for a residence permit (if applicable)
  - 2.2.5 Salary
  - 2.2.6 Personal and mental health support
  - 2.2.7 Further helpful information
- 2.3 Doctoral curriculum and initial academic steps
  - 2.3.1 Overview of the first year and beyond
  - 2.3.2 Cognition Academies
  - 2.3.3 Lab rotations
  - 2.3.4 E-learning
  - 2.3.5 Short visits to other labs
  - 2.3.6 External activities
  - 2.3.7 Life Cycle – Curriculum Management Tool
  - 2.3.8 Doctoral supervisor(s)
  - 2.3.9 End of first year evaluation

## 0 INTRODUCTION

Dear Doctoral Candidate,

We would like to welcome you to the Max Planck School of Cognition (MPSCog)!

This handbook will give you an overview of the MPSCog's four-year doctoral program as well as guide you through the various administrative steps which are necessary to start your doctoral studies in Germany.

We strive to continuously improve our program. Therefore, the MPSCog's coordination team would greatly appreciate your feedback! Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions for updating this handbook by contacting us at [cognition@maxplanckschools.de](mailto:cognition@maxplanckschools.de).

The Max Planck Society offers a brochure on working and living in Germany which you may also find of interest: [MPS Working and Living in Germany](#)

Due to the current special situation of Covid-19, the welcome week and Cognition Academies will take place in online mode, as well as some lab rotations. As soon as face-to-face meetings are allowed again, we will plan them accordingly and look forward to seeing you in person. Information given in this handbook refers to normal circumstances.

We wish you a successful, exciting and enjoyable time at the MPSCog!

Your MPSCog Coordination Team

# 1 THE MAX PLANCK SCHOOL OF COGNITION (MPSCog)

## 1.1 MPSCog: A doctoral program in Germany

The Max Planck School of Cognition (MPSCog), one of three pioneering national Max Planck Schools, is a joint initiative of the Max Planck Society and leading German universities together with Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Helmholtz Association, and University College London. Beyond the support from the Max Planck Society, the MPSCog is additionally funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).



The MPSCog explores new paths in postgraduate education in Germany by linking the diverse excellence of researchers in the various fields of cognition (Figure 1). The brightest minds in their respective fields come together to interconnect in 'faculties' representing the complex expertise within the MPSCog.



**Figure 1.** Variety of research domains within the MPSCog

The interdisciplinary and customizable doctoral program of the MPSCog offers a superior grasp on the different methods and approaches used in the rapidly evolving field of cognition.

## 1.2 Structure of the MPSCog

### Administrative location

Max Planck School of Cognition  
Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences  
Stephanstraße 1a  
04103 Leipzig  
Germany

The logistic hub of the MPSCog is situated at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences (MPI CBS) in Leipzig.



**Figure 2.** The MPSCog coordination team. While only the core positions are shown in this graphic, a complete list of people can be found [online](#).

## 1.3 Fellows and research institutions involved

The MPSCog has established a joint research and educational framework across Germany by bringing together top scientists from the Max Planck Society, German universities and other non-university research organizations as well as leading international universities. Through this network, the MPSCog offers doctoral candidates the opportunity to conduct lab rotations, master's projects and doctoral research work across a prestigious network of partner institutions (Figure 3).

Our doctoral candidates can conduct their doctoral research with one of 47 renowned fellows

- from 29 research institutions including Max Planck Institutes, Universities, Helmholtz Association, Fraunhofer Gesellschaft, and University College London
- working in 16 cities across Germany, the Netherlands (Nijmegen) and UK (London)



**Figure 3.** MPSCog partner locations

More information about our [fellows](#) and [partner institutions](#) can be found on our website.

## 2 PART I – Orientation Year

Coming to Germany as an international student can be challenging given the potentially unfamiliar regulations that must be considered. Some of the necessary procedures involve the embassy or other local authorities, and must be started immediately after admission to the MPSCog doctoral program. This section guides you through the necessary steps when moving to Germany. Please do not hesitate to contact our International Affairs Officer, Nicole Lorenz, to check your specific requirements.

### **International Affairs Officer:**

Nicole Lorenz

Nicole.Lorenz@maxplanckschools.de

Phone: 0049 341 9940 149

Room at MPI for Human Cognitive and  
Brain Sciences: C107



### **2.1 Onboarding steps – Before arrival in Germany**

The checklist below (Figure 4) provides an overview of what steps you need to take care of and when. Some processes run in parallel and not all of them apply to every candidate. Candidates coming from a non-European country may have to do a few more steps; for example, applying for an entry visa in their home country and transferring it into a residence permit after having moved to Germany.

#### **Tips for appointments with authorities**

Appointments with the Resident Services Office (Bürgeramt) and Foreigners' Authority (immigration office, Ausländerbehörde) are explained in detail in *Section 2.2*. To avoid long waiting times, however, we recommend scheduling appointments with these authorities online beforehand. Nicole can support you with scheduling those appointments.

#### **More information for stays in Berlin**

Please see Appendix for more information on onboarding steps if you are going to stay in Berlin.





**Figure 4.** Checklist for the necessary steps after admission to the MPSCog

The program starts with an orientation year. Candidates need to provide required information to begin the program. This information is further described on the following pages.



### 2.1.1 Submit documents necessary for scholarship agreement

As the Max Planck School of Cognition is located at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences (MPI CBS) in Leipzig, the administrative management is carried out by the HR department of MPI CBS. For the preparation of your scholarship agreement, you will be asked to hand in several documents.

### 2.1.2 Register with Leipzig University

In Germany, only universities can award academic degrees such as a doctoral degree. Therefore, affiliation with a partner university (alongside the affiliation with the Max Planck School of Cognition) is an academic requirement for all doctoral candidates.

Getting registered and accepted in the so-called *Doktorandenliste* (doctoral candidates list) is a compulsory step to initiate the MPSCog program. However, since the supervisors for the doctoral phase are not specified until the end of the orientation year, the preliminary registration takes place at Leipzig University for this period. Based on an agreement between the MPSCog and the Deanery of Leipzig University, registration is possible either at the Medical Faculty (with Prof. Arno Villringer) or at the Faculty of Life Sciences (with Prof. Erich Schröger) and will depend on the scientific background of each candidate (Figure 5). This process does not require anything from the student, other than providing documents. The preliminary registration will be revised at the end of the orientation year.



**Figure 5.** Preliminary registration as doctoral candidate during the Orientation Year is possible with two faculties at Leipzig University.

**Attention:** Our Curriculum Officer, Ewa Koper, will advise you on the suitable choice of faculty and guide you through the registration process. It is recommended to initiate the process as early as possible, especially for international candidates.

**Step 1:** Candidates must fill out an application template which can be downloaded from the webpage of the respective faculty:

- [registration with the Medical Faculty](#), temporary supervisor Arno Villringer

- [registration with the Faculty of Life Sciences](#), temporary supervisor *Erich Schröger*

**Step 2:** Additionally, candidates must submit an application to be registered on the doctoral list.

The application consists of:

1. Prospective title of the thesis (this is a provisory title and in no way binding)
2. Signed confirmation of a professor from the faculty to act as supervisor of the candidate
3. The candidate's confirmation to comply to the Regulations for the Degree of Doctorate and the principles of scientific best practice described in the preamble
4. Evidence of proficiency in German or English (Level B2 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*), if German is not the candidate's native language
5. Letter confirming admission to doctoral program of the MPSCog
6. Faculty Board decides if an additional qualifying examination is required

## Research Academy Leipzig (RAL)

Every doctoral candidate of the MPSCog who registered at Leipzig University will become a member of the [Research Academy Leipzig](#) (RAL). RAL is the central service institution at Leipzig University that is dedicated to actively supporting early career researchers. Members can, among other things, participate in their workshops of the [Competence School](#) to strengthen the skill sets you need as an early career researcher. When registering to those workshops, please indicate your status as ‘pre-doc’ at the MPSCog. Your participation is only possible if places are still available. As a doctoral candidate at the MPSCog, you are not eligible to request travel funding from RAL, whereas you can apply for the yearly doctoral prize.

