

MAX-DELBRÜCK-CENTER FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE  
IN THE HELMHOLTZ ASSOCIATION

# **INTERNATIONAL PHD PROGRAM**

**Application manual**

## Application manual

Once you have [registered on the Application portal](#), you will receive an e-mail with your personal login information. If this e-mail has not arrived, please check your spam folder. If the problem persists, contact us at [phdmdc@mdc-berlin.de](mailto:phdmdc@mdc-berlin.de). Please note that we do not accept applications other than those submitted through our Application portal (e.g. CVs sent directly via e-mail or through other job application portals).

After registration, you may start working on your application, editing and saving the information in each section until you submit. The application should be completed in English. All mandatory fields are marked with \*. Once you have submitted the form, you will no longer be able to edit the information, however, you can check the status of your recommendation letters. Please note that you will receive a confirmation email upon submission.

### Open projects

The list of group leaders participating in this call and their respective research projects can be found under the "Participating group leaders" tab on the left-hand side menu of the portal. After registration, a detailed description of each project will be available. For more information on the participating project leaders please visit the [profile pages of our research labs](#). Carefully look into the research information and find projects that best fit your interests. Consider to check this list regularly during the call as more projects may be added. You do not need to contact any of the project leaders at this stage, but make sure to include all the labs and projects of your interest in the text of your application (see below, "Research interest and motivation" section), with detailed statement of interest for each research lab.

Before starting the application process, please make sure that you are [eligible](#) to apply for our program.

### Eligibility

- Applicants are required to hold **a university degree equivalent to a Master Degree (MSc)**, including a research thesis in **biology, biotechnology, medicine, molecular medicine, chemistry, computer science, engineering, mathematics, physics, or some related field**.
- Applicants still studying should anticipate receiving their **degree not later than 6 months after the interview date**.
- Required MSc final grade is  $\geq 75\%$ , or German score of at least 'good' ( $< 2,5$  of 5)
- Applicants shall at the time of interview be **in the first four years of their research careers** (master degree obtained not later than 4 years ago) and **should not have a doctoral degree already**, according to the [European Commission's definition of early-stage researchers](#).
- **Language skills:** Applicants **need to have a good command of written and spoken English**, while German language skills are not required. English proficiency tests for non-native speakers are **recommended** (such as TOEFL test with a score of 95+ (internet-based), 240+ (computer-based) or 587+ (paper-based), IELTS certificate with a bandscore 7.0+, or Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)), however, **the language proficiency certificates are not a requirement for the application**.
- Please note that candidates who have previously been invited for interviews, will not be considered for further interview.
- In the application process, applicants having completed their university degree must upload a scanned copy of the certificate, as well as transcripts, including marked coursework from university. Students still enrolled in their university program must upload a provisional certificate stating the already obtained examination marks.

### MDC Master students and MDC interns

- MDC Master students and MDC interns who have been working or registered at the MDC during the past 2 years longer than 3 months until the PhD interview week at MDC, are not eligible to apply to the international MDC Program. Instead, they are considered internal students and may apply for internal PhD fellowship positions.
- Short-term interns who have been working or registered at the MDC for less than 3 months until interview week are eligible to apply to the Int. PhD program if they apply to a different research group.
- Short-term interns who wish to join the research group they have been affiliated before are not eligible for the Int. PhD Program and are recommended to apply for an internal PhD fellowship position.

If your eligibility status is unclear, please contact us at [phdmdc@mdc-berlin.de](mailto:phdmdc@mdc-berlin.de).

Below, you will find a detailed manual to help you fill in your application. **Please read it carefully, since incomplete and/or incorrectly filled applications will not be taken into further consideration.** Please make sure to include all relevant information in the application portal. Information only included in additional documents (e.g. CV or certificates) might not be considered.

More information about eligibility, application process, language certificates, selection process, salaries, etc. can be found in our [FAQ](#) section.

### Personal Information

If you have multiple names, please enter the name from your passport. This is especially important if you need a visa to attend the Interview week in Berlin, since we will use it later for your visa application. If applicable, please use hyphens. Please enter the address that is available to and used by courier delivery services. **Make sure to use an address where you will be reachable in the period until the Interview week in Berlin** (especially at the time of visa applications, ca. 4 weeks before the Interview week). Furthermore, make sure to provide at least one telephone number.

### Education

**Education:** For detailed information on degree requirements, please check the “[Eligibility](#)” section. Applicants holding (or expecting to hold within 6 months after interviews) a MSc (Master in Science) degree (or equivalent), including a research master thesis, are eligible to apply. If you hold a degree that is not a MSc, please send the name of the degree in the original language and the English translation to [phdmdc@mdc-berlin.de](mailto:phdmdc@mdc-berlin.de) and we will inform you whether you are eligible. Examples of accepted equivalents are MD, integrated programs, such as Diploma, or BSc-MSc, as well as BTech-MTech Dual Degrees. If you hold **only a BSc degree**, even an extended one of four years, **or if you already have a PhD, you are not eligible.**

Furthermore, to be eligible, you need to have some research experience (bachelor and/or master research projects). Also, a research master thesis should have been required for obtaining your degree. If your study programs were structured in this way, you are eligible to apply.

Enter information about your university and research thesis (both BSc and MSc or MD). Please note that information on **both BSc and MSc** (or integrated program) need to be given, or you won't be able to submit the application form.

