

WINTER SEMESTER 2025



MASTER BIOCHEMISTRY. GUIDELINE FOR YOUR MASTER STUDIES

Written by the Student Initiative Biochemistry (FSI)

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SCHEDULE OF THE ORIENTATION DAY

Monday, 06.10.2025

10:00	Welcoming by lecturers of the faculty
10:30	Introduction to the biochemistry master program by various professors
11:00	<i>“Life at FU”</i> – introduction by the student representation and time for questions
11:30	Introduction to the <i>“Tombola”</i>

The orientation days for the Winter Semester 2025 will be held as a video conference on the first day and on campus the following days. You should receive an email with the invitation link to the Webex Meeting by Thursday, October 2nd.

Please be on time and make sure to test Webex before Monday, as we won't have any time to focus on video- or audio problems.

During the orientation, we will guide you on your first semester at the FU and tell you more about the courses that are offered online this semester. We will also show you how you can register for the courses via Campus Management. This means, that you won't have to register for the courses now, as you will have plenty of time after the orientation.

FOREWORD

WELCOME TO FU BERLIN!

If you are reading these lines, you have done it! You are going to do your Master of Biochemistry studies at the FU Berlin and they start now! You are going to meet a lot of new people, learn a lot and hopefully also have a lot of fun.

To give you some orientation at the beginning of your Master studies, we have generated this overview. The following pages will provide you with helpful information about the Biochemistry masters program and the university system of the FU. (Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee completeness nor correctness)

At the very beginning a little reminder of two very important things:

- 1. Working in a team makes everything a lot easier!** This includes for example the lab work, writing of assignments and studying for the exams. Lone warriors will definitely have it a lot harder.
- 2. Show your own initiative and try to change things you don't like.** You can always talk to the professors or to us.

Good luck and a lot of fun with your studies wishes
Your student initiative Biochemistry (FSI Biochemie)

THE STUDENT INITIATIVE BIOCHEMISTRY (FSI)

Because the previous lines show our signature, you probably wonder by now who “we” are. We, the Student Initiative Biochemistry (German: Fachschaftsinitiative – short: FSI), are a random group of Biochemistry students out of all semesters (Bachelor and Master) who come together to make life at Uni more fun and act as liaison between the students and the faculty.

We organize the orientation days for the first semester students, represent the students in different committees (see university policy), help with the organization of the student parties (“Biochem-Keggas”) and organize the yearly Christmas party, give advice to students, and generally try to help improving our degree program, for example by participating in improving the study guidelines, appointment procedures and the establishing of new modules.

If you now think: that’s way too much work, I will never join that group; don’t be afraid: Not everyone does everything. There are no fixed duties, you can also just come by and listen to what we are talking about and what is going on at the Biochemistry department at the moment. Important to us is, that everyone feels welcome to join our meetings (which is why there are always snacks and drinks). Every helping hand and every thinking head is always welcome to join the FSI.

More about the FSI, you can find on our website:

<http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/chemie/biochemie/student-representatives/index.html>

or on padlet (online notice board) and instagram:

<https://padlet.com/fsi1/fu-berlin-biochemistry-news-and-vacancies-6z6jom9xjpl0ewnz>

<https://instagram.com/fsibiochemistryfuberlin>



WE WANT YOU
FOR THE FSI BIOCHEMISTRY

Next FSI-Meeting:

Will be announced on Instagram and during the orientation!

THE MASTER'S PROGRAM

Let's start with the goals for our studies - at least the ones stated in the study regulations of the program: During your studies, you will gain biochemical knowledge, learn to recognize, structure, and carry out research tasks independently and you will gain practice in scientific literature search, reading and writing of scientific texts and presentation of your work. At the end, you will be prepared to work in research and other practical life science jobs.

Great that we learn all that - but how?

The Master's program is regularly planned for 4 semesters. The program is built up by different kinds of modules (e.g. lab courses, lectures) out of the three main areas: structural biochemistry, molecular cell biology and molecular biomedicine. You also have the possibility to choose some modules out of other areas you are interested in. In total, you will collect 120 ECTS (at the FU called LP: "Leistungspunkte"; 1 ECTS = 30 hours of work).

All the regulations for the Master program and the specific modules are written down in the "Studien- und Prüfungsordnung". Unfortunately, this regulation is only available in German so far, but if you have any questions to that, you can always ask us (the FSI), the Mentoring department or the Examination office (see student counselling). In the

following, there will be a short overview over the Master program.

Overall, there are not a lot of fixed modules - you have a bunch of possibilities to choose the courses you are interested in.

During the Master program, you will collect 90 ECTS by choosing different modules and 30 ECTS through your master thesis. The 90 ECTS are divided into four parts:

1. The basic lecture (10 ECTS): Advanced Biochemistry

This basic lecture Advanced Biochemistry (sometimes referred to as BC V because there are four lectures in the Bachelor's program) is mandatory and divided into 2 parts. Each part takes place on Friday afternoon, so it's not possible to attend both parts at the same time. This lecture is graded, so the grade you get on both exams will count for your final grade.