**Attention:** When starting their doctoral phase (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> years), all candidates will have to register at the university where the actual supervisor of their doctoral thesis is based. Thus, some candidates will need to revert their registration at Leipzig University and re-register at the university where their supervisor holds a professorship. MPSCog candidates who switch from Leipzig University to another university at the end of the orientation year to pursue their doctoral research work, will automatically be excluded from RAL. MPSCog Curriculum Officer, Ewa Koper will support candidates at the transition stage.

### Preliminary admission as doctoral candidate

After successful registration on the doctoral list, candidates receive a confirmation for a preliminary admission as a doctoral candidate (“Vorläufige Zulassung zur Promotion / Vorläufige Promotionsbescheinigung”). This document is also added to the personal documentation at the MPI CBS Human Resources as well as the MPSCog.

### Registration as student

In addition to registering on the doctoral list (mandatory), you may choose to register as a student at any university, if you wish to receive associated benefits (e.g., a public transport ticket). However, since this is optional and not a requirement for the MPSCog doctoral program, the applicable registration fees will not be reimbursed.

## 2.1.3 Choose labs for rotation

Doctoral candidates will visit three to four laboratories on average during the orientation year. Each candidate will be asked to provide a list of preferred MPSCog Fellows and labs shortly after admission to the MPSCog. The individually customized first-year schedule will be coordinated by our Curriculum Officer. Please see *Section 2.3.3* for more information.

Doctoral candidates moving to Germany from a non-European country may want to be preferably placed in Berlin or Leipzig for their very first lab rotation, as these locations facilitate reduced logistic burden (due to administrative availability).

## 2.1.4 Application for an entry visa (if applicable)

International candidates need to apply for an entry visa before traveling to Germany (Figure 6). The bureaucratic visa processes require some time and effort and requirements may vary from country to country. Please consult with the local German embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date information for your individual situation – ideally immediately after admission to our program. The embassy will confirm whether you need a visa and which requirements apply to you for taking up a scholarship/employment in Germany. Clearly indicate the purpose of your stay (doctoral studies) when applying for the visa.



**Figure 6.** Do you need a visa? Non-EU citizens need to apply for an entry visa in their home country or the current country of living, and extend this visa into a residence permit after arriving in Germany

EU citizens as well as citizens of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and USA are exempted from this regulation. However, it is recommended to reassure yourself with an embassy. If you are entering Germany on a visa-free basis, you must apply for a residence permit at a Foreigners' Registration Office within three months after entry.

**Attention:** The process may take up to several months. Do not enter Germany with a tourist visa or a Schengen visa, or even without a visa even if it would be possible (e.g., for US citizens) as this may cause serious problems for your visa process.

Be prepared to provide the following documents at the embassy:

- Passport
- 1x Biometric photo
- University entrance qualification, university admission or confirmation of attendance at a preparatory college
- Proof of health insurance for the orientation year\*
- Proof of financial means and confirmation letter (can be provided by Nicole Lorenz)
- Scholarship agreement
- Visa application form

**\*Health insurance for international candidates**

Given that you are not living in Germany yet, you may have to look for an international private health insurance company. Moreover, it is recommended to have a foreign travel insurance for the trip to Germany.

**Useful websites**

[German Foreign Office \(Auswärtiges Amt\)](#)

[Do you need a visa?](#)

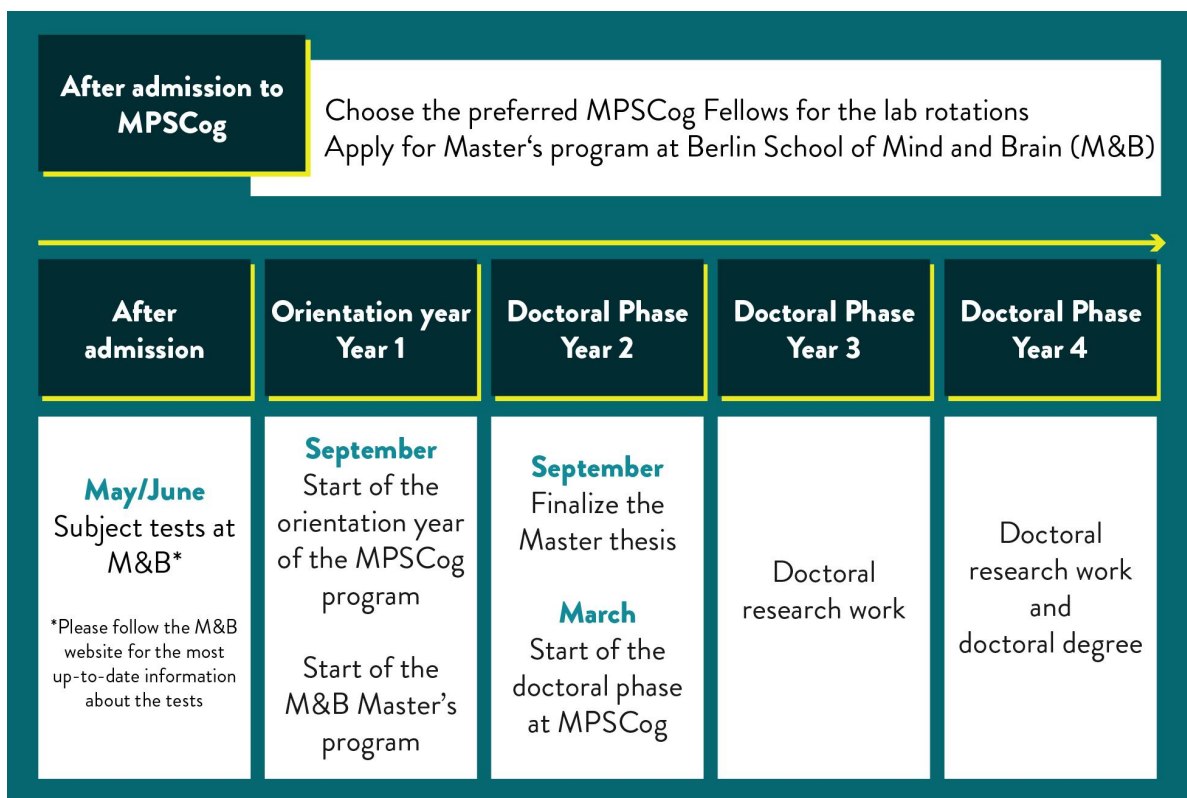
[Visa requirements](#)

[At a glance: Visa for study purposes](#)

### **2.1.5 Application for fast-track master's program (if applicable)**

Doctoral candidates entering the MPSCog program with a bachelor's degree (so-called 'fast-track') will need to obtain a master's degree before entering the doctoral phase of the MPSCog program. Therefore, the fast-track candidates need to apply to a partner master's program, usually at the [Berlin School of Mind and Brain](#) at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

In the first year, fast-track candidates have to fulfill the requirements of both programs: the MSc program at the Berlin School of Mind & Brain and of the MPSCog orientation year. All effort is put into making both programs compatible, e.g. by making the key elements of the program (e-learning, lab rotations) recognized in both programs.



