

## **Fachschaft Neuroscience**

### Handbook 2024

This handbook was originally written by the Fachschaft of 2018/19. We decided to add our own experience where we thought it was appropriate and invite you to do the same in one year!

Congratulations, new Fachschaft!

We the Fachschaft of 2023/24 have come to be strong believers in Murphy's Law. So that you have a little less chaos than we did, we've written you a handbook to guide you through the tasks of the Fachschaft. We hope you can keep it updated and improved for your successors.

Enjoy!

### **Contents**

1. Transfer of power
2. Who does what?
3. Fachschaft assets
4. Fachschaft meetings
5. The AStA
6. Finances
7. Events
  - Neurodinners
  - Welcome Week
  - Meeting with Module Leaders
  - Info Sessions
  - Graduation Party
8. Election of the new Fachschaft

## 1. Transfer of Power

First thing's first: the new Fachschaft has to receive some things from the old one. These are:

- Key to the Anatomy Building, which contains the Fachschaft library (see *Fachschaft assets*)
- Access to the Fachschaft bank account (see *Finances*)
- Access to the Fachschaft e-mail account, including updated security questions
  - All other relevant account informations
- Official paperwork proving you are the Fachschaft - this is important for getting funding from the AStA

Additionally, the new Fachschaft should schedule a meeting with Dr. Künzel and Prof. Henneberger before the winter semester begins to introduce themselves and discuss upcoming events, for example Welcome Week.

## 2. Who does what?

This is how we distributed tasks, although you are free to change it as you like.

### President

- Plans and runs Fachschaft meetings and info sessions
- Keeps an overview of events that need to be planned and topics that need to be discussed, generally makes sure "things get done"

### Vice President

- Takes over presidential duties if the President is on vacation
- Writes a protocol of Fachschaft meetings
- Books reservations/catering for Neurodinners and other events
- Handles the library

### Communications Officer

- Manages the Fachschaft e-mail account
- Makes announcements over e-mail

### Treasurer / Finance Officer

- Manages the bank account and Fachschaft finances
- Submits the funding application to the AStA each semester
- Relevant Information regarding this can be found here: <https://www.asta-bonn.de/Fachschaftenreferat>

### IT Officer

- Manages the Fachschaft website and social media pages (Position not filled in 2020/2021)

In general, the Fachschaft as a whole has two functions. First, we are basically the Party Planning Committee. We plan parties and dinners, and get the AStA to pay for them.

But secondly, students might sometimes voice concerns about the program to the Fachschaft, because we are supposed to be a line of communication between program faculty and students. Sometimes if there is a problem between students and a faculty member, the Fachschaft can help mediate the conflict. In general, it was found that professors prefer to hear directly from students. But if that is not possible or isn't solving the problem, the Fachschaft is officially an organization students can come to for help.

### **3. Fachschaft Assets**

The Fachschaft owns a few things that sometimes come in handy:

#### The Fachschaft corner

In the back part of our room in the Anatomy Building, our "Fachschaft corner" is where we store Fachschaft property while we're not using it. We also store leftover beer there. Sometimes the medicine students steal it.

It has a few miscellaneous items, including:

- Two grills for cookouts in the summer
- Some fake flowers and other decor
- A few cups, glasses, plates, and similar
- Disco lights

... and more. Just go check it out :)

#### The library

In our corner is a small library - cabinet, actually - where we keep neuroscience textbooks to lend to students. There is a record of people who have borrowed books taped to the door - make sure to have people fill it out when they borrow and return books, or Vice Presidents can keep record on their own.

If there is a book that students really want to access, you can talk to Künzel about ordering a couple of copies for the library.

#### The mailbox

Our mailbox is located in the coordination office. We have allowed Dr. Künzel to open our mail and have an agreement to ask whether something important was there. Try to do this every or every other month.

We mainly get advertisements for events or services from the AStA, which you can pass out to students if you want to. Occasionally free tickets to a university party appear.

The bank also sends our statements to this mailbox. Don't throw these out, they go in the big finance folder.

#### **4. Fachschaft Meetings**

Fachschaft meetings take place once a month and should be open to all students who might want to come with questions or concerns. In our experience the participation of students is low to nonexistent. It is however good practice to announce all the meeting publicly. The agenda is generally run by the President, and the Vice President writes a protocol of what was discussed. You may also use your room at the anatomy building.

Topics usually include the next month's Neurodinner, any upcoming events, administrative/financial topics, and student concerns that may have come to our attention.

#### **5. The AStA**

The AStA is a university's student union, and most universities in Germany have one. It is made up of all the Fachschaften at the university.

Some general information can be found in English here: <https://www.asta-bonn.de/AStA>

Our Fachschaft mainly deals with the AStA when requesting funding, but they also offer other things. They run regular meetings (in German) and encourage all Fachschaften to attend.

