



# offspring

## Dear PhD-Students and PhD-Representatives,

Max Planck offspring is the new magazine of the Max Planck PhDnet and is designed to communicate the network's activities, such as soft skill seminars for the PhD-students of the Max Planck Society (MPS) or the next General Meeting of the network end of November in Göttingen. Also, PhD-student relevant news are part of this publication (see pages two and three).

Since the last General Meeting in October 2004 in Garching, a lot has happened:

- A new *de facto* structure is now supporting the network's business; the Spokesperson, three Section Representatives, the Secretary Group and all Work Group Leaders are forming the network's "leading team".
- A first letter to the Directors of all institutes was written by the Spokesperson to inform about the network and point out some PhD-student relevant problems (see [www.phdnet.mpg.de](http://www.phdnet.mpg.de)).
- An article about the Max Planck PhDnet was published in Nature on August 18th, 2005 (see Nature, Vol. 436, 2005, p. 1062).

- It became clear that the network is in need of a statute to clarify the responsibilities and competences of the PhDnet-Representatives, such as the Spokesperson, the Section Representatives and the Work Group Leaders.

The team play within the network's leading team as well as between the »Generalverwaltung« and the Spokesperson is in a very good condition.

In order to take the network into the future and to strengthen the PhD-students' position within the MPS, we decided to give the network a statutory base on the coming General Meeting. Further the Meeting Work Group decided to enrich these meetings with a scientific program (see page four).

I am looking forward to seeing you in Göttingen and count on you for developing our network.

Yours,

(Benno Quade)

## PhDnet Development

End of June the Spokesperson invited all Section Representatives and Work Group Leaders to attend the Workshop "Development of the Network" in Munich from August 5th to August 6th, 2005.

On August 5th, only one of the five Work Group Leaders, Gudrun Schlaf from the Interdisciplinary Work Group, but all Section Representatives (María Soledad Saux, Section Representative Humanities; Joscha Gussmann, Section Representative Life

Science and Niels Syassen, representing the CPT Section) showed up in Munich.

Although we were so few the Workshop was quite productive: The agenda for the next General Meeting was determined, the organisation of the soft skill seminars (see next page) was completed and a lot more topics were successfully discussed.

All results will be presented in November in Göttingen. - *B.Q.*

### Meetings Work Group

The Network's General Meeting 2005 in Göttingen from November 24th – November 26th 2005 is organized and the meeting website is launched: See for further information [www.phdnet.mpg.de](http://www.phdnet.mpg.de) (click the meetings button) or page four of this folder. Leader: Ajaybabu Pobbati, [apobbat@gwdg.de](mailto:apobbat@gwdg.de)



Working for the Network's future: María Soledad Saux, Joscha Gussmann, Gudrun Schlaf, Benno Quade and Niels Syassen (from left to right)

### Interdisciplinary Work Group

No News reported. Leader: Gudrun Schlaf, [schlaf@mpch-mainz.mpg.de](mailto:schlaf@mpch-mainz.mpg.de)

## Network News

### Web Work Group

No News reported. Leader: Markus Garczarczyk, [garcz@mppmu.mpg.de](mailto:garcz@mppmu.mpg.de)

## PhDnet questionnaire

### PAC Work Group

No News reported. Leader: Jan Forbrich, [forbrich@mpifr-bonn.mpg.de](mailto:forbrich@mpifr-bonn.mpg.de)

With more than 3900 PhD-students, the Max Planck Society (MPS) is one of Germany's largest institutions for young graduates who want to get into fundamental research. The MPS attracts young people from abroad as well as students from Germany.

Your feedback is not only essential for the work of the PhD-representatives and Work Groups, but will also serve as a basis for discussions at this year's PhDnet General Meeting in Göttingen.

### Legal Work Group

No News reported. Leader: Enoma Omoregie, [omoregie@mpi-bremen.de](mailto:omoregie@mpi-bremen.de)

It seems that most of the PhD-students are quite happy with their PhD work in general. However, some PhD-representatives reported about problems especially concerning supervision and the duration of the PhD.

Furthermore, your feedback will also be a direct feedback to the president of the MPS. Of course, the more people participate, the more representative the results will be!

### The Secretary Work Group

No News reported. Leader: Sabine Schnabel, [schnabel@demogr.mpg.de](mailto:schnabel@demogr.mpg.de)

In order to learn more about the PhD-student's general situation and existing problems, the PhDnet will conduct an extensive survey starting at the beginning of October. This will be your unique chance, for you as PhD-student of the MPS, to evaluate your situation and to help pointing out difficulties while doing a PhD at MPS or just to rate your level of satisfaction.