**Figure 7.** Curriculum of fast-track candidates

**\*Attention!** Please follow the website for the most up to date information about the tests.

Combining both programs is a challenging task, hence the fast-track candidates are granted an extended orientation period in the MPSCog program. During the initial 18 months, fast-track candidates are expected to obtain their master's and complete the orientation year of the MPSCog program. After that, they move to the doctoral phase at the MPSCog.

### Master's program

More detailed information about the master's program at the Master "Mind and Brain" at Humboldt University in Berlin. Under the section "[Getting started](#)", candidates find an M&B Handbook, intended to assist with the organizational and bureaucratic steps needed before becoming a master's student at the Berlin School of Mind and Brain.

### Contact person at the Berlin School of Mind and Brain master's program:

Dr. Dirk Mende  
Liaison Officer for Educational Programs  
mb-education@hu-berlin.de  
Tel. +49 30 2093-89768

**Attention:** The submission process for the master's program at the Berlin School of Mind and Brain includes [subject tests](#) which normally take place in May.

### Location of the tests:

Applicants living abroad can take the subject test in their country of residence. Tests will be conducted in locations provided by the German Academic Exchange Service, Goethe Institutes, or the nearest German embassy or consulate. Applicants living in Germany, Austria or Switzerland can take the test in Berlin.

### Topic of the test:

Applicants take the test in the field of their bachelor's degree. The subject tests are divided into: (a) philosophy, (b) linguistics, and (c) for psychologists, biologists, neuroscientists and cognitive scientists.

## 2.1.6 Look for housing

Doctoral candidates are responsible for finding their own accommodation. You should start looking for accommodation as soon as the location of your first lab rotation is confirmed.

**To start with...** Many German students offer their apartment or shared apartment room for a temporary sublease while they for example do an internship or travel. This is the most convenient form of accommodation during lab rotations as the main renter will usually leave all furniture and other essential inventory. If you are coming from abroad, this is the recommended and most convenient option. Renting an empty flat coming from abroad and renting for only a few months is very difficult.

*Links for finding temporary living:*

- [Zwischenmiete](#)
- [wg-gesucht](#)
- [Studenten-WG](#)
- [WG-Gruendung](#)
- [Das schwarze Brett](#)

**Note:** For support, please contact the Curriculum Officer, Ewa Koper ([ewa.koper@maxplanckschools.de](mailto:ewa.koper@maxplanckschools.de)), or the International Affairs Officer, Nicole Lorenz ([nicole.lorenz@maxplanckschools.de](mailto:nicole.lorenz@maxplanckschools.de)).

**Student housing.** The *Studentenwerk* (Student Union) of a partner university is a service provider that offers the option of a student dorm (single or double room) or apartments. These accommodations may require a minimum contract time. The rent usually covers most incidental costs such as electricity, water, heating, and internet access. Generally, the rooms are furnished, but for hygienic reasons, you need to bring your own bedding and kitchenware.

**Apartment sharing.** A very common alternative to living by yourself is apartment sharing. Many students live in a so-called *Wohngemeinschaft* also referred to as *WG*. It has many advantages, such as sharing costs for electricity, internet, and TV license fees. Usually, you will have to pay a deposit to your landlord. In most cases, this is also between 2 to 3 times your portion of the overall monthly rent for a shared apartment. The money will be returned to you about 2-3 months after the contract ends. If the flat needs to be renovated in some form after you leave it, the landlord may keep parts of the deposit to cover the costs. The monthly rent consists of the



rent itself (*Kaltmiete*) plus running costs (*Nebenkosten*) including water, heating, and garbage collection. Additional costs are electricity and internet.

## 2.2 Onboarding steps – After arrival in Germany

It may be a good idea to arrive in Germany as early as possible before the start of the welcome week to take care of a few onboarding steps (Figure 8). Appointments with authorities for example can often be scheduled online beforehand (explained in *Section 2.1*) and will be easier to take care of ahead of your first day in a laboratory. Nicole Lorenz can assist you with any of the necessary steps.



**Figure 8.** Administrative steps necessary after arrival in Germany.

### 2.2.1 Register with a city

In Germany, everyone is obliged to register in the city of living within 14 days after arrival at the so-called *Bürgeramt*. For doctoral candidates coming from abroad, this would be in the city of your first lab rotation. Scheduling an online appointment well in advance might be necessary to avoid long waiting times. It might be helpful to be accompanied by a German speaking person (e.g. another doctoral candidate). If you have difficulties navigating the German language, please contact Nicole Lorenz.

You will need to bring:

- Completed registration form (typically available online or at the *Bürgeramt* office, “Anmeldeformular”)
- Personal identity card and/or passport
- Written tenant confirmation or renting agreement signed by your landlord

At the *Bürgeramt*, you will receive a registration confirmation (*Meldebescheinigung*) which allows you to open a bank account and to extend your visa.

## 2.2.2 Opening a bank account

In order to receive and make regular payments, you need to have a German bank account. The following documents have to be submitted at an appointment at the bank of your choice:

- Passport or ID card
- Registration confirmation from *Bürgeramt* (*Meldebescheinigung*)
- Scholarship contract
- Tax identification number (if available already)

The Max Planck Society has negotiated special bank account tariffs for their employees with Deutsche Bank. You should ask for those tariffs if opening an account with Deutsche Bank. Of course, you can choose any other bank, for example: Commerzbank, Postbank, Sparkasse or online banks like DKB, ING DiBa or N26 which may also offer special tariffs for students/doctoral candidates. Otherwise, banks may charge you a monthly fee for your account if they have no special student tariff available.

In Germany, it is more common to use an EC (debit) card rather than a credit card for non-cash payments. Some banks charge annual fees for issuing a credit card.

### **Transferring money onto a German account**

If students intend to transfer some of their savings to a German bank account, I'd recommend transferwise. It is a very cheap service for transferring money from one country to another. You can also exchange money from a different currency to euro at a very good rate.

## 2.2.3 Getting health insurance

Health insurance is compulsory in Germany – a travel insurance does not provide sufficient insurance cover when studying in Germany. There are two types of insurance: a statutory insurance (public healthcare system) or a private one. We always recommend membership with a statutory insurance company, but in some cases, this may not be possible. Under certain circumstances, it is also possible to keep health insurance in your home country (see Figure 9).

If you have been living in a European country before joining the MPSCog, you can take care of the health insurance just before you start the program. Non-European residents must do so before obtaining their entry visa. The procedure can be quite complex, depending on your citizenship. Please contact Nicole Lorenz for more information and support.

