

# The International Max Planck Research School for Language Sciences



**Excellence in multidisciplinary language research**



## Introducing the International Max Planck Research School for Language Sciences

**Language is the most complex of all human behaviours, crucial for the evolution of human culture and society. Future advances in the language sciences will strongly depend on integrating the relevant disciplines, including the brain sciences, the psychologies of action, perception and development, and the diverse branches of linguistics.**

In recognition of this need, the International Max Planck Research School for Language Sciences launched in 2009 to bring together expertise from three top research institutes in Nijmegen, The Netherlands: the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, the Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour, and the Centre for Language Studies at the Radboud University Nijmegen.

The IMPRS for Language Sciences provides a structured training programme for PhD students in the language sciences. Funded by the Max Planck Society, the research school is based in Nijmegen, yet is truly global in scope. Over the next three years, up to 54 outstanding students from around the world will benefit from this groundbreaking, multidisciplinary approach to learning.

## About the PhD programme

The IMPRS for Language Sciences' PhD programme uniquely equips students to start new lines of research in the language sciences and explore beyond their discipline of origin.

Students are trained in a multidisciplinary environment where they benefit from the combined resources of the partner institutes and the expertise of world-class researchers.



## The research programme

At the IMPRS for Language Sciences, students follow a research programme guided towards the publication of articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals and the completion of a dissertation submitted in English. Students also have the invaluable learning experience of working within a team research environment.

Individual research programmes are expected to take, on average, three years, except where other funding agencies permit longer fellowships. Each student has a dissertation committee of at least one professor in the relevant discipline and a senior staff member who acts as day-to-day supervisor.

During their research programme, students are primarily affiliated to one of the three partner institutes. They are encouraged to attend seminars, courses and project meetings in additional disciplines throughout their fellowship period. In most cases, students receive their degree from the Radboud University Nijmegen.

## Fields of research

Students can participate in existing research at the partner institutes as worked out in consultation with their supervisors. Research areas include:

- Language production;
- Language comprehension;
- The interaction between perception and action in the language domain;
- Language acquisition by children (normal and impaired) and adults;
- Multilingualism;
- Language and its relation to other cognitive faculties (e.g. memory, vision, audition);
- Language and the brain, brain development and plasticity, and language learning;
- Modelling of language processing;
- Corpus studies of language behaviour and their implications for language processing;
- Language diversity and the implications for language processing in the individual;
- Language typology and the search for constraints on 'possible languages';
- In-depth descriptions of undescribed languages which throw new light on the language capacity;
- Language and modality (sign languages, gesture and language);
- The evolution of language and its traces in the brain, physiology, cognitive capacities for learning and memory, multimodality and typology of languages.



## The education programme

In addition to their research programme, PhD students at the IMPRS for Language Sciences also develop a personalised education programme tailored to their needs and interests.

There are three elements to the educational programme:

- Discipline-specific courses (18 ECTS);
- General courses (6 ECTS);
- Participation in colloquia, lectures, research meetings, student days and workshops (6 ECTS).

Students take part in the education programme while working on their research. The programme language is English. An overview of possible courses is available online at [http://www.ru.nl/master/cns/students/program/course\\_descriptions](http://www.ru.nl/master/cns/students/program/course_descriptions) and [http://www.ru.nl/master/lc/ma\\_programme/programme](http://www.ru.nl/master/lc/ma_programme/programme).

## How to apply

Students already accepted for the PhD programmes at the partner institutes may be eligible to become part of the research school and can speak to their supervisors.

The IMPRS for Language Sciences also offers three PhD fellowships per year. These fellowships will be posted on

the research school website in the new year and will also be advertised internationally.

## Requirements

Applicants for IMPRS for Language Sciences fellowships must hold or be working towards a Master's degree in linguistics, psychology, computer science, or artificial intelligence. The Master's degree or equivalent must be awarded before the PhD programme can begin.

Applications must include:

- Curriculum vitae;
- University transcripts;
- Diploma, or proof of upcoming Master's degree examination;
- Names and contact details of two referees;
- A letter detailing the applicant's background, research aspirations, proposed area of research and reasons for special interest in the IMPRS for Language Sciences.

Short-listed applicants will be asked to provide written work and will take part in an interview process. All applicants must have a good working knowledge of oral and written English, the official language of the research school.

## Partner institutes

**Nijmegen is one of the few places in the world where a concentration of first-class expertise on language, its manifestation in behaviour, and its implementation in the mind and brain can be found.**

### **Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics**

The Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics undertakes basic research into the psychological and biological foundations of language. It is the only institute in the world entirely devoted to psycholinguistics: the study of how we produce and understand language, and how we acquire these skills as first or second language learners. Learn more at [www.mpi.nl](http://www.mpi.nl)

### **Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour**

The Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour of the Radboud University Nijmegen combines the Centre for Cognition, the Centre for Cognitive Neuroimaging and the Centre for Neuroscience. Together these institutes cover psychological approaches to language processing, the implementation of this processing in the brain and the neural architecture that supports it. Learn more at [www.ru.nl/cognition](http://www.ru.nl/cognition), [www.ru.nl/neuroimaging](http://www.ru.nl/neuroimaging) and [www.ru.nl/neuroscience](http://www.ru.nl/neuroscience)

### **Centre for Language Studies**

The Centre for Language Studies of the Radboud University Nijmegen carries out top quality and innovative research in linguistics, language and speech technology, and communication studies. Many of the research projects are conducted in close cooperation with national and international partners. Learn more at [www.ru.nl/cls](http://www.ru.nl/cls)



Radboud University Nijmegen



Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics



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