The AStA is also very involved in activism, so if that is something you are interested in, they would surely be happy to have you.

#### **6. Finances**

##### Bank account

The Fachschaft has its own bank account, for which two members are responsible. This account is how we pay for events and receive funding from the AStA.

The transfer paperwork is easiest if both members on the account are German, and at least one of them should definitely speak German in order to deal well with the bank. It's possible for one account holder to be a foreigner, but if so, we know from experience that everything is more complicated if you try to put a US citizen on the account - there is some treaty between the US and Germany that requires Americans to provide a bunch of extra paperwork and information. Best leave the Americans out of this one! :)

**Requesting funding from the AstA (Some of this info might be outdated as they are regularly updated. Make sure to check the current regulations on the Asta website!)**

Our general funding is called “Allgemeine Fachschaftengelder (AFsG)” and must be requested at the end of every semester. The AStA prefers paperwork in German, but if you find yourself in a Fachschaft without any German-speaking members, you may be able to convince them to accept documents in English.

There is also special funding (BFsG, besondere Fachschaftengelder), which can be requested from the AStA if you want to hold a special event, e.g. a class trip. We never did this but there is information about it on their website.

Information, forms, and contact information can be found (in German) on the AStA’s website:

<http://www.asta-bonn.de/Fachschaftenreferat>

If you have any questions or issues, you can call the AStA or go to their office hours in Nassestraße 11, first floor, room 3. In our experience they are very nice and want to help you!

Here is an overview of what you will need to submit each semester. If you’re not sure what a document should look like, check the AStA’s website for examples, or ask a previous Fachschaft.

### 1. Haushaltsplan (budget plan)

This is a plan for what you intend to spend in a given semester. You can also do it by year, that way you only do it once. It’s best to write this at the beginning of your tenure.

Your plan must contain the following:

- Dates for which it is valid (e.g. 01.10.23 - 31.09.24)
- A structured, itemized table of expected income and spending
- The income and spending have to be equal!
  - If you have money leftover from last semester that you plan to spend, enter it into the plan as “Entnahme aus den Rücklagen” (= taken from the reserves)
  - If you plan to have some leftover at the end of the year, enter it into the table as “Zuführung in die Rücklagen” (= added to the reserves)
    - This way everything will add up.
- Additionally, you have to provide a protocol of the meeting in which the budget plan was discussed and decided on. The person writing this protocol has to sign it.

### 2. Kassenabrechnung (spending statement)

While the budget plan is what you intend to spend, the Kassenabrechnung is what you actually spent. While writing this, it may help to refer back to the budget plan, as the structure is similar.

The Kassenabrechnung must contain:

- Signature of financial officer with date
- Dates for which it is valid (note: the *entire* semester must be accounted for before you get funding for that semester)
- A structured table of actual income and spending
- All of your income must be accounted for! If the Kassenabrechnung does not add up, the AStA will not give you your funding.

### 3. Kassenprüfung (audit)

After you have your Kassenabrechnung, the AStA wants to see a signature from two witnesses who say it all adds up. The audit is a documentation of this.

It must contain:

- The dates of the Kassenabrechnung which is being audited (same dates as on the Kassenabrechnung)
- The amount of money you began with at the beginning of this period, and the amount you ended with (same as on the Kassenabrechnung)
- Date and signature from the two auditors signifying that everything is fine
  - The two auditors should be students of Uni Bonn who are not, and never were, in the Fachschaft. They can be neuroscience students, but don't need to be.
- A protocol of the meeting in which the two auditors were chosen
  - The auditors must be voted for by other neuroscience students
  - This voting session must be protocolled
  - The protocol should contain:
    - The names of all attendees who are allowed to vote (so, all students who are not Fachschaft members)
    - The names of the two auditors, and how many votes each received
    - A signature from the person who wrote the protocol

### 4. Protokoll der konstituierenden Sitzung (protocol of Fachschaft election)

This is the document which proves that you are, indeed, the Fachschaft, and are allowed to ask for funding. If your senior Fachschaft is nice, they will write this for you after they run election day. ;)

It should contain:

- Name of the Fachschaft (Fachschaft Neuroscience)
- Date of the meeting at which the votes were counted
- Dates of the voting period (→ see **8. Fachschaft Elections**)
- Election results with positions and names of all new FS members

- List of the old FS members
- Signatures:
  - Writer of protocol
  - Person who oversaw the election (usually the previous president)
  - New president of the Fachschaft

## 5. Contact form

This tells the AStA how to get ahold of you.

It should contain:

- Your Fachschaft e-mail address
- The current IBAN for the Fachschaft bank account
  - These shouldn't change between Fachschaften, but the AStA likes to know everything is still current.

