

2025

# Jungle Book



A survival guide from LSM  
doctoral candidates

## Welcome!

Dear new LSM students,

Congratulations and welcome to the LSM! You have made a great choice to join the exceptional research cluster located here in Munich. We are sure that you have a lot of questions on how to start earning ECTS points and proceed with various LSM courses.

Here in the Jungle Book, your LSM student council has put together a small guide to help you better navigate through the LSM Curriculum as well as extra-curricular LSM activities. However, if you notice any missing information or would like to add information you feel would be helpful please let us know by sending an email to [Shalini Roy Chowdhury](mailto:Shalini.Roy.Chowdhury@bio.lmu.de) or [Johannes Hagen](mailto:Johannes.Hagen@bio.lmu.de).

We look forward to meeting you on campus soon!

Sincerely,

Your LSM Student Council

### Contact

In case of any questions or uncertainties, please do not hesitate to contact us:

LSM coordinator Nadine Hamze [ism@biologie.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:ism@biologie.uni-muenchen.de)

Student council president Shalini Roy Chowdhury [sroychowdhury@bio.lmu.de](mailto:sroychowdhury@bio.lmu.de)

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\*The LSM Graduate School is not liable for the content within the Jungle Book. All information provided is from students for students and is to be used only as a reference to help with new students' questions upon starting their studies.

\*This document was originally curated by Ms. Anastasia Kitashova and Ms. Nupur Sharma and has been modified by Ms. Shalini Roy Chowdhury and Ms. Lisa Baus (January 2025).

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## Summary

Please find below the table summarizing the LSM curriculum.

<b>Course</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>ECTS point</b>
Orientation course: Successful application	LSM application / Interview days	2
Retreats	1 <sup>st</sup> Retreat	2
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Retreat	2
	Retreat Organisation	1
Lecture Series	Internal	2
	External	2
Workshops	Method course 1	3
	Method course 2	3
	Transferable skills course 1	1
	Transferable skills course 2	1
	Transferable skills course 3	1
Group seminar	Lab meetings / progress report / journal clubs throughout your doctoral studies	4
Advanced / Teaching course	Supervision of Bachelor / Master students, supervision of practical courses	2
Conference	International conference with poster or talk (atleast a 3-day conference)	4
TAC Meetings	1 <sup>st</sup> TAC (6 months after beginning of studies)	3
	2 <sup>nd</sup> TAC (1 year after the 1st TAC)	3
	3 <sup>rd</sup> TAC (1 year after the 2nd TAC)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>

Generally: 1 ECTS = 30h of effort (incl. attendance, preparation, etc.)

# LSM Curriculum

## How to start

As soon as you are accepted to LSM and after submitting your matriculation to the LSM coordinator, you are a part of LSM. **There is no official start date of the study program.** Therefore, students can consider the moment they submit their matriculation to the LSM office as their personal starting day and are welcome to register for the courses and attend the lectures.

The overview of the curriculum can be found on LSM webpage:

<https://www.lsm.bio.lmu.de/curriculum1/index.html>.

In brief, students have to acquire 180 ECTS points during their doctoral studies: (i) 141 ECTS points by accomplishing a doctoral project; (ii) 39 ECTS points by completing LSM courses, summarized in the following table:

<b>Total ECTS</b>	<b>180</b>
Doctoral Project (including TACs)	150
LSM Courses	30

There is a lot of supporting material at the “Useful links and Downloads” section on the LSM webpage: <https://www.lsm.bio.lmu.de/downloads/index.html>. Check “How do I accumulate ECTS points for the LSM curriculum?” there, you can find a checklist with all the courses you need to take. If you don’t find information on the LSM website or in this document, please feel free to contact us.

As a part of the orientation, you need to either attend an E-Learning course on "Scientific integrity and good scientific practice" <https://www.en.graduatecenter.uni-muenchen.de/events/e-learning/index.html#integrity> alternatively “coping with the challenges of PhD”.

