Lab rotation 3 (IRT3) Guidelines WS 16/17

10 ECTS = 300 hr workload
Determined: IRT3 Committee, July 2015

Goals
Students learn how to design a research project and write a scientific grant proposal based on preliminary data or analysis from their own pilot study. The goal of the pilot study is to prepare each student for the Master's thesis, and the topic of the project should be in the field of Evolution, Ecology or Systematics. Students find and read relevant literature; write a research plan and discuss this plan with various people; and collect preliminary data and/or do some preliminary analysis. They write a grant proposal in the format of a big granting agency (e.g. DFG). Finally, **they give a short (10min, with 5 min for questions) presentation at the IRT3 Conference.**

Tips
Students should invest a substantial amount of time on researching and reading the relevant literature. During the IRT3, students should be encouraged to gather and synthesize most of the background literature needed for their Master's theses. The result of this literature search should be clearly evident in the proposal. Time should also be spent on discussion of ideas with the supervisor, colleagues in the lab, and others.

The result of the IRT3 project is a written proposal. Students are strongly encouraged to design their own project rather than conduct a project designed by their supervisor.

Grant proposal writing
As part of the grant writing course (Skills 3), students write a grant proposal, following the guidelines of big funding agencies. In addition to writing a proposal of their research, they learn how to design a time plan and budget.

Grant Proposal Rules

Proposal deadline: **February 20th , 2017**. The proposal should be sent by email (as one PDF document) to the EES coordinator, who will then forward it to the members of the IRT3 Grant Proposal Committee.

Proposal evaluation and grading
The proposals will be evaluated and graded by the IRT3 Grant Proposal Committee. The final grade for the IRT3 will be decided based on three things: (1) the written grant proposal [50%], (2) the presentation at the IRT3 conference [25%] and (3) active participation in class [25%].
Important: Your proposal must be accompanied by a **signed letter of support from the supervisor** of the IRT3 project. In this letter the supervisor has to confirm that the project is doable without any external funding. He/she also has to comment on the grant proposal, confirming that the project can be finished within the required period (6 months) of the Master's thesis.

IRT3 conference
Students present their proposals to the members of the IRT3 Grant Proposal Committee. The IRT3 conference will be public, and the students' supervisors should make a strong effort to attend. The students will organize and moderate the conference themselves, and each talk will be 10 minutes, with an additional 5 minutes for questions. Students from the 1st semester are required to attend this conference.

Deadlines 2016/17

24.10.16	Decision on where to do the IRT3 – turn in course approval form listing other courses as well as IRT3 info
10.01.17	1st draft of proposal is due to supervisor
24.01.17	Supervisor submits evaluation of draft
20.02.17	Final draft of IRT3 proposal is due Students submit proposal to the EES coordinator, who will forward it to members of the IRT3 Grant Proposal Committee
20.03.17	Present work at IRT3 conference

Proposal

The proposal should be no longer than a maximum of 9 A4 pages (excluding references and CV) with 1.5 line spacing and Arial font, size 11. Roughly half of the proposal should be devoted to the research plan, time table, and budget.

The proposal should contain the following information:

General information
Applicant: first name, last name, institution, department and research group, email address
Supervisor (and collaborators, if applicable): first name, last name, institution, department and research group, email address
Title (max 15 words)
Summary (max 200 words)

Scientific background
Background literature summary and up-to-date synthesis of relevant research. Cite the work of other scientists in your field and integrate ideas into the proposed topic of your research.

Preliminary work
Give a summary of your preliminary work on that topic (if applicable)

Research plan
Mention the objectives and goals, the methods of investigation, the available data, the data to be collected. Provide details of all planned experiments (e.g. the experimental design, duration, statistics). Where the research will be conducted? Is there any assistance needed from outside your own group/institute?

Time table
All steps and the mile stones should be included here. When will data be collected, analyses performed, thesis written up?

Budget
All the costs should be listed here. Make clear which items/expenses will be incurred by the lab where you will be conducting your thesis project. The budget should include consumables, travel expenses and any other costs (if applicable).

References

CV of the applicant