<b>EU CITIZENS</b>	<p><b>Apply for a membership with a statutory health insurance company (e.g. TK, AOK, Barmer)</b></p> <p>Costs: ca. 105 € per month   Subsidy from MPSCog: 50% (max. 100 €)</p> <p><b>Necessary documents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data sheet from the insurance company</li> <li>• Confirmation of current health insurance or copy of current insurance card</li> <li>• Registration confirmation from city council</li> <li>• Copy of ID card or passport</li> <li>• Working contract or scholarship agreement</li> <li>• Picture</li> </ul>
<b>NON-EU CITIZENS</b>	<p><b>Have you been a member of a statutory health insurance company in Europe before?</b></p> <p><b>YES</b> → <b>Apply for a statutory health insurance in Germany</b> For necessary documents, see above “EU Citizens”</p> <p><b>NO</b> → <b>Three options:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1</b> Your home country has a contract with Germany so you can stay comprehensively insured for the time of the orientation year in your home country. In that case, you have to present an S1 certificate (former E106) from your insurance company and a copy of your insurance card.</li> <li><b>2</b> Enroll yourself as a student in a German university and then apply for a statutory health insurance company (for necessary documents see column “EU-citizens”; additionally hand in enrollment certificate)</li> <li><b>3</b> Apply for a membership with a private health insurance company (e.g. Mawista). Costs are age- &amp; tariff-dependent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ approx. 40 € for the basic tariff: not recommended and no subsidy from MPS Cog (50% of insurance fees, max. 100 €); highly recommended; subsidy will be granted if insurance is equivalent to a statutory health insurance according to § 257 Abs. 2 a SGB V (i.e., letter from insurance company necessary confirming the amounts of both, the health insurance and the long-term care insurance)</li> <li>→ approx. 170 € minus subsidy from MPS Cog [50%/max. 100 € if insurance is equivalent to a statutory health insurance according to § 257 Abs. 2 a SGB V (i.e., a letter confirming the amount of the health insurance and the long-term care insurance): from 170 € ]; highly recommended!</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

**Figure 9.** Options for health insurance coverage in Germany

## 2.2.4 Application for a residence permit or extended visa

If you are neither a German citizen nor a citizen of the EU or EEA (European Economic Association), you have to apply for a residence permit or an extended visa with the Foreign Authorities. This needs to be done within 90 days after entry. It is recommended to schedule an appointment online beforehand as the process may take several weeks.

The following documents are necessary:

- Completed visa application form
- 2 biometric photos
- Passport plus copy of passport
- Copy of the rental contract
- Registration confirmation from the Residents' Registration Office (*Bürgeramt*)
- Copy of scholarship contract
- Copy of health insurance

Costs: between 60 and 110 € to be paid at site

Residence permits are issued for two years and can be extended for one more year after application.

## 2.2.5 Salary

During the first year at the MPSCog, doctoral candidates receive a stipend in the amount of between 1,565 € and 1,665 € per month, depending on the subsidy for health insurance (Figure 10). Subsidy will be granted to candidates who are members of a statutory health insurance company or have comprehensive private health insurance equivalent to a statutory one (see *Section 2.2.3*).



**Figure 10.** Monthly payment for doctoral candidates at the MPSCog

The scholarship during the orientation year is paid by the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences (MPI CBS) and will be transferred onto your German account at the end of each month (i.e., first payment is made at the end of September assumed all documents have been submitted on time).

During the orientation year, the decision on supervision of the doctoral phase is made. From the start (September) of the second year (doctoral phase), candidates receive a contract by the institution (Max Planck Institute, university, or other) where their doctoral supervisor is based. They are paid a full TV/TVöD E13 position whereas the

amount may vary due to personal situation (married, children) and region within Germany.

**Attention:** Please note that the preparation of the contract for your doctoral phase in the institution where the doctoral project will be conducted may take 2-3 months. Therefore, the decision on the supervision of your doctoral project must be made in May/June of the orientation year, at the very latest. Ewa Koper can assist you.

## 2.2.6 Personal and mental health support

Participating in a doctoral research program can be challenging on both, the professional and the personal level. There will be stressful times as well as unexpected events that may put you in a difficult situation. [Over the last few months, there have also been many unanticipated challenges caused by coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\). COVID-19 causes uncertainty and may lead to circumstances that threaten our mental health.](#)

If you experience any stress or pressure, especially regarding mental health, please do not hesitate to contact us – no matter how big or small you feel your query may be! We will happily help you and/or assist you in finding the right contact point inside or outside of MPI CBS. The MPSCog team is happy to support you regarding any questions and challenges you may encounter during your doctorate. We can offer internal confidential consultations, can assist you in contacting external professional counselling services, and can also serve as a general information and contact point for a variety of issues.

If you are unsure about how to proceed, please contact our Curriculum Officer Ewa Koper ([ewa.koper@maxplanckschools.de](mailto:ewa.koper@maxplanckschools.de)).

### MPSCog internal consultations

If you experience any problems with your research project, we advise you to contact and discuss primarily with your supervisor(s) and/or advisors. If you have any issues with supervision or if you have questions that are connected to the MPSCog program, you may always contact the MPSCog Scientific Coordinator [Natacha Mendes](#) or the Curriculum Officer [Ewa Koper](#).

### External consultation

If you would like to get an external consultation, [EMAP](#) (an Employee and Manager Assistance Program) is readily available to you.

EMAP is an anonymous, free service for all MPG employees (including scholarship holders) delivered by the [Fürstenberg Institute](#). EMAP can also be contacted for issues related to the COVID-19 crisis.

*How does EMAP work?*

You call the free phone number 0800/387 78 36 or from foreign countries 00800/38 77 83 62. You can also write an email to [beratung@fuerstenberg-institut.de](mailto:beratung@fuerstenberg-institut.de) or book an online appointment on their [homepage](#).

Importantly, the service is available in English and several other languages.

If calling, please indicate that you are part of the MPG. If they wish to further confirm that you are entitled to this service, they will simply ask to see a copy of your work contract. If candidates prefer, they may also contact [Ewa Koper](#) for assistance in contacting EMAP.

**\*COVID-19 crisis- Reputable sources on mental health management:**

- [Protecting your mental health during the Coronavirus crisis](#)
- [The Conservation- 7-science based strategies to cope with Coronavirus anxiety](#)
- [US-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention- Manage Stress and Anxiety](#)

## 2.2.7 Further helpful information

*Language courses.* Taking German classes during your time in Germany is voluntary, but advisable, as not everyone in Germany speaks English. The universities (e.g., [Research Academy at Leipzig University](#)) offer language courses – please get in touch with the secretary of your lab if you are interested in a language class.

*Emergency numbers and medical services*

Fire Fighters & Emergency: 112

Police: 110

On-call medical service: 116 117

*Medical practitioner:* If you are feeling sick, a general practitioner (*Hausarzt*) would be the first place to go. We recommend that you schedule an appointment beforehand, otherwise you may have to wait a while before being seen. If you need to see a specialized physician (*Facharzt*), the general practitioner might need to give you a transferral form. If you get sick (not life-threatening) over the weekend or after the opening hours of the general practitioner, you can call a medical service: 116117 (*Ärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst*). They will try to immediately assess the situation at hand and will report to a doctor. If necessary, you will be transported to the nearest medical facility. In case of a medical emergency, please call 112 or go directly to a hospital nearby (*Notaufnahme*). Your health insurance will always cover these visits and the emergency services! Bring your insurance card or proof of insurance coverage for consultation. Please contact the secretary of your lab for tips on English-speaking doctors, or do an online search.

*Shop business hours:* Normal opening hours of shops in Germany are from 10:00 to 20:00. Smaller shops often vary in their opening times. Most supermarkets are open from 07:00 - 22:00h from Monday to Saturday.

**Note:** Please note that shops are closed on Sundays, although there are exceptions: stores in central train stations are usually open on Sundays for limited hours, some bakeries are open on Sundays and petrol stations who often offer basic food are typically open 24/7.



*Mobile phone contracts:* In Germany, you can choose between two ways to use your mobile phone. The first option is to get a prepaid card for your phone, which is often easier than getting a contract. You can purchase a prepaid sim card in any supermarket. You should compare the prices and packages, also with the second option which would be by contract. Here, you pay monthly and usually have a 2-year contract. It is a bit more complex and there are various phone companies to choose from (e.g., Vodafone, Telekom, O2, a comparison of the current offers can be found here: [Telefontarife](#) or [Billiger Telefonieren](#)).

