Bylaws of the *Fribourg Graduate School of Life Sciences* (FGLS) of the Department of Biology, University of Fribourg

**Art. 1:** This document states the purpose, organization, tasks, responsibilities and curriculum of the *Fribourg Graduate School of Life Sciences* (FGLS) of the Department of Biology, University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

**Art. 2, Purpose:** The FGLS is an interdisciplinary graduate school, which offers a coordinated doctoral program in life sciences at the University of Fribourg. It addresses doctoral fellows in the fields of biology, biochemistry, molecular medicine, chemistry, physics, bioinformatics, and mathematics who have a life science focus. State-of-the-art theoretical and experimental research will lead to a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The Faculty of Sciences offers the following degrees related to biology:

- PhD in Biology
- PhD in Biochemistry
- PhD in Bioinformatics

The curriculum and exams follow article 12 of the “Regulation for the award of the doctorate at the Faculty of Science of the University of Fribourg”; 21.09.2015; http://www.unifr.ch/science/de/etudes/doctorat)

**Art. 3, Organization:** The members of FGLS consist of two groups: scientists (principal investigators (PIs)) and doctoral fellows.

PIs are members of the Department of Biology of the University of Fribourg and include full and associate professors, SNF professors, and senior lecturer/researchers (*i.e.* maître-assistants [MA] and maîtres d'enseignement et de recherche [MER]) who finance PhD positions. All PIs commit themselves to the activities and regulations of FGLS. Members of other Departments of the University of Fribourg may join FGLS if they work in the area of life sciences. The board of PIs will decide about new memberships. PIs meet regularly to organize school activities.

Doctoral fellows are all PhD students registered at the Department of Biology of the University of Fribourg. Participation at FGLS is obligatory.
Art. 4, Tasks: FGLS offers a coordinated internationally advertised selection procedure. Open positions are posted on the departmental web page, as well as internationally. The selection procedure encompasses a presentation of 15 min of the applicant covering her/his previous scientific work followed by a discussion, as well as interviews with PIs having open positions. Decisions of admittance are taken by the PIs concerned and will be communicated to the applicants directly. Apart from the selection procedure PIs may also directly suggest applicants.

FGLS offers an interdisciplinary curriculum and keeps records for its doctoral fellows on personalized forms, covering all obtained grades and all attended training activities.

Art. 5, Responsibilities: PIs are responsible to ensure adherence to the rules of FGLS and to fulfill the tasks of the school. PIs offering positions will cover the costs for the invitation of candidates.

All doctoral fellows are enrolled at the Faculty of Science of the University of Fribourg as doctoral students according to its regulations. Doctoral fellows are responsible to follow the FGLS curriculum. It is the fellows’ duty to provide course attestations and signatures that certify her/his successful participation in postgraduate courses, congresses, practical courses, and seminars. When the signature of an organizer cannot attest the fellow’s participation in these events, the PhD supervisor can sign instead.

Doctoral fellows are responsible to establish a thesis committee during the first year of the doctoral studies. The doctoral fellow, in accordance with her/his supervisor, has to choose two additional experts willing to support her/him during the thesis work, in accordance with the supervisor. The PI and the two experts form the thesis committee of the respective doctoral fellow. The doctoral studies can be terminated by decision of the thesis committee. The thesis supervisor shall furnish a written communication to the Dean’s office concerning this procedure.

Art. 6, Curriculum: On a yearly basis, the fellow has to give an oral presentation to the members of the thesis committee concerning the progress made and any problems encountered. The experts will assist both the thesis supervisor and the doctoral fellow
concerning any scientific or personal questions related to the thesis work. Both thesis supervisor and doctoral fellow should for this purpose also meet at least once a year independently with the other members of the thesis committee. The costs for these meetings are borne by the PI.

In accordance with university regulation, the fellow’s scientific performance and abilities will be evaluated by the thesis committee based on the fellow’s achievements in the field/lab and her/his performance in attended courses.

Each year, the doctoral fellow has to attend courses covering minimally 2 ECTS. Courses should be divided between scientific/methodological courses and “soft skills” courses. At the end of the thesis the fellow has to have obtained minimally 2 ECTS from “soft skills courses”. The fellow must pass the courses, i.e. receive minimally a 4.0 as grade.

To submit a thesis, fellows must have followed at least three courses, conferences, or symposia designed specifically for postgraduate studies. Such courses are offered, among others, by the following societies and doctoral schools:

- EMBO: http://www.embo.org/events/calendar.html
- LS2 (Life Sciences Switzerland): http://www.usgeb.ch
- SGM/SSM: http://www.swissmicrobiology.ch
- StarOmics (CUSO, doctoral school): http://biologie.cuso.ch/accueil/
- Microbiology (CUSO, doctoral school): http://biologie.cuso.ch/accueil/
- Swiss Chronobiology Meeting: http://www.unifr.ch/biology/events/chrono4/
- Doctoral Program in Ecology and Evolution (CUSO): http://biologie.cuso.ch/ecologie-evolution/welcome/
- Interuniversity Doctoral Program in Organismal Biology: http://www2.unine.ch/dp-biol

In addition, fellows are expected to have participated and have presented a poster in at least one international congress. Participation in any of the above mentioned events should be discussed beforehand with, and approved by the PhD supervisor, who has to judge if a given scientific conference or course will be appropriate for the training of the fellow.
Fellows should try to participate in congresses also beyond the required minimum, especially if they take place in Switzerland, if the supervisor agrees with this.

If a fellow wishes to participate in another specialized education program or doctoral school of CUSO, she/he can ask for accreditation of these courses. The participation in any specialized education program or doctoral school requires the consent of the PhD supervisor.

The regular and active participation in progress reports, journal clubs, conferences and seminars organized by the Department of Biology form an integral part of the education of fellows (see recommended course schedule).

For fellows who are based for their thesis work at another university or research institution in cooperation with FGLS, it is the duty of the PhD supervisor to define an equivalent training program and to make sure that the examinations and requirements are equivalent to the ones of FGLS and the University of Fribourg.

Exemptions from these rules are decided by the board of PIs of FGLS.