New „International Max Planck Research School“ with focus on biophysics in Göttingen

Combined application of physics and life sciences to explore biological and other complex processes

As of Mai 2008, there will be a new doctoral program for the training of graduate students in Göttingen, the „International Max Planck Research School (IMPRS) for Physics of Biological and Complex Systems“. The new IMPRS is a cooperation between the Max Planck Institutes for Biophysical Chemistry and for Dynamics and Self-Organization and the University of Göttingen. The focus of this joint doctoral program is to quantitatively investigate biological and other complex systems. To this aim, state-of-the-art physical methods as well as latest techniques in biology, chemistry and computer sciences will be combined.

Since 2000 the Max Planck Society, in cooperation with Universities in Germany, is building up a network of doctoral programs, the “International Max Planck Research Schools” (IMPRS). Aim of this joint program is to promote excellent junior scientists and researchers from Germany and abroad. With the B.Sc. or equivalent as entry level, the program offers both a structured scientific training as well as excellent research opportunities. In Göttingen, four of these programs have already been established, the IMPRS for “Molecular Biology” and for “Neurosciences” as well as the IMPRS “History and Transformation of Cultural and Political Values in Medieval and Modern Europe” and “Physical Processes in the Solar System and Beyond”. With the new IMPRS for Biophysics and Complex Systems, a fifth IMPRS will strengthen Göttingen as a centre for science and research. The new doctoral program results from a joint initiative of the Max Planck Institutes for Biophysical Chemistry and for Dynamics and Self-Organization. The school will run for six years, with a possible extension by another six years. Funding for the new doctoral program is provided by the Max Planck Society, the Max Planck Institutes, the University of Göttingen, and the State of Lower Saxony.

“This new doctoral program will further strengthen the cooperation between the Max Planck Institutes and the University of Göttingen, as well as the field of biophysics in general”, says Prof. Helmut Grubmüller, Director at the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry and spokesman of the new IMPRS. „Besides its
internationality, first-class interdisciplinary training will be particularly attractive for our students", Grubmüller summarizes the advantages. Prof. Eberhard Bodenschatz, Director at the Max Planck Institute for Dynamics and Self-Organization and co-initiator of the IMPRS, emphasizes: „Highly attractive is the integration of physics of complex systems with physics of biological systems – this feature renders the doctoral program unique in Europe”. Besides the Max Planck Institutes for Biophysical Chemistry and for Dynamics and Self-Organization, three faculties of the University of Göttingen – biology, chemistry and physics – as well as the Institute of Informatics participate in the new program. The new IMPRS will be directly integrated within the Göttingen Graduate School for Neurosciences and Molecular Biosciences (GGNB), which is funded by the German Excellence Initiative and currently comprises 12 different doctoral programs.

The new International Max Planck Research School with focus on biophysics will combine physics with life sciences in order to explore biological and other complex systems. (Picture: Hell, MPIbpc)

The doctoral program will attract talented graduate students from abroad and Germany. More than 60 % of the stipends available within the total of 49 IMPRS in Germany have been awarded to international students. The new doctoral program will admit up to 30 doctoral students, enabling them to complete their PhD within three years. The training comprises biochemistry, structural biology, bioinformatics and biophysics, as well as quantum chemistry. The students will be familiarized with state-of-the-art methods in practicals and lab-rotations. Scientific training will be complemented by seminars and soft skills training, e.g., communication- and presentation techniques or project- and team management. Students are encouraged to participate and to organize international conferences and workshops. The program language is English. Interested students with a diploma or master’s degree can already apply for the new IMPRS for Physics of Biological and Complex Systems.
Links:
[1] Details of the new „IMPRS for Physics of Biological and Complex Systems“:
   http://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/58718.html
   http://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/sh/56640.html

Contact:
Prof. Dr. Helmut Grubmüller,
Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry,
Department of Theoretical and Computational Biophysics,
Am Fassberg 11,
37077 Göttingen,
Tel.: +49 551 201-2300,
Fax: +49 551 201-2302,
Email: hgrubmu@gwdg.de

Prof. Dr. Eberhard Bodenschatz,
Max Planck Institute for Dynamics and Self-Organization,
Department of Fluid Dynamics, Pattern Formation, and Nanobiocomplexity,
Am Fassberg 11,
37077 Göttingen,
Tel.: +49 551 5176-300,
Fax: +49 551 5176-301,
Email: eberhard.bodenschatz@ds.mpg.de

Dr. Carmen Rotte,
Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry,
Public relations office,
Am Fassberg 11,
37077 Göttingen,
Tel: +49 551 201-1304,
Fax: +49 551 201-1151,
Email: pr@mpibpc.mpg.de