2. Methods (15 ECTS)

Method courses are usually two-week long all-day courses in which you will gain knowledge about one specific method or one method-area. The courses are not graded but you usually have to give a talk and / or hand in a protocol in the end. Method courses are offered in the three main areas:

- a. Structural biochemistry
- b. Molecular biology
- c. Molecular biomedicine

You have to take two method courses out of two different areas. The third method module can be out of the third area or out of

an affine area (biology, chemistry, pharmacy, physics, bioinformatics, medicine).

The spots for the method courses are given away during the **Tombola** (will be explained during the orientation, instructions on how to participate are already available here: <https://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/chemie/biochemie/master/Information-for-enrolled-students/index.html>). You will apply online for courses you are interested in. You will be notified once the distribution is complete, and you can check which course you got. If you want, you can also participate in more than one method course in one semester, but please make sure you actually have the time and fulfill the requirements for the courses you apply for, so that you do not occupy places you won't actually use. If you didn't get a placement in your desired method module during the Tombola, it is always worth contacting the responsible professor and ask to be put on a waiting list. If you are unsure about which method module to take, it is always a good idea to talk to higher semester students, to us, or later also to your fellow students and ask for recommendations.

A new addition to the program are **decentralized method modules**. If you want to learn a method, that is not offered in a course or did not get a place in your favorite module you can organize a three week stay in the lab and learn the method then.

The Form can be found here:

https://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/studium-lehre/verwaltung/pruefungsbuero/pruefungsbuero_unterlagen/biochemie_master/08_Formular_Anmeldung-dezentrales-Methodenmodul.pdf

3. Research (45 ECTS)

In the research part, you will do three research projects in total (each 9-week internships; In total 12 weeks of workload with preparation and post-processing time - 15 ECTS). As for the method modules, you have to choose two projects out of the areas: structure biochemistry, molecular cell biology and molecular biomedicine. The third research project can be out of the third area or again out of an affine area (biology, chemistry, pharmacy, physics, bioinformatics, medicine, ...).

The research projects, you have to find and organise on your own. You can apply for FU internal internships in the FU groups or you can do your internship externally. External internships can be done for example at research institutes like the MPI, FMP, MDC or Fraunhofer Institutes, but also in the industry.

After finding your internship, the examination board has to approve of your internship before you actually start your internship. At the end of your research project, you will give a brief presentation about your work and write a short report. The presentation will be graded and will make up your grade for the research project. If you are doing an external internship, you have to make sure that you have a supervisor who is officially eligible as an examiner. Professors, lecturers with a teaching

assignment at the FU and individuals approved by the examination committee are eligible to grade your presentation. You might have to find an additional eligible supervisor if you do your internship externally.

4. Electives (20 ECTS)

The elective part is non-graded and divided into the parts elective biochemistry courses (10 ECTS) and free elective courses (10 ECTS).

a. Elective biochemistry courses

In this sub-part, you can for example attend method courses you haven't taken yet, do shorter research projects (3-6 weeks), or attend biochemical lectures.

b. Free elective courses

In this sub-part, you are totally free to choose whatever you want, as long as you have not already taken that course. For example, you can take more biochemical modules or choose modules out of other programs. This sub-part can also be used to learn another language or extend your knowledge about business, philosophy, or other things.

5. Master thesis

Your master thesis is planned for your fourth semester. You have to find a place for your thesis on your own. Like the research projects, you can do your thesis at FU or in another institution. If you do it externally, you, again, have to find an eligible supervisor who will supervise your thesis. Your topic also has to be approved by the examination board before you start.

To start your thesis, you have to have collected at least 60 ECTS and for all the other missing modules you have to be enrolled. After starting your thesis, you have 6 months to finish. At the end of your project, you will write a thesis and give a presentation about your work. Different from the research projects, this time, both the thesis (3/4) and the presentation (1/4) are graded.

Overall, your Master's grade will consist only of the main lecture, the research projects and your master thesis. The remaining courses are ungraded and only have to be passed in order for you to obtain the degree!

A summary of all modules offers the so called "Studienverlaufsplan". It also gives you an orientation on when to take what kind of modules, but you don't have to do it that way. You can structure your studies however you like. For example, you can take more lectures and method modules in the first semester in order to have more time for research projects in your later studies. Or you can do the majority of your lectures during a semester abroad, in for example your third semester.

Semester	Study parts: basics and electives	Study part: methods	Study part: research
1. (30 ECTS)	Main lecture part I (5 ECTS)	Method module - 1. Area (5 ECTS)	Research project - 1. area
	Elective biochemical module (5 ECTS)		
2. (30 ECTS)	Main lecture part II (5 ECTS)	Method module - 2. Area (5 ECTS)	Research project - 2. area
	Elective biochemical module (5 ECTS)		
3. (30 ECTS)	Free elective module (10 ECTS)	Method module - 3. Area or affine area (5 ECTS)	Research project - 3. area
4. (30 ECTS)	Master thesis with defence (30 ECTS)		

PLANNING YOUR MODULES

After this long part about the modules you can or have to take, the question comes up: How do I find out about the courses? All the courses offered directly from the FU, you can find in the course catalogue (“Vorlesungsverzeichnis” – short: VV):

www.fu-berlin.de/vv/

A whole list of the method modules and when they will take place, you can find on the website of the department:

<http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/chemie/biochemie/master/Information-for-enrolled-students/index.html>

Since a lot of the modules are offered in blocks, you will not really have a regular timetable like you might have had in your Bachelor studies. During your Bachelor studies, you may also be used to study along with your fellow students. This is not the case for this Master’s program, since everyone chooses different courses and internships. You are going to meet some of your fellow students only rarely. But as you probably know, studying together with your fellow students is much easier than alone, e.g. to exchange information which method modules may be interesting to you. Therefore, socialize right from the beginning!