*Second-hand sales:* If you need any furniture or a bike and do not want to pay the full price, second-hand is an alternative option. The most commonly used websites are [ebay-Kleinanzeigen](#) or [Das Schwarze Brett](#), but Facebook Marketplace or local Facebook groups are also very common.

*Broadcasting fees:* In Germany, every household has to pay a broadcasting license fee for the state-run TV channels, radio stations and online streams of these services – even if you do not have a radio or TV set. This fee is a fixed sum (currently 17,55 € per month), regardless of how many persons live in the household. You should receive a letter from the company automatically. For more information, please visit this [link](#).

*Internet/telephone:* Even though many public areas have free wifi (a.k.a. WLAN in Germany), you might want to have wifi at home. If you have your own apartment, you have to select a provider. The main providers in Germany are *Deutsche Telekom*, *Kabel Deutschland*, *Vodafone*, and *1x1*. They all vary in their monthly rates. Thus, a comparison of the current offers is advisable, such as on the websites [Telefontarife](#) or [Billiger Telefonieren](#).

*Electricity:* There is always a basic electricity supply when you rent an apartment, which may be a little more expensive than offers you can find online. If you want to save some money, you can compare prices with webpages such as [Check24](#).

*Liability insurance:* While you are not legally required to have liability insurance in the majority of cases (see below), it is strongly advised to get the coverage. Some landlords may want to see a proof of insurance. Private insurance companies often provide combined health and liability insurance. It protects the policyholder against compensatory financial claims caused by damage to the property of a third person, in business or in private context. While you are on lab rotations, it might, for example, happen that you accidentally drop an expensive device and it breaks. Every institution has its own regulations and cover of such accidents, but it might be that they are not going to cover the damage. Then it is good if you have such liability insurance. More information can be found here [here](#). Insurance providers can be found online.

*Insurance of contents:* An *insurance of contents* covers your personal belongings at home (and in some cases, also if they leave the home) against elemental damage (fire, storm, flood, theft), damage through pipe water, burglary and vandalism. You are not required to have such an insurance, but it would be advised to, since they are usually not very expensive.

## 2.3 Doctoral Curriculum and initial academic steps

The MPSCog offers an international four-year doctoral program open to graduates with a 4-year bachelor's (*Section 2.1.5*) or master's degree. Conducting a doctoral program is a huge project. The Curriculum Officer and the MPSCog coordination team are there to support the candidates in all stages of the program. Please do not hesitate to contact us in case of any questions.

### Curriculum Officer:

Ewa Koper Ewa.Koper@maxplanckschools.de

Phone: 0049 341 9940 2300

MPI for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences

Room: C105



### 2.3.1 Overview of the first year and beyond

During the first year of the MPSCog doctoral program, there is an emphasis on two academic elements: lab rotations and e-learning. This so-called *orientation year* offers a unique, individually-tailored curriculum to explore research fields across different labs. It also covers the fundamental knowledge from the broad field of cognition via e-learning courses. Figure 11 gives an overview of each of the four years of the MPSCog program.



**Figure 11.** Timeline of the MPSCog doctoral program

Furthermore, three Cognition Academies (and an introductory week in September) are also parts of the orientation year. They allow candidates who are spread across Germany, London and Nijmegen to meet in person.

At the end of the first year, the accomplishments of the candidates (e-learning, lab rotations and presentations at the labs) are evaluated and the successful candidates then proceed to the doctoral phase. The design of the first year assists the candidates in making an informed decision about the supervisor for the doctoral phase. If the fellow agrees (and has the capacity) to accept the candidate, the candidate can then settle into the desired lab at the start of the second year and commence the doctoral phase of the program.

### **First week at the MPSCog: What to expect?**

The opening ceremony of the doctoral program takes place in September with the welcome week at Harnack House in Berlin. During this week, candidates meet their peers and the MPSCog coordination team in person. They are introduced to the program and the e-learning platform, present their previous research work to the group, and attend talks by some of our fellows.

Candidates are also invited to join and participate in the Max Planck School Day (September 11th, Figure 12). This event officially welcomes all new doctoral candidates from the three Max Planck Schools and allows exchange amongst researchers of participating institutions across a wide range of career stages.



**Figure 12.** Picture from the first Kick-Off Symposium in 2019. The German Science Minister Anja Karliczek also took part in the event, pictured here with the Max Planck President Martin Stratmann, the Vice-President of the Max Planck Society Ferdi Schüth and doctoral candidates of the three schools (Bojana Grujičić from the MPSCog)

(Picture: Max Planck Society / David Ausserhofer)

## Getting a mentor

During the first week, each candidate will be assigned a mentor (i.e., a more advanced MPSCog candidate). The mentor should support the mentee in navigating the orientation phase of the program. Mentees can change their mentors if they wish to do that for any reason. In such a case, please contact Ewa Koper.

### Access granted: E-mail addresses, Life Cycle, MPI CBS Library, Open LMS

**Email addresses:** Every doctoral candidate will be granted an official e-mail address (Name.Surname@maxplanckschools.de) and each cohort will have a group contact (e.g., doccandidates2020@maxplanckschools.de) through which the coordination team can contact the candidates and share all important information.

**Life Cycle:** Doctoral candidates will be introduced to the Life Cycle tool (<https://mps.cloud.opencampus.net/>), which allows management of academic data collected throughout the doctoral program.

**MPI CBS Library:** As contract holders with the Max Planck School of Cognition/the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences (MPI CBS), the candidates are also given access to the virtual library of MPI CBS (<https://www.cbs.mpg.de/library>) during the orientation year.

### MPSCog affiliation

Doctoral candidates are asked to add the MPSCog affiliation to the e-signature in their emails: “Doctoral candidate at the Max Planck School of Cognition” (or similar).

## Orientation year

After the welcome week, doctoral candidates will relocate to the institution where their first lab rotation is to take place. The e-learning sessions will commence in the second half of September.



The first year consists of three academic components which are further described in the following sections resulting in an overall evaluation (Figure 13).

**Figure 13.** Academic components of the orientation year



### 2.3.2 Cognition Academies

Cognition Academies are planned for each year of the program (Figure 11). They present an opportunity to come together and meet the other candidates, tutors, fellows, invited guests, and the MPSCog coordination team.

#### **Purpose of the Academies during the first academic year:**

- Classroom weeks to further discourse on topics of the precursory e-learning courses
- Chance to attend talks of the MPSCog Fellows and other invited speakers
- In-person opportunity to discuss the learning progress with e-tutors
- Chance to present data and findings from lab rotations and obtain feedback
- Opportunity to socialize with the other doctoral candidates, including those from other cohorts

**Attention:** Doctoral candidates are expected to actively participate in all respective Cognition Academies, and to give at least two talks or poster presentations on their research projects.



**Figure 14.** Harnack Haus in Berlin - a conference center of the Max Planck Society where the Cognition Academies mainly take place

#### **Organization of the Academies**

Cognition Academies are centrally organized by the MPSCog and mainly take place in Berlin (Figure 14) and Leipzig, with occasional (inter)national exceptions. If needed, accommodation for doctoral candidates will be handled by the MPSCog. Travel arrangements, however, must be made individually and will be reimbursed afterwards. For more information, please see *Section 5.1*.

### 2.3.3 Lab rotations

After the admission, doctoral candidates submit a list of four [laboratories of MPSCog Fellows](#), which they would like to visit to gain experience throughout the orientation year. Based on the wish lists of each candidate, the coordination team arranges an individual schedule.

#### Which labs to choose for the lab rotation?

The candidates are given freedom in choosing their preferred labs. However, in order to avoid over-specialization in the first year, candidates are encouraged to choose labs from complimentary research areas.