## Buddy support

Onboarding as a new PhD student abroad can be overwhelming, and LSM is here to help. Established in 2022, our **Buddy Support** initiative aims to connect incoming LSM students with an advanced PhD student “buddy” in hopes of easing their onboarding experience. Your buddy is there to answer any questions you have regarding student life, PhD advice, etc. Sign-up sheets are usually sent out at the start of the summer semester, shortly after LSM students receive their acceptance letters. We aim to support you to the best of our knowledge, and for more specific queries, we request that you contact our coordinator, Ms. Nadine Hamze.

## LSM Lecture Series

During their studies, students have to attend internal and external lectures, which account for **4 ECTS points**. **Internal lectures**, which are organized by the LSM, take place on Wednesdays at 17:00 during the semester time and are announced in advance by the LSM coordinator. The LSM coordinator takes notes on attendance, so students do not have to worry about extra confirmation. Students are strongly encouraged to attend these lectures from the beginning of their studies.

**External lectures** are any talks or seminars you attend outside of LSM lecture series. In this case, students must confirm their attendance by the signature of the speaker or host on the following form: [https://www.lsm.bio.lmu.de/0\\_assets/external-lecture-attendance.pdf](https://www.lsm.bio.lmu.de/0_assets/external-lecture-attendance.pdf). Please note that institute seminars with internal speakers (PhD students, Postdocs, etc) will not count.

The minimum number of each type of lecture is 15, and students must attend a total of 40 lectures (see table below):

<b>Total Lectures</b>	<b>40</b>
LSM Lectures (Internal)	15
External Lectures	15
Other Lectures (Internal and/or External)	10

Once a semester, LSM organises an **Elevator Talk Session** called the “**LSM Soapbox**”, where students are invited to share their ideas and research with their peers in a friendly environment. This includes a 5-minute presentation *without* PowerPoint, figures, or preparation.

## Method Courses

LSM offers methods courses each semester. Students must complete **6 ECTS by attending methods courses**, which corresponds to 12 days. Students can fulfil the requirement by attending several shorter courses (2-3 days each).

There is a possibility to do an external method course. In case the external method course has a different duration, it is possible to re-calculate ECTS points and combine this course with another. This is done upon submission of the certificate of attendance to the LSM office to count it in the curriculum.

Lab rotations can also be counted as method courses. The rules are the same as for external method courses. Students should provide a proof of their lab rotation with the details and duration (for example, a written confirmation by the supervisor) to the LSM office.

## Transferable Skills Courses

Transferable skills, or soft skills, courses are offered by LSM every semester. Throughout the studies, LSM students have to complete 3 courses (each course is 2 -day long), each enabling them to acquire 1 ECTS point. So, in the end, **students can earn 3 ECTS points by accomplishing 6 days of transferable skills courses**.

Students can also do these courses outside of LSM. For example, the **GraduateCenter-LMU** also offers free courses to LSM students in German and English:

<https://www.en.graduatecenter.uni-muenchen.de/events/workshops/index.html>

The registration for the courses is done on the GraduateCenter portal. Upon successful completion of a course, students get a certificate of attendance to submit to LSM that counts towards the curriculum.

It may happen that external transferable courses take longer than 2 days, in this case it is possible to re-calculate ECTS points to better fit the curriculum. For this, students can just submit the certificate of attendance to the LSM office.

## Retreats

**Students have to participate in 2 LSM retreats and organize at least one.** By participating in one retreat students earn 2 ECTS points and by organizing a retreat they earn 1 ECTS point. So, in the end, students have to acquire **5 ECTS points**.

LSM retreats usually take place in Aug-Sept for 2-3 days. Students present their research, participate in workshops, and enjoy social events. **Students have to present a poster and give a talk.**

**Organization of the retreat** is done “by students for students”. Usually, the LSM coordinator asks students to volunteer for different activities. Several groups of organization committees are made, for example, those responsible for scheduling the retreat, creating a booklet, or coming up with social activities. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know each other, have some fun, and improve your scientific and soft skills.