ENROLLING INTO MODULES

Generally, the „Campus Management“ is the platform where at the end all your courses and grades should be found (www.fu-berlin.de/sites/campusmanagement/). Depending on the module, you either enroll in the course directly in the campus management yourself or, most of the time, the examination or study office does it for you.

The basic lecture (Advanced Biochemistry Part I and II) is the main module for which you enroll yourself manually in the Campus Management. Enrolling in modules yourself is only possible in the first weeks of the semester. If you miss the deadline, you can always write to the examination office and they post-enroll you.

For almost all the other modules, the examination office enrolls you. By filling out the online form for the Tombola, you let the offices know which method modules you are planning to take in the coming semester, and they enroll you. If you got a placement in a module later in the semester (for example by writing the lecturer of the module), the lecturer of the module usually will let the examination office know and they will post-enroll you into the module. You should check whether the lecturer will let the examination office know and maybe write to them yourself. For the research projects, the examination board has to approve of your internship. For that, you fill out a form (link below) and hand it to the examination office. If the examination board

approves the project, you will be enrolled automatically in the course, and it will show up in the Campus Management.

http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/studium-lehre/verwaltung/pruefungsbuero/pruefungsbuero_unterlagen/biochemie_master/z_ressourcen/formular_antragforschungsprojekt-benotet-mit-hinweisen.pdf

If you are planning to take modules from different institutes (e.g. biology / bioinformatics) the procedure might differ, and you have to find out for each institute how to enroll in the courses.

YOUR ZEDAT-E-MAIL ADDRESS

The zedat-e-mail address (x@zedat.fu-berlin.de) is your email address from the FU. Every information will be sent to this address. Therefore, you should check this email address regularly. You also can have your emails forwarded to your private email address automatically or save the account in your mail program (e.g. outlook). Instructions on how to do this can be found here: https://www.zedat.fu-berlin.de/tip4u_99.pdf (unfortunately only in German). Make sure to use this address when contacting university staff or professors, since e-mails from other providers may be identified as spam and never be read.

One last tip: you can set up an alias-address, which makes out of the x@zedat.fu-berlin.de ending the nicer x@fu-berlin.de ending.

UNIVERSITY POLITICS

At FU, politics is not only a subject, but you can experience it and even participate! The elections for the students' parliament (StuPa) will probably be your first encounter with FU politics. They take place annually in January. Plenty of posters will be stapled to trees and Dahlem will look as if federal elections were about to take place. But what does the students' parliament do? Every student at FU can elect a list, which will represent the student in the parliament. The StuPa will then elect the "executive" organ, the General Students' Committee (AStA). All of this reminds of federal politics. However, there are some major differences:

First of all, there are numerous lists to choose from. About 40 lists compete for 60 seats in the parliament every year. As there is no 5% threshold to be reached in order to enter the parliament, basically every list will get a seat. 30 votes are necessary for a single seat in the StuPa and residual seats are distributed percentage-wise.

Secondly, the self-conception of several organs is substantially different from those in federal politics. Many lists do not belong to any political party and insist on their independence. They either originate from student councils or represent so-called status groups. Last but not least, there are also student associations belonging to political parties. Among them are Jusos, RCDU, GHG, LHG and SDS (belonging to the social

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democrats, Christian democrats, green party, liberal party and socialist party respectively). Unfortunately, StuPa elections suffer from low voter turnouts of about 10%.

The AStA does not envision itself as the students' representative. It rather rejects hierarchies and has a symbolic value. However, real work is done in the AStA's departments (german: Referate), which again remind of ministries in federal politics. The departments cover different topics, and each consists of three referents. Among them are autonomous departments, which do not have an equivalent in the federal government. Referents of the gays', lesbians', women's, foreigners' department are elected directly at the plenary assembly of the respective status groups and are confirmed by the StuPa afterwards. This ensures, that each status group can select its referent without interference by others. For example, men cannot participate in the election of the women's referent.

What does the AStA do?

Each department works individually and independently. Among others, the AStA offers a variety of consulting services for students and publishes and distributes magazines (for example "out of Dahlem"). Furthermore, it organizes the annual summer party. Importantly, you will never find a political initiative implemented by the AStA as it has no political mandate. We do not actively support the AStA nor do we oppose it. We mainly interact with the AStA when it comes to organizing parties, as they also have rooms and equipment the FSIs can use upon

request. The AStA also offers financial support for events organized for the new students, such as the get-togethers during orientation week.

In some faculties, a student representative (Fachschaftsrat, FSR) is officially elected. Often, however, there is only the unofficial student council (FSI) in which every student can participate without previous elections. Another advantage of student councils is that each area of study can have its own group whereas the FSR takes care of topics concerning the entire faculty. In our case the FSR would have to deal with topics concerning the biochemistry, biology, chemistry and pharmacy departments.