#### Rotations...

... with Adjunct Faculty members can be accommodated, if suitable. In exceptional cases, also lab rotations with supervisors who are not MPSCog Fellows can be considered.

#### How long should the lab rotations last in total?

The total time spent in lab rotations should not be less than eight months. The usual timeline of the lab rotations must remain compatible with the schedule of e-learning and Cognition Academies (Figure 15), which is:

- Rotation in the 1<sup>st</sup> lab: mid-September (after Cognition Academy) – December
- Rotation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> lab: February – April
- Rotation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> lab: June – August

#### Flexibility of rotations

The total number and the length of lab rotations can vary from the standard (above mentioned) schedule. There is some flexibility in adjusting the timeline of lab rotations for individual candidates. Therefore, in case of queries, the candidates should approach the Curriculum Officer.

**Attention!** We highly recommend getting liability insurance as it will pay if you cause harm to someone, e.g. break something by accident in a lab (see *Section 2.2.5*).

**Attention!** Ewa Koper, our Curriculum Officer, is ready to support you regarding any questions and challenges (e.g., level of supervision or organisation of the lab rotation) you may encounter during your lab rotations.



\*Until May, doctoral candidates have to decide on a supervisor for their doctoral thesis.

**Figure 15.** Timeline of Cognition Academies and lab rotations throughout the program

### **Purpose of lab rotations**

- Gaining more experience in a relevant field
- Exploring novel areas of research and techniques
- Getting to know the overall laboratory and location
- Exploring several labs in order to better define research interests and make informed choices on the supervisor with whom the candidates would like to continue their doctoral thesis work
- Providing fellows the opportunity to evaluate candidates and assess their potential for fitting into their research group

### **Evaluation of the lab rotations**

- Fellows supervising lab rotations will be asked to fill out an Evaluation Questionnaire. Candidate's overall performance and the oral presentation (in front of the department or the research team) will be assessed
- Most essential points of the evaluation will be made available to the individual doctoral candidates via the Life Cycle portal (2.3.7)
- MPSCog does not require any written work or reports from the lab rotation

First two lab rotations of the *fast-track* candidates:

- Length: 300 working hours each, to be recognized by both programs
- Based in the labs in Berlin, to allow attending the in-person master's courses
- Timeline: October- March (1) and April-September (2)

Third lab rotation of the *fast-track* candidates/MASTER'S PROJECT:

- Rotation to conduct a master's project
- Start: September - approximately until February
- Based in the labs in Berlin or in Leipzig


### **Organization of lab rotations**


The logistical arrangements for lab rotations should be organized by the doctoral candidates. Travel costs from Cognition Academies to lab rotations are reimbursed by the MPSCog. It is also possible to combine trips to/from lab rotations and academies with visits to home (for detailed procedure, see *Section 5.1*). Accommodation costs during lab rotations cannot be covered by the MPSCog. Our team is ready to support candidates in finding appropriate accommodations.


#### **Advice for the doctoral candidates when starting their lab rotations**


It is entirely up to the fellow and doctoral candidate to decide how the lab rotations should be structured. We encourage candidates to contact the fellows in advance and discuss expectations regarding the rotation.




**Know what you want in advance and discuss this openly with your supervisor.** 

**Be as honest and as direct as you can when discussing your expectations and proposals for your project.** 

**Do not be afraid to try new things, make mistakes, or learn something new. This is a great opportunity to get involved in something that interests you, even if it does not seem directly related to your doctoral thesis at this point in time.** 

**Reflect on how your rotation experiences align with your broader learning and future goals.** 

**Be curious throughout your rotations: observe how different labs operate, and network with people.** 

**Figure 16.** Tips for success during your lab rotation

## 2.3.4 E-learning

### General information

The *orientation year* of the MPSCog doctoral program is roughly divided into three terms: Autumn (September – December), Winter (January – April), and Spring (May – July). In total, doctoral candidates will complete approximately three lab rotations (see *Section 2.3.3*) and eight foundational e-courses in the first year (Figure 17). Each term will include one lab rotation and no more than three 10-week e-courses running in parallel. Building up on these foundational courses, each term will finish with a Cognition Academy, during which doctoral candidates, tutors and fellows of the MPSCog will come together for 2-3 weeks of *advanced* lectures and workshops around the subjects taught during the respective term.

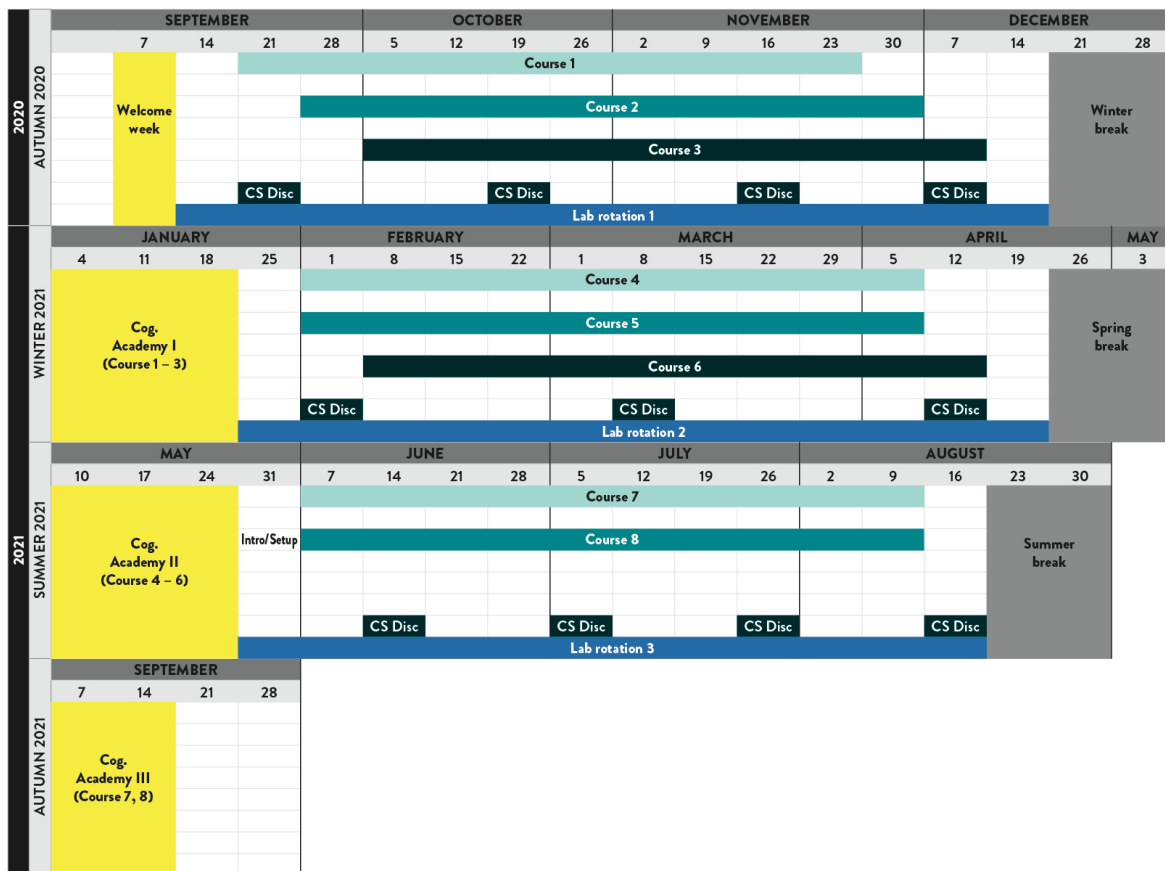


Figure 17. Example of a course calendar

## E-learning team

Dr. Samyogita Hardikar  
E-learning Officer  
Samyogita.Hardikar@maxplanckschools.de  
Phone: 0049 341 9940 2412  
MPI for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences,  
Room: A121



Tomoko Koda  
Learning Designer  
Tomoko.Koda@maxplanckschools.de  
Phone: 0049 341 9940 164  
MPI for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences,  
Room: C105



Samyogita Hardikar and Tomoko Koda will be the primary points of contact for everything related to e-learning. A full and up-to-date overview of the tutors teaching the e-courses can be found [online](#).

