

Teaching and supervision in the ebb group

March 1, 2021

Information for students

It is very important that a researcher is able to communicate his/her ideas, results and problems with the scientific community. Therefore, a research project is also a communication exercise. Keep that in mind whenever you present or write down parts of your research.

This document applies mainly for research modules ('Forschungsmodule') but might be helpful for other reports or modules.

Writing the report (20+20=40% of all points):

- Check the "How to write" section for details on our website:
<http://www.bornberglab.org/teaching/how2write>
- Don't write 'for us' - we already know the project and background. Write for an audience that doesn't know the project. For this, short sentences are usually a very good way to make things easy and clear to understand!
- Ask yourself before starting the report: What is the purpose of the research? - Build your report around it! That will also help you to be very clear and create a coherent 'story'.
- Keep taking notes in structured ways from the first day of the project. This should include at least:
 - What has been discussed?
 - What are the research questions? What are the aims, what the objectives?
 - Which references have you considered?
- To keep it as fair as possible, your supervisor can give you feedback on your report at the following stages:
 1. Provide an outline of your project and a short paragraph of written text right in the beginning after your literature search. This will allow your supervisor to help you focus on the correct things from the start of your module.
 2. To help you with your writing style and the general structure of the report, an early version of your report should be sent about 10 days before the deadline. That could be for example a couple of paragraphs of written text and a bullet point list for all chapters, showing the proposed structure and storyline of the report in more detail.
 3. An additional feedback can be given on the final version of the report. We recommend at least 3-4 days before the hand-in deadline.

Therefore: Start writing early on! For a maximum feedback, provide an early outline with a written paragraph at the end of the first week, then a more complete report 10 days before the deadline and your final report 3-4 days prior to the deadline.

These guidelines should be adapted in the case of shorter projects such as those in the Biocomputing module, where it is only possible and sensible to offer feedback once or twice within the last week before the deadline.

- Don't underestimate the importance of the report: it's worth 40 % of your total research module grading! That's another reason to start early ;)
- Remember: Don't use colloquial terms ('Alltagsphrasen') in a written report!
- Remember: The report is a communication exercise, based on your accomplishments, not a description of what you have done. Put only essential information in the main text, technical descriptions or less important results should go into an appendix.
- To reduce any biases in grading to a minimum we perform dual marking, i.e. half of the points for the report are awarded by your supervisor and the other half by the group leader (Prof Bornberg-Bauer).

Presentations (5+5=10% of all points):

- Check the "How to present" section for details on our website:
<http://www.bornberglab.org/teaching/how2talk>
- Make sure everyone from the group can follow your project. Remember, not everyone is working on the same project and might need more information than someone as familiar with the topic as you.
- To make sure that the communication exercise part is taken seriously, someone else from the group will be grading your presentation (not your supervisor!).
- That also allows your supervisor to give you a bit more feedback on your slides or even on a practice talk beforehand as he/she is not grading you on the presentation. But again, remember that your supervisor will need some time to do so, therefore start preparing the slides not just the evening before the talk.
- Your presentation will be graded based on how well you communicate the results, not how many results you have at that stage of the project. So consider presenting only a sample of the most important results rather than everything that will go into the report.
- Keep to the allocated time (usually 20 minutes) - this will be graded.
- To minimise any biases, grading of the presentation is again done by splitting the points to be awarded between two group members. Your supervisor will NOT be involved, so remember that you should address a knowledgeable but not an expert audience.

An important point to consider on both components (report, presentation): Think about how much (or how little ...) you knew about the project before you started it. Would you understand it all based on what you are presenting now? Would your friends who work in other groups understand it?

30% of all points will be awarded according to your achievements and 20% for project management.