For the **students who are part of SFB**, it is possible to replace one LSM retreat with two SFB retreats. Students should submit confirmation of participation with the details (for example, whether the student presented a poster or gave a talk) to the LSM office to fit the curriculum.

## German Language Course

Students can voluntarily take German Language Courses offered by the International Universitätsclub München (<https://www.begleitkurs-deutsch.de/en/>). **LSM covers the cost of the courses** if students pass the final exam.

Courses take place in the evenings, twice a week (Mon-Wed or Tue-Thurs). Students can choose between in-person classes (Campus city center or Campus Martinsried) or via zoom. However, the choice of location is not guaranteed as it depends on the number of students per level requesting each location.

## TAC Meetings

Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings take place **once a year** and exist to monitor students' progress and assist them. There are three TAC Meetings in total. The TAC members include one's supervisor and 2 to 3 additional scientists, usually professors. Once student start their doctoral studies, is it obligatory to submit the information on the TAC members to both the LSM office and Dekanat (part of Bestätigung / Confirmation form)

Find more information on applying for permission for your doctoral study (= Promotionsberechtigung) at Dekanat here:

<https://www.en.biologie.uni-muenchen.de/organisation/dekanat/promotion-and-habilitation/index.html>

It is the students' responsibility to contact the TAC members and organize the meeting. Prior to the meeting, students have to submit **a progress report** (around 5 pages) to all the participants. After the meeting, students have to write **a report** highlighting the key points discussed at the meeting, fill in **the TAC form**, and again submit it to the TAC members to acquire their signatures. All three documents have to be submitted to the LSM office.

**It is important to note that the students must conduct their 1st TAC meeting within the first 6-8 months of joining.**



## FAQ section

### 1. After registration, can I directly start signing up for courses and lectures?

Yes, after your admission is confirmed to the LSM, you can refer to the [LSM website](#) and start signing up for your courses. There is no deadline or window in which you have to sign up for a specific course unless otherwise specified.

### 2. What are the LSM lecture series?

[LSM Lecture Series](#) are seminars/ talks organized by the LSM by speakers from all around, that the students of LSM can attend. You don't need to register for these talks; just show up! The information about a lecture is shared in advance by Nadine (LSM coordinator), or you can look them up anytime on the Campus Martinsried Seminars page (<https://campusmartinsried.de/en/seminars/>).

### 3. What is the difference between internal and external lectures?

Internal lectures include the lectures hosted via the [LSM Lecture Series](#). External lectures are all the other lectures hosted on the campus or elsewhere, which have to be 45 min long followed by a Q&A session. The students have to attend 15 internal lectures, 15 external lectures, and 15 open (internal or external) lectures throughout the duration of their doctoral studies.

### 4. How do we get signatures for the lectures?

Generally, the host of the lecture signs every attendee's attendance sheet. On Zoom, however, different hosts employ different methods to confirm attendance. One should either contact the organizer of the respective lecture for the details or ask the supervisor to sign the form. For the LSM lecture series, an attendance sheet is maintained, which should be signed by all the students attending.

### 5. How do we sign up for different courses?

You can sign up anytime for [Method Courses](#) or [Transferable Skills](#) by sending an email to [lsm@bio.lmu.de](mailto:lsm@bio.lmu.de). You will receive a confirmation once your name is on the list of attendees. In case of externally organized lectures, a confirmation of participation submitted to the LSM can fetch you the ECTS points.

### 6. Does LSM offer German Language Courses?

Yes! LSM offers [German Language Course](#) every semester, under the IUCM program. The details for the same can be found under [https://www.begleitkurs-deutsch.de/en/content/BK\\_Home](https://www.begleitkurs-deutsch.de/en/content/BK_Home). You need to pay for these courses, but the entire money is refunded once you pass the exam.