Apart from elections for the StuPa, representatives can be elected for the institute's council, faculty's council, academic senate and curatorium biennially. All of these councils are made up of professors, academic staff and students. Importantly, professors always have the absolute majority in these councils. A new addition to the political councils are the Arbeitskreise (working groups) and Ausbildungskommission (education commission) at our department, that allow students to take a more active role and offer the opportunity to communicate problems directly to the professors at eye-level.

Institut's council (Institutsrat, IR):

The institut's council makes decisions concerning the institute of chemistry and biochemistry. It is especially important for personnel decisions at the institutes.

Faculty's council (Fachbereichsrat, FBR):

The faculty's council issues statutes for the entire faculty, decides on professorships and habilitations and coordinates teaching as well as research.

Academic senate (Akademischer Senat):

The academic senate comprises the highest panel at FU. It issues statutes for the entire university and takes basic decisions for the overall studies. For example, it decides on study regulations and sets the academic calendars.

Curatorium (Kuratorium):

The curatorium does not only consist of professors, academic staff and students but involves representatives from politics, economy and labour unions. Although the curatorium is currently not active at FU, members can get a seat in the academic senate or in the extended academic senate.

INTERNET AT UNI

At FU the internet can be accessed via Wifi (for instructions see <http://www.zedat.fu-berlin.de/WLAN>) or in computer pools. The latter can be found in the Silberlaube ("Zedat pools", Habelschwerdter Allee 45) or in the institute for organic chemistry (Takustr. 3, room 33.02.). In order to work at the organic chemistry computers, you need to register at www.chemie.fu-berlin.de/chemnet/general/benutzer-antr.html and subsequently see the network administrator (PD Dr. Kiste, OC, room 26.10).

Some important web addresses:

Institute for chemistry and biochemistry: <http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/chemie/index.html>

Website of biochemistry: www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/chemie/biochemie/

Student counselling: www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/chemie/biochemie/Studienberatung/index.html

FSI biochemistry: www.facebook.com/fsi.biochemie
<http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/chemie/biochemie/student-representatives/index.html>

Course catalogue: www.fu-berlin.de/vv/

Campus Management: www.fu-berlin.de/sites/campusmanagement/

Blackboard: lms.fu-berlin.de/

Zedat (mailing, printing, ...): <https://www.zedat.fu-berlin.de/Home>

Library Portal (Literature search, Online Textbooks, ...): https://fu-berlin.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?&vid=FUB&

CAMPUSCARD

The Campuscard combines your student ID with the public transport card and the anonymous Mensa (cafeteria) and library card (lending books, use lockers, pay fees, print, ...). If you are new to the FU, you must issue the card ones at one of the five card issuance machines with your QR code available on your profile online (locations can be found in the link below). After the initial issuance and before the start of each semester you have to validate your card at one of the validation machines.

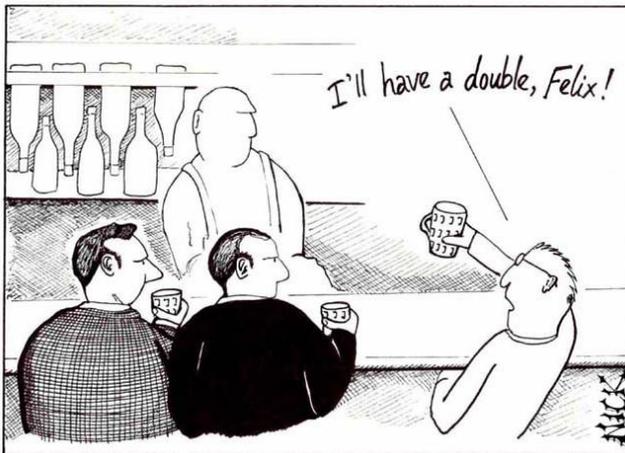
<http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/studium/studienorganisation/immatrikulation/campuscard/standorte-automaten-campuscard/index.html>

WHAT'S THAT? – FU ABBREVIATIONS 101

At university, many abbreviations are used. This guide should help you out in the abbreviation-jungle.

AC	inorganic chemistry (Anorganische Chemie)
AS	academic senate (Akademischer Senat)
AStA	<i>General Students' Committee</i> (Allgemeiner Studierenden Ausschuss, students' "government")
BC	biochemistry
BCP	Biology, chemistry, pharmacy, biochemistry
c.t.	<i>cum tempore</i> (lat. "with time"): the event starts 15 min later
FaKo	faculty coordination (Fachschaftskoordination, all FU student councils together)
FB	faculty (Fachbereich)
FBR	faculty's council (Fachbereichsrat)
FSI	student council (Fachschaftsinitiative)
FSR	student representative (Fachschaftsrat)
IR	institute's council (Institutsrat)
LNdW	long night of sciences (Lange Nacht der Wissenschaften)
LP	credits (Leistungspunkt, correspond to 30 hours of work)

MiBi	microbiology (Mikrobiologie)
OC	organic chemistry (Organische Chemie)
PC	physical chemistry (Physikalische Chemie)
PfgL	award for good teaching (the award bestowed annually to a lecturer of our faculty)
PflaPhy	plant physiology (Pflanzenphysiologie)
s.t.	<i>sine tempore</i> (lat. "without time"): the event starts on time
Studis	students
StuPa	students' parliament (Studierenden-Parlament)
SWS	hours per week during the semester (Semesterwochenstunden)



Cambridge 1953.