## 6. Completed AFsG form

This form can be downloaded here: [http://www.asta-bonn.de/w/images/e/e9/AFSG-Antrag\\_2015.pdf](http://www.asta-bonn.de/w/images/e/e9/AFSG-Antrag_2015.pdf)

*Note: that one is from 2015 and will someday not be current anymore, so check for an update.*

You don't have to submit everything at once, but sometimes the AStA misplaces things, so keep a copy of anything you send. Documents that don't require original signatures may be sent by e-mail.

## Acceptable spending

The AStA states that Fachschaft money may be used for:

- Parties
- Office materials for the Fachschaft (e.g. pens)
- Debts to Fachschaft members or others (e.g. reimbursing someone who paid for a Neurodinner)
- Other sensible expenses which benefit neuroscience students

## 7. Events

### Neurodinners

Neurodinners are opportunities for everyone in the program to hang out together. The Fachschaft plans one per several months (at least 2 times a year).

Usually, we pick the restaurant and then send around a Doodle with different time slots for everyone to pick from.

Before picking a restaurant, make sure they are big enough to accommodate 15-20 people - not all places are. It's smart to call ahead a few days in advance no matter what, because weekends are often busy for restaurants. Reservations are usually a good idea.

Here are some restaurants that previous years liked in the past, but feel free to explore new ones as well!

#### **BurritoRico**

At least one American thinks these are the best burritos in Germany.

#### **Cowboy Burger**

Exactly what it sounds like, and delicious.

#### **Sausalito's**

Excellent cocktails, although a bit more expensive.

#### **Cafe blau**

A student cafe right next to the main university building. Not as pricey and serves a variety of dishes. Nice party atmosphere.

#### **Barbecues**

If the weather is nice, grab the Fachschaft grill and have a nice neuro-barbecue on the Beuel-side of the Rhine or at the Rheinaue. If someone has access to a car it's even more easy to carry the grill and drinks over.

#### **Ginger's**

Small Vietnamese place that specializes in sushi, but also serves other awesome dishes.



## Welcome Week

Welcome Week is probably the biggest thing the Fachschaft does - and you plan it right at the beginning of your term, when you don't feel like you know what you're doing yet! We'd recommend already beginning to plan this a couple of months in advance to give yourselves enough time to get everything ready.

**Dates:** Welcome Week traditionally takes place in the week before classes start. There is no set schedule or order of events that has to happen - other than the Welcome Brunch, the program is yours to decide.

### **Organization**

As soon as the new list of students is finalized, be sure to send out an e-mail informing everyone of the dates of Welcome Week. The earlier people know about it, the more will be able to attend (because of flight schedules, etc). A detailed schedule can come later.

### **Student mentors**

As part of welcoming the new students, each junior is assigned a student mentor from the senior class so they have someone in the program to contact with questions. As soon as the list of students is finalized, you can assign mentors as you see fit. We did it roughly by country. Then, contact both juniors and seniors to inform them who their mentors/mentees are and provide contact information.

### **Welcome Week Events**

#### Pizza Party

The Pizza party takes place on the first evening of the welcome week. It's a nice opportunity to introduce yourselves to the new students and make them feel welcome in Bonn. They also have the chance to get to know their new classmates a little better.

Here's a checklist for how to plan the pizza party:

- Make sure the seminar room in the anatomy building is free that night. Professor Schilling's secretary should be able to reserve it for you.
- Buy some beer and other drinks (easiest if someone has a car but otherwise Netto/Edeka at Poppelsdorfer Platz are the closest option)
- Order Pizza (different flavours and also have some veggie-options)
- Arrange the tables in a nice way
- Put up signs so that people find the room
- Have the juniors introduce themselves with their name + descriptive adjective to make it easier to remember. Go around the table and make them *all* memorize all the names so far. We all had to do it, make the new kids suffer too.
- Think of some ice-breaker games i.e. "Who am I?"
- Optional: write a welcome statement on the whiteboard and decorate the room a bit

- Make sure everything is clean, lights are off, windows closed, and tables are put back in the original arrangement before you leave. The janitor will get really mad if you don't.

### Welcome Brunch

The welcome brunch is an opportunity for Künzel and Henneberger to put names to faces and introduce the program to the new students in person.

Here is a general list of things to think about when organizing Welcome Week:

- Book a room: the Gartensaal in Poppelsdorfer Schloss is very nice, although if it isn't free you should be able to use the Anatomy Building. Definitely check with the secretary that it is free.
- Breakfast food  
We ordered our baked goods from Kamps in Poppelsdorf and got everything else at the supermarket. Previous Fachschaften have been able to actually find a bakery to sponsor the brunch (in exchange for a little advertising, of course) so it may be worth looking into.
- Drinks (coffee, juice, tea, water, etc.)
- Paper cups, plates, & napkins; bread knives
- Signage - put up some signs telling everyone where to find the room, or you may have some lost neuroscientists

### Campus Tour

This is helpful for the new students to not get lost between Venusberg and Nussallee and all its different and sometimes hidden buildings and entrances.

