

BIOME Task Force Recommendations

As mentioned at our annual BIOME staff meeting on 03.02.2020, a smaller group of BIOME SCs met up as a task force on 12.03.2020 to find constructive solutions to ensure that there is more homogeneity between the individual core programmes and to look into ways of improving doctoral discussion.

Firstly, it was agreed that an overarching guideline was needed concerning the structure, content and length of the doctoral presentations of own work. These points have now been defined as follows:

Guidelines for BIOME Seminars

Length: 30 minute presentation plus 15 minutes for discussion

Presentations

Content:

	Doctorates at the beginning of their thesis	Doctorates at more advanced stages of their thesis
Introduction	Overview of the state of the art in the field, major background for the project.	Introduction to enable non-experts to understand research background and question.
Methodology	A description thereof.	A description thereof.
Results	A description of initial research results.	A more detailed description of research results.
	Mention any present stumbling blocks. These can be discussed with your fellows to find the best ways to overcome them (interactive troubleshooting discussion).	
Figures	Please ensure these are <u>clearly</u> labelled!	
Conclusion	Summary of what the results mean, how they relate to the goals of the project.	
Future Perspectives	Next steps, how the research project relates to the field of research (also with reference to the introduction).	

Discussion

Format: For each seminar a **nominated student chair** will lead and host the discussion with the session's **assigned scientific coordinator** taking a supportive background role. Thus, the hosts are expected to prepare well to ensure a lively discussion, also selecting people in the audience to respond ad hoc.

- **The whole group** should have on average at least **10 questions** to ask the presenting person; these can be prepared beforehand or arise from listening to the presentation.

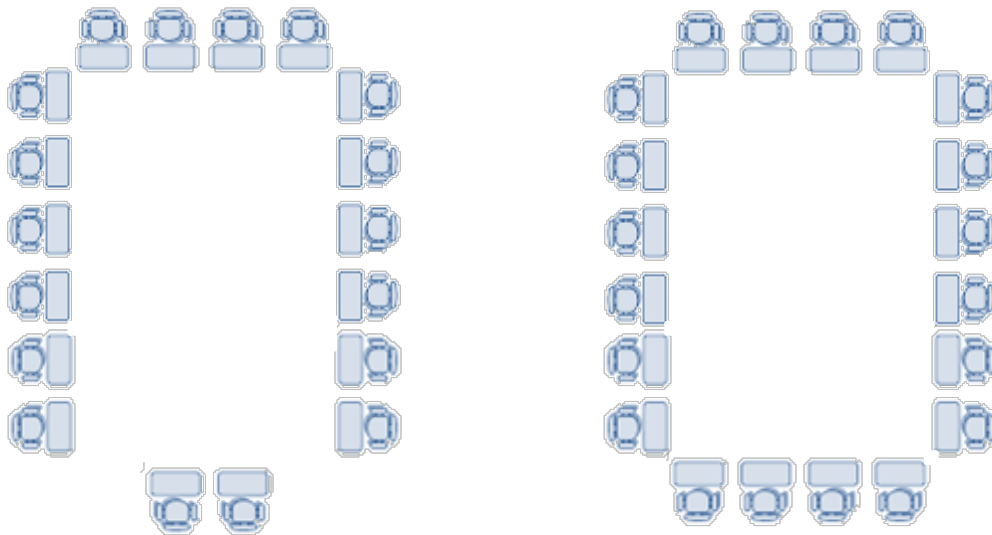
Group discussion may also include feedback on the presentation and slides.

These guidelines shall be sent by BIOME (via Delia) to all students, be attached to the application forms and rule guide and can be accessed on our website: https://www.uni-due.de/imperia/md/content/biome/guidelines_for_seminars_for_doctorates.pdf

Furthermore, the guidelines should be shared as a slide and be presented to the participants at the first core event each semester.

Seminar Seating Arrangement

Colleagues have noted that the seating arrangement seems to have a major influence on the level of the group's interaction with each other. In cores where the members have **eye-contact** (horseshoe or hollow square formation) discussion flows decidedly more freely and naturally, so the task force highly recommends implementing these formations for the seminars (should the same not be possible for lectures as well).



* Recommendation for when physical teaching is again possible...

Additional Doctoral Presentation Formats

Particularly the smaller BIOME cores reported the problem of too much repetition with not enough new interesting data in the seminar programme/at the annual retreat if the doctorates hold their talks too regularly. Cores have had very positive experiences with getting the doctorates to hold additional presentations on:

- **State of the art of a specific field/topic**
- **What's new in a particular research field?**
- **A refresher presentation on the scientific background of a certain area**
- **Method presentations**
- **Conference summaries.**

Furthermore, it was suggested that **Oxford debates** could be introduced to the retreat programmes, as this is the perfect setting for this format.

Updated Overview of Recommended BIOME Training Hours for Cores

BIOME Cores with a fortnightly/weekly schedule during the semesters:

- Lectures (circa 15 lectures x 60 min per year)
- Seminars (with two presentations per session, circa 30 seminars x 45 min per year)
- Annual Retreat (2 days x 8 full hours/day)

Total: circa 53,5* hours per year (160,5 hours in three years)

** Can vary slightly depending on semester dates and bank holidays*

BIOME Cores with a monthly schedule throughout the year:

- Lectures (12 lectures x 60 min per year)
- Seminars (with two presentations per session, equals 24 seminars x 45 min per year)
- Annual Retreat (**2 days** x 8 full hours/day)
- **OR** Annual Retreat (**1 day** x 8 full hours) with 8 additional doctoral presentations during the regular lecture programme

Total: 46 hours per year (138 hours in three years)

- Attendance at **soft skill workshops** and **external conferences** is in addition to the above calculations for BIOME certification.