Shortly before discovering the structure of DNA, Watson and Crick, depressed by their lack of progress, visit the local pub.

STUDENT COUNSELLING

During your studies, you might have questions, which you cannot solve on your own. For this reason, there are several services to help you out and guide you through your studies.

Information and contacts can also be found online: <http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/chemie/biochemie/bachelor/beratung/index.html>

Mentoring faculty of biology, chemistry, pharmacy

General Mentoring:

Rafaela Münch (Takustr. 3, room 14.10)

Consultation hour: any time after arrangement by mail

E-Mail: mentoring@bcp.fu-berlin.de | phone: 030-838 50971

Website: <http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/studium-lehre/verwaltung/mentoring/index.html>

Student counselling by students

Tom Bergmann (only until end of September, successor will be reachable under the same address)

Consultation hour: any time after arrangement by mail

E-Mail: studbiochem@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Student counselling by faculty advisor

Prof. Dr. Christian Freund (Thielallee 63, Room 129)

Appointments upon request per e-mail

E-Mail: chfreund@zedat.fu-berlin.de

BAFöG student counselling

Prof. Dr. Florian Heyd (Takustraße 6)

Appointment upon request

Please bring a transcript of records and the BAFöG-form

E-Mail: florian.heyd@fu-berlin.de

Phone: [+49 30 838 62938](tel:+493083862938)

Erasmus student counselling

Dr. Bernhard Loll (Takustr. 6, room 307)

Please mail for an appointment

Email: lolll@chemie.fu-berlin.de

General student counselling (Info-Service)

Info-Service (Iltisstr. 4 close to U station Dahlem-Dorf)

Consultation hour: Mon – Thu 9am – 5pm, Fri 9am – 3pm

Please call 030 838 70000 for an appointment for personal counselling

Mail: info-service@fu-berlin.de

Phone: 030-83870000 or 030-83877770

Chat (Mondays 3-4 pm): www.fu-berlin.de/sites/studienberatung/info-service/Chat/index.html

Website: <http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/studienberatung/infothek/index.html>

Psychological counselling

Appointments need to be arranged via email/ phone

E-Mail: psychologische-beratung@fu-berlin.de

Phone: 030-838 52247

Website: http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/studienberatung/psychologische_beratung/index.html

→ besides individual counselling, workshops about specific topics are offered (English and German)

OTHER IMPORTANT ADDRESSES

Study office

Herr Björn Kleier (Arnimallee 22, Room A.012)

Consultation hour: online after arrangement via email/ phone

E-Mail: studienbuero@chemie.fu-berlin.de

Phone: 030-838-55330

Website:

http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/studium-lehre/verwaltung/studienbuero/studienbuero_chemie/index.html

Examination office

Frau Heinrich

Consultation hour: Tuesday (10 am – 1 pm), Thursday (1-4 pm)

E-Mail: pruefungsbuero-biochemie@fu-berlin.de

Phone: 030-838-55255

Website:

<http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/studium-lehre/verwaltung/pruefungsbuero/index.html>

Campus-Library (Campus-Bibliothek)

Library for Science, Cultural Studies, Education, Mathematics, Computer Science and Psychology

Located in the L-Street of the “Rost- und Silberlaube”: Access from Fabeckstr. 23/25

Opening hours: Mo-Fr: 9 am – 10 pm, Sa-So: 10 am – 8 pm

Lending desk closes 30 min before library closing time

Counselling: Mo-Fr 9 am – 6 pm

Website: <http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/campusbib/index.html>

Library portal (Primo):

https://fu-berlin.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?&vid=FUB&

RESEARCH GROUPS (BIOCHEMISTRY, FU BERLIN)

An overview of the biochemical research groups can also be found here:

<http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/chemie/biochemie/research-groups/Overview/index.html>

Listed here are only professors leading a research group directly in the Biochemistry institute at the FU Berlin. Further associated docents are also involved in the master program, which can be found under the link below.

<http://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/chemie/biochemie/research-groups/associated-groups/index.html>

Biochemical related research at the FU Berlin is also done in for example the organic chemistry or the biology institute.