- Announce a time to meet and meeting point i.e. in front of the anatomy building (maybe split the group in two if there are many students)
- Show them:
  - The physiology building and the back-entrance for the NeuroPhys lecture
  - The library
  - The Mensa in Poppelsdorf
  - How to get to Venusberg (with Bus no. 601)
  - Get off at "Uniklinikum Nord"
  - Lehrgebäude/Fachschaft
  - BMZ
  - The Mensa on Venusberg
  - DZNE/Life&Brain
  - The neurology-building + the route to Künzel's office

### Hike

Look for a day with suitable weather-forecast and schedule a hike to Drachenfels and Schloss Drachenburg for a nice insight into the local history and nature.

Meet with the Juniors at platform one (e.g. in front of McDonalds as it's easy to find) at Bonn Hbf. Take a subway to Königswinter and get off at the Sea-Life. From there your hike will start. Enjoy!

### Pub Crawl

In order to get to know Bonn's Bar and Pub scene organize a nice tour around the city at night. Venues could be:

- James Joyce (irish pub)
- Pendel/Cartoon (nice cocktails)
- Steinbeck (quite small but cozy)
- Mayas (same)
- Nyx
- Dubliners (another irish pub in Altstadt)
- Limes (a little shabby but solid prices, not as crowded and offers a variety of beers)
- Tacos (cocktails)

Make sure that there is enough space and maybe reserve a table especially if the group is big

### October Neurodinner

The October Neurodinner is the first one for the new Juniors. It does not necessarily have to take place during the welcome week but it is nice to announce the habit of having dinners every other month together already then, so that the juniors know about it.

It does not differ much from the other "regular" Neurodinners.

### Meeting with Module Leaders

Each year there is a big meeting with all the module leaders, usually in November. Künzel should inform the Fachschaft of the dates. A couple of Fachschaft members should go and listen, so that you are in the loop about changes to the program, issues faculty may be facing, and other discussion topics. In the past, the Fachschaft has also been asked to briefly talk about what students think of the program right now and whether there are any major concerns that involve all faculty (there weren't, but it's nice to have the opportunity to report on what the students actually like about the program).

### Info sessions for electives

The point of these sessions is for the seniors to share their experiences in the different electives with the juniors. We hold two info sessions per year for the juniors: one around November for the elective courses, and one in the spring for the elective practicals.

In each session, we ask all the seniors to either come in person (or zoom), or send us a short report about each of their electives. Then, we go through each of the classes and ask one

person who had it to briefly share their experience. We hope this helps everyone make more informed choices about which labs they want to work in.

### Graduation Party

The graduation party is a day to celebrate everyone's accomplishments in the Master's program, and it is often the last time that a class is all in one place together. We usually have a ceremony for students, families, and professors first, then an open after-party later.

As of this writing, we aren't done planning our party yet. But here is a list of things to consider:

Date: Set the date well in advance so people's relatives can book plane tickets and get visas. Previous years had it in September-October, before anyone really finished their thesis and left the country. Of course, try your best to make sure every student can attend!

Venue: This is worth booking well in advance, since places tend to fill up quickly in the summer. Some years had their party at the event room in the Venusberg Bistro. University-owned buildings seemed to offer the best deals for students, so you can ask the Studierendenwerk what they have available. Other rentable buildings tend to be more expensive, and most of them appear to be bars.

Catering: Bonn has several catering companies to choose from, and you can easily find them online. They tend to charge 20-25 Euros per person for a full meal. Because that gets quite expensive, all recent Fachschafts have had a cover charge to get into the graduation party.

Speakers: Professor Henneberger and Künzel will probably want to say a few words, and you can invite another professor to give a longer commencement speech if you like. It's good to do this as soon as you find a date and venue, since professors have busy schedules.

## **8. Election of the new Fachschaft**

Each summer, the old Fachschaft arranges the election of the new. We did this in July and had the new Fachschaft take over in August. It may make sense for the old Fachschaft to retain ownership of the bank account until they have turned in their last finance report at the end of September, after the graduation party. Do whatever makes sense.

The AstA has particular regulations for elections, so be sure to follow them (at least officially - we are a small group and so some of the regulations may seem a little over-the-top. Just know what they are and turn in the right paperwork.)

A copy of their regulations can be found here (in German): [http://www.asta-bonn.de/w/images/f/f5/FS\\_Wahlordnung\\_05.2017.pdf](http://www.asta-bonn.de/w/images/f/f5/FS_Wahlordnung_05.2017.pdf)