### 7. How many retreats do I need to attend? What do I have to present?

During the course of your doctoral studies, you have to attend 2 [Retreats](#) and organize at least one of them. In terms of presenting, you have to present a poster and a talk in total, but only one of them at a time.

**8. I want to go to an international conference. Can LSM provide me with financial support for the same?**

Yes, LSM can provide the funds for you to attend a conference. Contact the coordinator for more details.

**9. I just joined the LSM Graduate school and started my Ph.D. I am new to Munich. Can LSM provide me accommodation till I find a place of my own? Or can I be assisted with accommodation via the LSM?**

Unfortunately, LSM cannot provide an accommodation to you. However, LMU provides LMU gateway <https://www.lmu.de/en/about-lmu/working-at-lmu/additional-services/lmu-gateway/> that could help you to find accommodation. For renting private apartments, we suggest applying to portals like <https://www.immobilienscout24.de/> or <https://www.wg-gesucht.de/>. If you are looking for affordable student accommodation in dormitories, apply via the [Studentenwerk Munich](#) and sign up for a room. There are always long waiting times for the dorms, so we suggest you start looking for them as soon as possible.

**10. I am admitted to the LSM program. Am I eligible to obtain the student semester ticket for the MVG public transport system?**

Yes, as soon as you are a part of LSM, you can reap the 'student status' benefits in Munich. One major benefit is being able to buy a student semester ticket for public transport. This ticket, called the '*Deutschland Ticket*', can be bought online at <https://www.mvg.de/abos-tickets/abos/ermaessigungsticket.html#>, and it is sold as a subscription. It costs around 38€/month (as of February 2025) and covers the whole MVG network, buses, and regional trains across the country.

**11. I have enrolled with the University. How much are the enrollment fees, and for how long can I be matriculated?**

The solidarity fee per semester is 85€. You would enrol twice a year (summer and winter semesters). The reminder for the enrollment is always sent in advance. LSM students can enrol up to 10 semesters in total.

**12. I am having trouble with my PI in terms of communication and would like external interference to sort out our differences. Can LSM help with that?**

Yes, if you are having troubles with your PI in the workplace and need an external communicator, LSM offers an Ombudsperson to help. Additionally, the Faculty of Biology has representatives who can also mitigate problems.

**13. How do I address grievances to the student council?**

The student council has an anonymous Q&A box ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfw0Or7bOyZFFoQbldpRLbRI8qFOcbpz8iGy8Uqr5fyZijp7A/viewform?usp=pp\\_url](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfw0Or7bOyZFFoQbldpRLbRI8qFOcbpz8iGy8Uqr5fyZijp7A/viewform?usp=pp_url)) where you can submit your questions, and one of our members will try to address it subsequently.

**14. Does LSM offer support for mental health guidance?**

LSM offers support for doctoral students who are mentally distressed in their personal and professional lives. This support involves mentoring and career guidance, cultural and social

change, and lack of work-life balance. This support is achieved via our 2 volunteers, Dr. Annabel Dischinger and Dr. Mauricio Toro-Nahuelpan, who can guide and nudge you in the right direction and direct you to a professional if required. Please find more information [here](#). You can also contact Nadine for assistance services. Apart from this, the psychological counseling center of LMU offers professional counseling support to all LMU employees. You are required to log in with your credentials in the LMU service portal and schedule an appointment for an one-on-one consultation.

#### **15. How does the LSM Student Council provide a social environment for the PhD students?**

We strive to conduct many social events around the year, such as bowling, bouldering, visits to the beer garden, BeerPong tournaments, etc. Other than that, we have a barbeque every year after the Annual General Meeting.

#### **16. How can I join the LSM student council?**

You can email either the LSM coordinator Nadine ([lsm@bio.lmu.de](mailto:lsm@bio.lmu.de)) or the president of the LSM student council, Shalini ([sroychowdhury@bio.lmu.de](mailto:sroychowdhury@bio.lmu.de)) to sign up to be in the council. We encourage you to also attend our LSM Student Council Meetings if you wish to see how we function.