Prof. Dr. Francesca Bottanelli

Membrane trafficking (vesicular transport, GOLGI and ER)

Address: Thielallee 63, Room Office 304a

Mail: Francesca.bottanelli@fu-berlin.de

Phone: +49 30 838 65860

Prof. Dr. Sutapa Chakrabarti

mRNA Metabolism (signals triggering mRNA degradation)

Address: Takustr. 6, Room 129

Mail: chakraba@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Phone: +49-(0)30-838-75094

Prof. Dr. Helge Ewers

Membrane Biochemistry (assembly of multiprotein complexes at the membrane-cytoskeleton interface)

Address: Thielallee 63, Room 102b
Office: Manuela Gibson
Mail: manuela.gibson@fu-berlin.de
Phone: +49 30 838 59517

Prof. Dr. Christian Freund

Protein Biochemistry (scaffolding proteins mediating non-covalent interactions in immune cells and other eukaryotic cells)

Address: Thielallee 63
Mail: chfreund@zedat.fu-berlin.de
Phone: +49 30 - 838 54389

Prof. Dr. Lydia Herzel

RNA dynamics (co- and posttranscriptional RNA regulation)

Address: Takustraße 6, Room 123
Mail: lydia.herzel@fu-berlin.de
Phone: +49 30 838 60266

Prof. Dr. Florian Heyd

RNA Biochemistry

(Alternative splicing in the circadian clock and T-cell activation)

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IMPORTANT DATES

Next meeting of the student initiative (FSI)

Will be announced during the orientation and on instagram

Evening seminar

Check our homepage, FSI padlet or Instagram for dates

<https://padlet.com/fsi1/fu-berlin-biochemistry-news-and-vacancies-6z6jom9xjpl0ewnz>

Biochemkegga

(Party organised by biochemistry bachelor students):

At the end of the semester

Biochem-Christmas Party

Usually in the last weeks before christmas break

EVENING SEMINARS

From time to time, the biochemistry student council organises so-called evening seminars with different guests from the area of biochemistry. The invited work at universities, in the industry or in teaching and are willing to share experiences they made in their lives and carriers.

They cannot only answer questions, which might come up during your studies but can also give you some advice for the future. However, the evening seminars are not only informative but also a nice opportunity of getting together and hearing funny anecdotes. They are held in a cozy atmosphere, allow for chats and questions concerning work, life and others.

Everybody is welcome – this does not only include biochemistry students but also interested friends and colleagues - and drinks and snacks are provided by the FSI.

Check our Padlet and Instagram for the next date!

CHECKLIST

- 1. Visit the orientation days
- get to know your colleagues
- exchange whatsapp/ facebook to stay in contact
- sign up in the email-list
- get your Campuscard (best before the orientation days)

2. Activate your FU-Account

- Information on activating your FU (zedat) account can be obtained from the letter you received 1 week after your matriculation

ZEDAT-Mail:

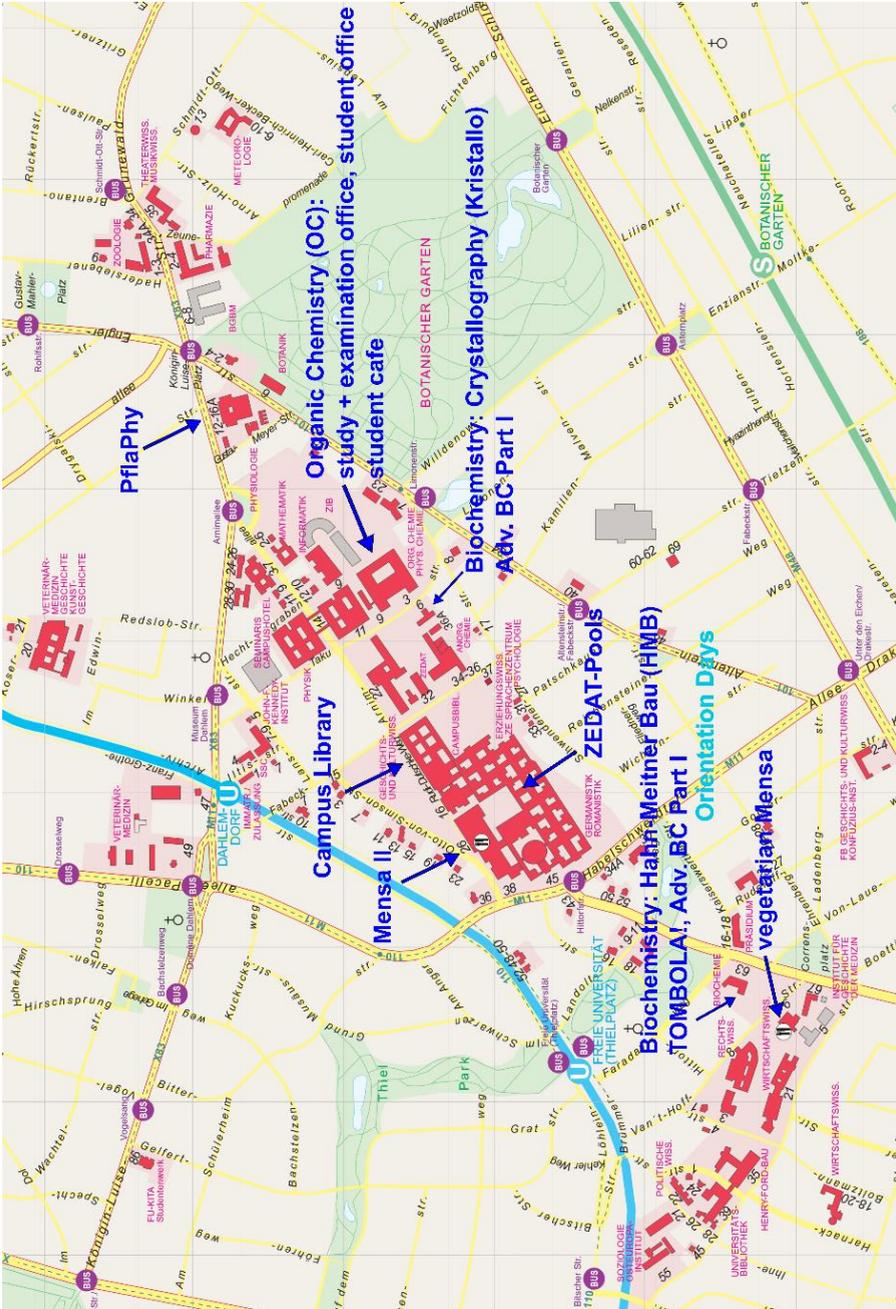
- forward zedat-mails to your private Email account
- install your email program on your phone/ computer
- establish your “alias” address: max.mustermann@fu-berlin.de