Eight online courses (Figure 18) will cover the fundamentals on different topics related to cognition:



**Figure 18.** Online courses and discussion sessions offered at the MPSCog

Throughout the year, doctoral candidates will also participate in bi-weekly discussion sessions (*Cognitive Science Discussion*) about various topics within cognitive science led by fellows or tutors of MPSCog.

### **Personalized curriculum**

If a doctoral candidate has demonstrable expertise in the topic of an e-learning course (e.g., covered equivalent content within his or her bachelor's or master's studies), there is the possibility to opt out from that course. The decision of whether the doctoral candidate can or cannot opt out will be made by the tutor of the course, based on the previous course syllabus and transcripts, and an assessment of the candidate's knowledge. After the assessment, the tutor will decide whether the candidate may be allowed

- a complete opt-out (i.e., no need to undergo exam/evaluation at the end of the course),
- a conditional opt-out (may opt out from weekly course activities, but still needs to undergo and pass exam/evaluation at the end), or
- no opt-out at all.
- The doctoral candidate who opts out from a course is expected to arrange an alternative evaluation with the tutor if applicable, and keep the Curriculum Officer up to date.

There is no limit to the number of opt-outs. However, if a doctoral candidate chooses to (completely) opt out of more than two courses, beginning from the third such course, they are required to choose one of the two options below:

- participate in an alternative course of an advanced level in the area of the opted-out course, or a beginner level course in an area not covered by the eight courses within MPS-Cog,
- participate in the opted-out course as a Teaching Assistant (TA)

The specifics of such an arrangement must be discussed with the tutor and the Curriculum Officer.

### **Course structure and format**

Each course will last for 10 weeks, concluding with a pass/fail assessment.

**Note:** Exception for the fast-track candidates who will get grades according to the Berlin School of Mind and Brain requirements.

The courses consist of two parts: weekly face-to-face live sessions and self-paced learning. Weekly live sessions (90 minutes) require students to be virtually present in the same online place (*Blackboard Collaborate* or *Zoom*) at the same time to directly interact with tutors and classmates. For the self-paced learning component, doctoral candidates should go over the provided materials (e.g., pre-recorded video lectures, assigned reading) and complete assignments and activities before the deadline at their own pace. Attendance at these sessions and completion of all the materials and assignments/activities before their deadlines is mandatory.

## Virtual campus

We are using [Open LMS](#) as the e-learning platform for the MPSCog. *Blackboard Collaborate* provides the virtual classroom for the weekly live interaction with tutors. **Please make sure you read the *Code of Conduct for the virtual campus* when you sign up for *Open LMS*, and adhere to it at all times.**

*What technology is required?*

- A computer with
  - an up-to-date operating system (e.g., Windows or Mac) and an internet browser (we suggest using either Chrome or Firefox)
  - basic computer audio/video equipment: microphone or headset with microphone and webcam
- Broadband/high-speed internet connection (1.5 Mbps download, 750 Kbps upload minimum)

**Attention:** In case the doctoral candidate does not have the required equipment, they should inform Ewa Koper.

## Rules and regulations

- Passing all e-courses during the first year is a requirement of the MPSCog doctoral program.
- It is the responsibility of the doctoral candidates to ensure attendance of all e-learning courses, including weekly online face-to-face sessions with tutors.
- In case of a justified absence, due to sick leave or other commitment (such as another course or conference), doctoral candidates must inform the MPSCog of their absence by immediately marking it in the Life Cycle calendar (see *Section 2.3.7*). If you need to be excused from attendance or assignments due to sickness, please also provide a doctor's note.



Figure 19. Tips for success in online courses

### 2.3.5 Short visits to other labs

Doctoral candidates who want to visit and explore different laboratories can arrange short visits (e.g., 1-2 days) to these labs during the orientation year. This is an opportunity to meet more fellows and to get to know these labs, which could also be considered for the doctoral phase of the program.

The visits can be arranged individually or in small groups by contacting the fellow directly. The visits can be planned at any time during the orientation phase, ideally during the breaks between the *official* lab rotations. The travel cost of these visits will be reimbursed (see *Section 5.1*). The visits are the initiative of the doctoral candidates, but the Curriculum Officer can provide support if needed. Please follow the general procedure of a business trip described in *Section 5.1*.

### 2.3.6 External activities

The main focus of the first year is participation in the e-learning courses and Cognition Academies, as well as making the most of the lab rotations experience. Typically, the first year is rather busy and little time remains for any additional activities. The doctoral candidates are, however, encouraged to participate in conferences, especially if they can already present data. They can also attend external (research-related or soft skills) training, including: online courses, workshops, and summer schools. All the external activities should be relevant and need to be approved by Ewa Koper.

**Attention:** Additional external activities must not overlap with the Cognition Academies, as the attendance at the academies is mandatory.

Doctoral candidates who wish to attend a conference or a workshop are asked to:

- Inform the Curriculum Officer (Ewa Koper) as soon as possible prior to the event, so that the request can be considered on time
- Discuss attending the event (possible absence from the lab) with the supervisor of the lab rotation and e-tutors
- Start the procedure for business trips with the MPSCog (see *Section 5.1*)

#### **Budget for the Orientation Year**

In the Orientation Year, the MPSCog grants each doctoral candidate a total budget of 1,000 € for participation in relevant scientific activities. Travel expenses, accommodation, registration fees, and potential visa costs can be covered by this allowance. There is no limit on the number of activities but the total budget of 1,000 € must not be exceeded.

**Note:** Please ask your lab rotation supervisor for permission and inform the Curriculum Officer about the content, dates, and estimated costs.

### 2.3.7 *Life Cycle* – Curriculum Management Tool

*Life Cycle* is a general database for all doctoral candidates of the MPSCog. It has been established to facilitate the management of academic data, accomplishments, and progress reporting of doctoral candidates. Up-to-date maintenance of the information collected within the *Life Cycle* is required of each candidate and monitored by the coordination team.

#### **How to access *Life Cycle*?**

Doctoral candidates will receive an email with a link that redirects them to generate a password and access to the platform.

#### **Type of data collected within the candidates' individual profiles in *Life Cycle*:**

- Application files
- University registration information
- Lab rotation evaluations
- E-learning assessments
- Project proposal and progress reports (from second year onwards)
- Information on publications, awards and external activities
- Absence record - candidates can mark planned and unplanned (sick leave) absences
- Short wrap up from individual meetings between the candidates and the coordination team member(s)

#### **BOX 13: Advantages of using *Life Cycle* for the candidates and the MPSCog**

- Collecting and managing all academic records in a consistent and transparent way (e.g., for the first year evaluation)
- Data protected and secure system with tailored access rights to the collected data (e.g., e-learning team views and edits only the e-learning part)
- Uploading files and sharing information in a user-friendly manner (e.g., planned absence)
- Effective monitoring of the progress of the research projects (e.g., scheduled progress reports) via sending automatic reminders

### 2.3.8 Doctoral supervisor(s)

Even though all supervisors within the doctoral program of the MPSCog are generally available to candidates, the selection of a preferred supervisor may not always be an easy task. For administrative reasons and to maintain high supervision standards, the fellows do have limitations regarding supervision capacity. For example, each fellow may ultimately only supervise one candidate per cohort. Thus, selecting a supervisor may require a strategic approach and overall flexibility in final choice. It is important that candidates thoughtfully identify more than one fellow as a potential supervisor, particularly if the case arises that the first choice supervisor is unavailable. Doctoral candidates are advised to approach their preferred supervisor(s) latest by May of their orientation year to express their intention to pursue a doctoral project. For example, for candidates starting their orientation year in September 2021, they are advised to contact their potential supervisor(s) by May 2022 latest.



