



CEPLAS

Cluster of Excellence on Plant Sciences

Join the CEPLAS Graduate School for Plant Sciences in Germany!

Founded in 2012, our fully funded PhD program trains outstanding Bachelor graduates from around the world

CEPLAS – the Cluster of Excellence on Plant Sciences – is supported through the Excellence Strategy of the German federal and state governments. The cluster brings together five renowned research institutions: the **University of Cologne (UoC)**, **Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf (HHU)**, **Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research (MPIPZ)**, **Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK) Gatersleben** and **Forschungszentrum Jülich (FZJ)**.

Excited to help **uncover how complex plant traits shape performance and adaptation—**and to drive innovations for **sustainable crop production?**

We offer

- **An inspiring international and interdisciplinary research environment** with renowned faculty and state-of-the-art infrastructure
- **A fully funded graduate program** and extensive administrative support for international students
- **An innovative training concept** with a 1-year qualification phase followed by a 3-4-year doctoral research period, with the option to obtain a Master's degree along the way
- **A comprehensive training program** including courses in scientific and transferable skills, lectures, seminars, and practical courses in state-of-the-art laboratories
- **A vibrant community of early career researchers** participating in joint courses, seminars, and program activities
- **Opportunities to build lasting professional networks** with internationally recognized PIs across participating institutions

We are looking for

- **Highly motivated B.Sc. graduates** in cell/molecular biology, genetics, biochemistry, computational, quantitative or synthetic biology, or related fields (an excellent degree is required at the start of the program)
- **Students at the start of their Master's studies:** Master's graduates are not eligible; however students within the first 3 months of a 2-year Master's program may apply
- **Students confident in English** and eager to grow in an international research environment

Further information

- **Online application and CEPLAS Graduate School details:** www.ceplas.eu
- **Application deadline:** January 18, 2026
- **Selection procedure:** Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a selection workshop which takes place on March 9-10, 2026 in Düsseldorf
- **Program start:** October 2026
- **Contact:** gradschool@ceplas.de