3. Get access to Eduroam and Cisco Webex

- On the campus, activate Wduroam for wifi access
- At home, you can access the campus network via a Virtual Private Network (VPN) or Proxy-Server of ZEDAT
- Login on the zedat-portal for access to Webex

4. Make your schedule | register for modules

- Check out the course catalogue for interesting courses
- Enrol your method modules via Campus Management
- Visit interesting courses in the first two weeks and decide if you really want to take them
- Register for courses in the study office
- (pay attention to different enrollment procedures for language and ABV-courses)



PflaPhy

Organic Chemistry (OC):
study + examination office, student office
student cafe

Biochemistry: Crystallography (Kristallo)
Adv. BC Part I

Campus Library

Mensa II

ZEDAT-Pools

Biochemistry: Hahn-Weinert Bau(HMB)
TOMBOLAI, Adv. BC Part I

Orientation Days

vegetarian Mensa

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZING YOUR MASTER'S STUDIES

The Biochemistry Master's program at Freie Universität Berlin offers students a high degree of flexibility to organize their curricula. There are only three types of required courses. Firstly, a lecture/seminar series (Advanced Biochemistry I and II; mandatory for every student). Secondly, methods courses (three mandatory in at least two different fields but with specific contents flexible). Thirdly, research projects/lab rotations (three 15 CP research projects mandatory in at least two fields but with specific contents flexible).

Students can enroll in a wide spectrum of additional courses to fulfill the requirements of the program in terms of elective courses (20 CP total required in electives). In addition, we allow and even encourage taking some of the courses elsewhere (at other Berlin institutions, at other places in Germany or at institutions abroad).

While this program is attractive in terms of gearing study contents to your individual interests and will allow you, *e.g.*, to document mobility and gain international experience, it poses particular challenges in terms of efficient organization and requires a high degree of self-reliant and judicious planning on your part right from the beginning.

Note that the formal “exemplary curriculum” (“Studienverlaufsplan”) for our program (<https://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/chemie/biochemie/master/curriculum>) may not be the ideal plan for you. In designing this plan, we were limited with respect to the amount of time we could officially plan for you to be physically present in lectures, seminars, labs, etc. It may actually be very useful to consider a different plan, if you can cope with longer times in events at the university or in labs.

Please do not underestimate the importance of planning meticulously right from the beginning of your studies and take a minute to consider the remarks below in organizing your studies.

Please also note that it is your own responsibility to design your studies; if you are not actively searching and applying for lab rotations, you will most likely not get any opportunities.

The main lectures

Make sure to enroll in the Advanced Biochemistry lecture series during your first and second semesters. Do not postpone this. Make every effort to take each partial exam right after the first time you have attended each part of the course and take the first possible retake exam as an improvement option if you really want.

Note that the contents of this course will change over time and if you do not take the exam right after you participated in the

lectures/seminars, it may turn out to be even necessary that you attend them again at a later time to pass the exam. In the end, this would require a lot more work on your part.

In case you obtain a passing grade after your first two semesters in the Advanced Biochemistry lecture series, consider if it is worthwhile at all to take an improvement option (provided you still have one). To have a realistic chance for improvement sometime after you actually took the course might require you to sit through the lectures/seminars again and certainly to study the course contents again.

Try to complete both lectures by the end of your second semester as this will give you much more freedom during the last two semesters.

Methods courses

It can be worth trying to get into multiple methods courses during your first semester, as you will be prioritized in the allotment of spots as a new student. You likely will also not start your first research project during your first lecture period, so you will have the time and method courses can furthermore be a great opportunity to get to know the working groups. The groups will also pay attention to the students in they practicals and may offer you a position for a research project.

If you did not receive the chance to participate in two methods courses, you can contact the instructors of your preferred

courses directly. Many of them keep waiting lists and you may make it into a course if somebody cancels or fails to show up. Be aware that in such cases you may have to be ready to participate on short notice.

For the tombola, please consider: It may be much more important for you to finish your course requirements on time than to make it into each and every of your first choices for methods courses. Thus, consider alternative courses if you do not make it into your preferred courses. And then attend the courses you did get in the tombola, even if not your first choice. It may be very good and turn out to be very useful to learn methods that were not on your agenda.