In order to guarantee your anonymity, the questionnaire will be available online at the PhDnet webpage at

[www.phdnet.mpg.de/questionnaire05](http://www.phdnet.mpg.de/questionnaire05)

from October 1st, 2005 onwards. In the near future you will receive an e-mail, which contains a code that enables you to fill in the online-questionnaire.

This is your chance to help improving the situation of PhD-students at MPS. Take it! - *N.S.*

October 18th, 2005 – München: Wissenschaftliches Veröffentlichen

October 25th, 2005 – Mühlheim: Scientific Publishing

October 28th, 2005 – Berlin: Scientific Presenting

November 9th, 2005 – Heidelberg: Scientific Presenting

November 10th, 2005 – München: Scientific Presenting

December 6th, 2005 – Göttingen: Scientific Publishing

## This Year's Series of “Soft Skill” Seminars

On October 18th, 2005 the first series of soft skill seminars organized by the Max Planck Phdnet will take off in Munich: Until December 6th, 2005 more than 120 PhD-students will have the chance to improve their presentation or publication skills in German or English at six different places all over Germany (see above).

The seminars are organized by the Spokesperson, the Interdisciplinary Work Group and at least one engaged PhD-student of the hosting Max Planck Institute and sponsored by the Deutsche Bundesbank. End of December, will be held a seventh soft skill seminar especially for “fresh” PhD-students near Freiburg, dealing with the question of how to structure a PhD project.

For PhD-students interested in attending a seminar: The application process is open now and will be closed on October 1st, 2005. To apply please visit

[www.wemeet.de/phdnet](http://www.wemeet.de/phdnet)

and “browse the database for your seminar”; here you will find all information about the seminars and the trainer Dr. habil. Claus Ascheron from Springer, who is giving all the seminars listed above.

When you found your seminar of interest please click on “application” or “registration form” and enter your personal information. An e-mail address @...mpg.de is required in

order to place an application: If you are a PhD-student at a Max Planck Institute but do not have a @...mpg.de e-mail address please press “contact” and support will be provided within 24 hours.

Please be aware of the terms and conditions for application before you sign up for a seminar (just click on the “terms and conditions”-button on the website).

Groups of PhD-students can also apply for a soft skill seminar in 2006: If you are 12-15 PhD-students willing to attend a soft skill seminar and working at the same Max Planck Institute please fill in the “Group Registration Form” or contact Gudrun Schlaf from the Interdisciplinary Work Group ([schlaf@mpch-mainz.mpg.de](mailto:schlaf@mpch-mainz.mpg.de)) for further information.

We hope that you will get your application placed and will profit from one of the seminars. We ask for your understanding; since the number of places is limited we can not guarantee a place for everyone.

- *B.Q./G.S.*



Dr. Claus Ascheron,  
Executive Editor  
Physics at Springer-  
Verlag: Trainer of  
this year's soft skill  
seminars.

PhD-Representatives: Register now for  
the Network's General Meeting 2005 in Göttingen.

[www.phdnet.mpg.de](http://www.phdnet.mpg.de)

## Invitation to the 4th General Meeting

The Meetings Work Group of the PhDnet invites all PhD-representatives to the 4th Max Planck PhDnet General Meeting, which will take place on November 24th-26th, 2005 in Göttingen. The president of the MPS supports the General Meeting and will attend it.

All PhD-representatives meet annually not only to discuss specific issues like the further development of the network, the results from the questionnaire and problems reported by PhD-students or to elect their Spokesperson, Section Representatives and Work Group Leaders but also to get to know other PhD-students from the several Max Planck Institutes and to get involved in one of the Work Groups.

The upcoming meeting is of utmost importance and contains two special features, the introduction of the statute and a scientific day themed "Pushing the Borders of Science". We expect renowned speakers from different disciplines like Lifesciences and Philosophy. The meeting is a valuable

opportunity to address all the queries that are specific to your institute. Detailed information on the next meeting (including registration) can be found on our website (see above).

If you would like to participate, it is »crucial« that you go through the PhDnet website and the meeting reports prior to your arrival in Göttingen, since explaining the structure and the activities of the network to the newcomers is impossible due to the tight schedule of the General Meeting.

I hope to see you in Göttingen!

Yours,



(Ajaybabu Pobbati)