

Making the most out of my research: patents, licenses and other things I cannot afford to ignore

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Over the last decades, life sciences have become a productive source of technological innovation, leading to commercial products and new markets. Along with this on-going development, issues in intellectual property are becoming more and more important for researchers in biosciences. To help young scientists to prepare for this challenge, the Forum for Genetic Research of the Swiss Academy of Sciences has run on June 23rd -24th 2014 the 8th edition of a graduate course on intellectual property protection in the life sciences. The course was organized by Prof. Dr. Heinz Müller (Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property Protection) and Prof. Dr. Daniel Kraus, Université de Neuchâtel.

Thirty-eight doctoral students and post-docs from different Swiss universities have seized this opportunity to learn during two intense days about a variety of patenting issues. A series of lectures introduced the participants to aims and limits of patents, patent law, patenting strategies, challenges for intellectual property protection in a SME and in an academic institution as well as to ethical considerations. A half-day workshop allowed the attendees to gain hands on experience in one of three topics: drafting a patent application, intellectual property protection during commercialization or applying patent law to defend patents. During the two days, there was also ample room for discussions and the participants made great use of this opportunity to engage with the experts and their peers.

This year's edition of the course was organized in collaboration with the following doctoral schools: CUSO, doctoral programs Staromics and Microbiology; Graduate School for Cellular and Biomedical Sciences, University of Bern; Life Science Graduate School Zürich; Interuniversity Doctoral Program in Organismal Biology. The course was also generously supported by the Kontaktgruppe für Forschungsfragen (KGF) and its member companies BASF, Syngenta, Novartis and Roche.