Candidates will typically receive the final decision about supervision from the contacted fellows in May of the orientation year. MPSCog cannot guarantee that candidates will get supervision from the supervisor of their first choice. The decision on the doctoral supervision is based purely on a mutual agreement between the supervisor(s) and the doctoral candidates. The MPSCog encourages all candidates to physically visit (if possible) or schedule online calls with the potential supervisors of the doctoral phase. Given the May deadline, the third lab rotation (scheduled from June to August) may not necessarily provide additional information to help candidates make a decision on a specific fellow and the respective lab. The MPSCog does, however, organize bi-weekly online talks by fellows/postdocs from MPSCog associated labs where candidates may ask scientific questions. This may also provide the opportunity for candidates to connect with senior candidates of the MPSCog to inquire about different laboratories within the program.

Again: Please, keep in mind that fellows can only **supervise one doctoral candidate per cohort**. Thus, even if the supervisor you have in mind is requested by more than one candidate within a cohort, the supervisor can still only select one candidate of that cohort. Therefore, we ask all candidates to always remain open to a second and/or third option of supervisors. The MPSCog coordination team can be approached at any time, in case support or advice is needed throughout the process.

At the beginning of the second year, doctoral candidates will also decide on an advisory team for their doctoral thesis, the so-called Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC).

**Purpose.** The TAC supports the doctoral candidate throughout the doctoral phase up to the preparations for the defense. The committee meets regularly to assess the candidate's progress and to provide feedback on the development of the candidate's thesis work. Members are also available to the doctoral candidate for one-on-one consultations and may become a source of references (networking person). At any time, the candidate can contact TAC members for personal discussions or can request additional TAC meetings.

**Structure.** A TAC generally consists of a maximum of 3-4 members, selected by the doctoral candidate in consultation with the thesis supervisor. The TAC consists of a main supervisor (holding a professorship at the university that will later award the doctoral degree) and two advisors.

The *supervisor* performs the scientific function of supervising the doctoral project with regard to its contents. Candidates carry out their research work in the supervisor's laboratory, and regularly discuss and present data to the supervisor and research group during their lab meetings.

*Advisors* support the candidate by providing academic counseling for the doctorate project as well as ensuring appropriate supervision of the candidate. They may be approached if there are problems regarding either the project or the supervision.

The committee members will have expertise in the topic of the research project and at least meet once a year with the candidate (e.g., during Cognition Academies) to monitor their progress, provide critical feedback and guidance, and ensure that a high-quality thesis is completed in a given time.

At least one of the advisors should be independent from the supervisor and someone who could provide an objective assessment of the candidate's progress. This *independent TAC advisor* is in charge of filling out the TAC assessment form during the meeting, keeping track of time during the meeting. It is the candidate's responsibility to invite the TAC members, arrange TAC meetings, and provide the PhD Program office with copies of the signed TAC assessment forms.

The Curriculum Officer will support the candidates in the selection of the advisory team.

### **2.3.9 End of first year evaluation**

To move on to the doctoral phase (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> year), doctoral candidates must fulfill the following criteria by the end of the orientation year:

- Complete all online courses successfully
- Participate in all three Cognition Academies, including at least two presentations per doctoral candidate
- At least three confirmed lab rotations with positive evaluations
- Confirmed primary supervisor for doctoral research work

Those accomplishments serve as a foundation and preparation for the doctoral phase. Candidates who successfully carried out all those tasks, have a high chance of succeeding in the 3-year doctoral phase.

Candidates who do not fulfill all of the aforementioned criteria will not be able to move on to the doctoral research phase immediately. In such a case, a decision on the next steps in each particular case, will be made by Prof. Arno Villringer (Speaker at the MPSCog), Natacha Mendes (Scientific Coordinator), and Ewa Koper (Curriculum Officer).

## **Appendix: Useful information for stays in Berlin**

### **Humboldt-Universität International Office**

Unter den Linden 6  
Room 2257  
Phone: +49 30 2093-46724

[www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/](http://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/)  
[www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/contact](http://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/contact)  
[www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende-aus-dem-ausland-wegweiser](http://www.international.hu-berlin.de/en/studierende-aus-dem-ausland-wegweiser)

### **Registration with the City (*Bürgeramt*)**

[Online appointments](#) and then click „Termin buchen“

### **Foreigners' Registration Office Berlin (Ausländerbehörde)**

Friedrich-Krause-Ufer 24  
(underground station „Amrumer Strasse“)  
Phone: +49 30 903690

[www.berlin.de/labo/willkommen-in-berlin/aufenthalt/studium](http://www.berlin.de/labo/willkommen-in-berlin/aufenthalt/studium)  
[www.berlin.de/einwanderung/en/](http://www.berlin.de/einwanderung/en/)  
<https://service.berlin.de/standort/121885/en/> *HYPERLINK*

### **Where to stay during the first days or weeks**

[Guesthouse Humboldt-Universität](#)

[House of Nations](#)

[Student Village Schlachtensee](#)

[Studentenwerk Berlin](#)

[Berlin flatrentals](#)

[Rooms in Berlin](#)

[Furnished flats Berlin](#)

[Berlin Craigslist](#)

[Berlin scholars](#)

[Crocodilian](#)

[Berlinovo](#)

Nino Schriefer  
Berlinovo Apartment GmbH  
Hallesches Ufer 74-76  
Phone: +49 30 25441-3107  
E-Mail: [schriefer@berlinovo.de](mailto:schriefer@berlinovo.de)

Fully furnished apartments, up to 3 rooms  
Prices 2019: 470-1065 € per month warm rent (Berlin Mitte from 850 € for 1 room, 30 sqm; 2 rooms 50sqm)  
1 month notice period (so 2 months rent minimum)

Necessary docs:

- Visa
- Passport/ID card
- Working contract
- Interessentenvereinbarung

## **Health Insurance Companies**

*Overview of public health insurance companies:*

[www.gkv-](http://www.gkv-)

[spitzenverband.de/service/versicherten\\_service/krankenkassenliste/krankenkassen.jsp](http://spitzenverband.de/service/versicherten_service/krankenkassenliste/krankenkassen.jsp)

### [AOK Nordost](#)

Hufelandhaus, Hegelplatz 1

Phone :+49 800 265080-24634

E-Mail: [margareta.barisic@nordost.aok.de](mailto:margareta.barisic@nordost.aok.de)

### [Techniker Krankenkasse](#)

Alte Jacobstr. 81-82

Phone: +49 800 2858585

### [Barmer GEK Berlin](#)

Karl-Liebknecht-Str. 20

Phone: +49 30 25331 44-2427

## **Banks in Berlin**

[Berliner Bank](#)

[Berliner Sparkasse](#)

[Deutsche Bank](#)

[Postbank](#)

[Sparda-Bank](#)

## **List of English speaking Doctors**

[Doctors in Berlin](#)