

COMPASS FOR PHD STUDENTS

DEPARTMENT OF BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

In this document, we give you a short overview of contacts, websites, and events. The document also provides information on what is important in the first year of your PhD.

Please also consult the following websites, as they provide a lot of relevant information about your PhD at the University of Basel and part of the Graduate School Medical and Health Sciences. [Website Graduate School Medical and Health Sciences \(GSMHS\)](#) & [Website Graduate Center \(GRACE\)](#).

CONTACT POINTS

Contact point	Role	Details
Renate de Bock	DBE PhD program coordinator	phd-dbe@unibas.ch and office B02.096 (opening hours on the door)
Anja Matthiä	GSMHS program coordinator	gsmhs@unibas.ch and online virtual office hours
Jan Schimmelpfennig and Sathvik Kadimisetty	DBE student representatives	jan.schimmelpfennig@unibas.ch and srisaisathvik.kadimisetty@unibas.ch

APPLICATION DOCTORAL STUDIES

Before you can start your PhD education, you must enrol as a PhD student at the University of Basel. [Follow the steps on the website](#). Choose 'Biomedical Engineering' as your PhD subject.

PHD PROGRAMS

As a PhD student within GSMHS, you need to choose one of the five PhD programs, each recommending courses dedicated to the specific needs of enrolled PhD students. Two of these programs are particularly recommended for Biomedical Engineering PhD students: **Technology and Engineering-Oriented Research** or **Patient-Oriented Research**. [More information](#).

WELCOME EVENTS

The GSMHS organizes a welcome event twice a year. You can already join before you are matriculated. If no welcome event is coming up, please make an appointment with Renate de Bock. The aim of the event is to give you information about what is important in the first year, how to find relevant courses, and getting to know other students, student representatives, and program coordinators. [More information and next dates](#).

GRACE, the GRAduate CEnter of the University of Basel, organizes an online welcome event at the beginning of the fall semester. Here you receive information on employment, relevant regulations, and the various services available to PhD and postdoctoral researchers at the University of Basel. [More information and next dates](#).

IMPORTANT EVENTS

Event	Date	Details
DBE PhD Day	[tba Spring 2027]	Organized by DBE PhD students
DBE Research Day	26 August 2026	PhD students present a poster. More information and registration.
GSMHS Welcome Event	7 October 2026	More information and registration
Various events organized by the student representatives	Continuous	Check your e-mail and information on the screens

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

New PhD students are automatically added to relevant mailing lists. You will receive information from the GSMHS, DBE PhD coordination office, and the student representatives. In addition, and not mandatory: [WhatsApp group](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for all GSMHS students.

SUPPORT IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Informal confidential support: Speak with someone you trust, such as your supervisor(s), a colleague, the PhD coordinators Renate de Bock (DBE) or Anja Matthiä (GSMHS), or Daniela Vavrecka-Sidler (DBE Managing Director).

Independent and confidential support: Contact the [University of Basel Integrity Office](#). They will listen to your concerns and guide you toward appropriate support.

[Other advisory services at the University of Basel.](#)

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN THE FIRST YEAR?

UNiverse

UNiverse is the system that tracks the progress of your PhD. You will (if you haven't already) receive a separate invite for UNiverse from the GSMHS. In UNiverse, you need to upload your administrative data, as well as the PhD agreement, research proposal, and mid-term reports. The system automatically tracks deadlines for you and your supervisor.

COURSES

In the first year of your PhD, you have to plan 18 ECTS (credit points) as part of the research proposal. Read what can be accepted in the regulations ([in German](#): Anhang 1; [in English](#): Doctoral Education and Coursework).

Which courses do we recommend? Which courses should you take? Before you search for courses, first think about the skills that you want to learn during your PhD. What skills will you need for your PhD project, what skills you may need for your career plan? In what skills do you want or need to improve?

Recommended course	Who
Writing a Thesis Proposal in Medical and Health Sciences	All 1 st year students
Research Data Management in Medical and Health Sciences	All 1 st year students
At least one of three summer schools 2027: Summer School: Scientific Writing and Publishing 2028: Summer School: Science Communication 2029: Summer School: Good Scientific Practice	All DBE students
Seminar Series: Latest Breakthroughs in Biomedical Engineering Research	Mandatory for PhD Program Technology and Engineering- Oriented Research
General recommendations	Technology and Engineering- Oriented Research
General recommendations	Patient-Oriented Research

Courses at other Swiss Universities: PhD students enrolled at the University of Basel may also attend courses offered by other Swiss universities. Credits earned through these courses can be recognized as part of the doctoral training program, provided they meet the relevant requirements. The GSMHS also offers [funding for external courses](#).

SUPERVISION

PhD candidates work closely with their supervisor to ensure steady progress and high-quality research. It is common to rely more heavily on your supervisor during the first months of the PhD, with increasing independence expected over time. The frequency and format of meetings (e.g., weekly, biweekly, or monthly) should be agreed upon at the start of the project and adapted as needed. A useful tool is the “[Expectations Alignment sheet](#)” that you can fill out together with your supervisor.