In case you do not make it into the number of methods courses you planned for, be flexible and instead fulfill some of the requirements in terms of elective courses. Remember – you can choose essentially any course offered by Freie Universität Berlin as a free elective.

Research Projects

It may be a good idea to schedule your first research project for the first lecture-free time. The Advanced Biochemistry lecture is also a good place to get an impression of topics and PIs that could host your first lab rotation.

If you plan to do a lab rotation during the lecture period, it may be worth noting that research projects have a maximum total

duration, but you can work part time in the lab at least some of the time or on certain days of the week in case your supervisor agrees. The research project may then extend over a longer time than the minimal time required to finish it, but this may allow you to attend a lecture/seminar in the same timeframe.

Electives and going abroad

It is a good idea to take at least 10 CP of electives during your first two semesters, as this will give you the opportunity to focus more deeply on your lab work during later semesters, especially during your thesis.

If you plan to go abroad (for example in your third semester) it may also be worth considering keeping some of your electives open, to complete at the host institution. You can also complete one of your method courses abroad as a decentralized method module, possibly in combination with a research project in the same lab. **Very important:** Make sure that the examination board will accept the envisioned courses for your degree before you go abroad.

The last semester: your thesis

If you complete all your formal requirements by the third semester, the 4th semester can be fully dedicated to your Master's thesis.

Note that study regulations demand us to limit the Master's thesis to a six-month duration, including writing and defending

the thesis (although you can choose to defend it later). This is a very short timeframe. Experience shows that students tend to defend their theses after they have finished the research and after they have handed in the written thesis, although this is not a formal requirement.

Thus, to realistically finish your studies within four semesters, it is essentially mandatory that you start your Master's thesis before the fourth semester formally begins.

A good idea might also be to combine 5 or 10 CP research projects (with which you can also cover the requirement for elective courses) with subsequent (or preceding) 15 CP research projects or the Master's thesis. This would give you the opportunity to work longer on a project, which might make it more attractive both for you and the supervisor and give you an insight into methods and how the lab works before the clock for your thesis officially starts running.

You might find many PIs reluctant to give out very short-term projects, but in the way outlined above you will find them very open to accommodate this. **Important:** while the combined research projects/theses can of course be on the same research topic, the exact contents (e.g. specific questions addressed, specific parts of a larger study or specific techniques employed) have to be clearly separable. You still need to hand in separate reports for the 5/10 CP research projects that you combine with 15 CP research projects or theses.

Further tips

Consider applying for a leave of absence for semesters spent abroad. While this will not be an option for people receiving BAföG or similar support, and you may have other reasons for not taking this option, it can be an efficient way to formally finish your studies in the regular timeframe. Note that it is no problem to earn credits towards your degree during times when you are on leave of absence. You can apply for leave of absence *via* <https://www.fuberlin.de/en/studium/studienorganisation/immatikulation/rueckmeldung/urlaubssemester/index.html>.

Likewise, if there are times during which you cannot study full-time, e.g. because you have to work besides your studies, consider changing your student status to part-time. Again, this might allow you to formally finish your studies in the normally prospected timeframe. You can change your status via <https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/studium/studienorganisation/immatikulation/rueckmeldung/teilzeit/index.html>.

If you have been admitted to the Master's program while you still had course requirements in the Bachelor's, please make every effort to finish all your obligations for the Bachelor's before your Master's program starts. You will almost certainly not be able to cope with a full Master's workload and remaining obligations for the Bachelor's at the same time. You are also formally required to hand in your Bachelor's degree by the end of your first Master's semester.

Of course, it is always possible that you may not be able to follow your initial plans due to unforeseen events, such as illness, family obligations, courses delayed from the Bachelor's (in spite of your best efforts to avoid that ...) or other reasons. We also realize that many of you may have to work besides your studies to cover your living expenses.

Please contact the Student Advisor (<https://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/chemie/biochemie/master/counselling>) in case you realize that you fall behind your study plans and do not know how to catch up. The Student Advisor can pair you up with a faculty member, who will try to assist you in getting back on track. Note that dedicated counselling is also available for other special issues:

<https://www.bcp.fu-berlin.de/en/chemie/biochemie/master/counselling>

All of these are just recommendations, and it is also not strictly necessary to complete the program in the recommended time-frame. If you are not dependent on support like BAföG, it might also make sense for you to take more time for your studies, to stay longer in the labs, take additional courses and get to know more of the possibilities you have. Learning as much as you can while you still have the privilege of being a student may be more valuable in the long run than finishing in four semesters time.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Phew... this was a lot...

Hopefully we did not overwhelm you with all this information. At the beginning of your studies, a lot of new stuff is coming towards you and that can be overwhelming. Most of it will make sense later on anyway and should that not be the case for some questions the faculty and we are always there to help.

Also, you don't need to plan out every detail of your studies right now. In this program, you have a lot of freedom to study what you want to study and try out new things, maybe even some things they may not lie within your main area of interest. The most important thing however is to enjoy time you have here: get to know your fellow students, join the parties, explore the scientific world of Berlin and find a way to cope with the long train rides to Dahlem.

In any case, we, the FSI Biochemistry, warmly welcome you at Freie Universität Berlin and look forward to meeting you during the orientation days!

Cheers!

FSI BIOCHEMISTRY