**Date of graduation:** If you have not graduated yet, put an approximate date of graduation.

**Final score:** To transform your grade into the German grading system, a detail description of your university's grading system is needed. Therefore, please provide information on i) highest possible grade in your grading system; ii) lowest passing grade in your system (please note: not possible, but passing) and iii) your achieved final grade. These will be used to translate your final grade into the German grading system.

## Honors/ Awards

**Scholarships and/or Awards:** Please clearly state the type of scholarships/awards you have received, the funding body, and the duration of the support.

**Study abroad:** Please state all long term (e.g. master program or a semester abroad), as well as short term (e.g. summer school, workshop or a course) visits. Please clearly state type of the program / event, host institution and duration of the study stay.

**Publications:** Please give a list of your publications (**only those published in international journals**) and conference contributions (poster presentation and/or talk). Please give full citations of all publications / conference contributions. Publications in preparation or under review should not be given.

## Research Experience, Interest and Motivation

Please select the **research area** you are most interested in from the drop-down menu. In addition, you may also select drop-down research **key words** that particularly match your interests. If you would like to be considered for one of **the international exchange programs** at the MDC, select the appropriate program field from the drop-down menu. At this stage, this only indicates your interest, and it is not considered an application for the specific exchange program.

**Research experience** (max 2500 characters including spaces): Please provide information on your relevant research experience, and list any supervised research projects with a duration of at least several weeks. Please indicate whether your contribution to the project work was of a theoretical or experimental nature. Describe your role in the project, as well as contributions and results obtained from your work. Describe your accomplishments, with emphasis on the techniques you used and skills you obtained.

**Research interest essay - Personal Statement** (max 3000 characters including spaces): Use the research interest statement to express which **research field** you want to pursue during your PhD and why, as well as specify your **preferences for particular MDC research labs and projects**. **Make sure to include all labs and projects of your interest, with detailed statement of interest for each project.** This might include, for example, the background of your interest (such as previous experience or personal motivation), details on scientific questions, concepts and/or techniques of interest, as well as your goals and vision of your scientific career development, etc. Here, you should also express and elaborate on any interest in an exchange program.

**Scientific discovery that has impressed you the most** (max 2500 characters including spaces): Here, you should describe a scientific discovery that fascinates you, avoiding historical and technical overviews, but elaborating why you think this research matters. Did it disprove an existing paradigm, how did it affect everyday lives, or benefit the progress of society and science in general?

**Undergraduate courses you found the most inspiring:** max 2500 characters including spaces.

## Video Upload

In this section you may upload a video where you address the following question in ca 2 minutes (min 1 minute): **"Which of the Nobel prize awards in the field of Physiology or Medicine, Chemistry or Physics did you find the most inspiring and why?"**. You may elaborate on any award of the above categories, either recent or older.

## Referees

Please enter complete contacts for **two referees**. We recommend choosing referees that know you personally and are willing and able to write a description of your academic performance. After you fill in the contact details of your referees, an automated e-mail with a request for writing the recommendation letter will be sent to them. Please fill in **all required fields** - only after all fields are filled, the automated request will be sent. Please let **your referees know in advance that they will receive an invitation e-mail from MDC!** You cannot change your referee once you have saved the contact. If you wish to change a referee, contact us on time to reset the information. Following the invitation, referees should submit their letters directly to the MDC PhD application system, using a link they received in the e-mail. **Please make sure your referees have received an invitation email.** If they do not receive an e-mail within 24 hours after the automated request is sent, notify us at [phdmdc@mdc-berlin.de](mailto:phdmdc@mdc-berlin.de) immediately.

**Also, make sure that your referees have submitted their reference letters in time.** You can check the status of your references after submission using the colour code of this box. The colour will change from red to orange after automated requests for reference letters are sent to your referees, and from orange to green after your referees have submitted their letters. Please note: References arriving after the reference deadline will not be processed and **applications will be considered incomplete.**

## Supplementary information

Please tell us where have you first heard about the International PhD program at the MDC.

## Documents

All documents must be uploaded as pdf files (max of 3MB).

A scanned version of the following documents is mandatory:

- **Short CV** of max. 2 pages (In the CV, please provide only biographical data and professional development timeline. All relevant education, research experience, motivation, workshops, conferences and publications information should be given in the application form.)
- **Transcript** (record of study, including courses list and scores) **of Bachelor degree**, Vordiplom or equivalent
- **Certificate of Bachelor degree**, Vordiplom or equivalent
- **Transcript** (record of study, including courses list and scores) **of Master degree**, Diplom or equivalent
- **Certificate of Master degree**, Diplom or equivalent

If you have not completed your Master's program yet, provide temporary transcripts, including scores. All documents **should be available in German or English**. If you do not have an English version issued by your university, a translation certified by a public notary or other official will be sufficient. If your university does not provide transcripts, a marksheet should be provided instead. **Applications without scored transcripts cannot be further processed.**

A scanned version of the following documents is recommended (**but not obligatory!**):

- GRE score
- English proficiency test

Please note: Applicants **need to have a good command of written and spoken English**, since the program language is English. Language proficiency tests for non-native speakers are recommended, however, **the proficiency certificates are not a requirement for the application!**

## Submission

Don't forget to submit your application once you have completed all sections. After submission you cannot change or add information, but you can check the status of your references. The completed application must be submitted by the application deadline.

Please note that upon submission you will receive a confirmation e-mail.