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Assessment of Vera Slaninova during her PhD studies

Vera Slaninova joined our laboratory as our first master student and then she decided to become also the lab's first successfully defending PhD student. Her path to the end of it was not straightforward, as it hardly is with a PhD student; there were failings, dead ends, but also exciting new observations that lead to a success at the end. It was a steep learning curve and it was a pleasure to watch Verka growing scientifically over the years. She worked hard and I have no hesitations to say that she has become an experienced *Drosophila* geneticist as well as a molecular biologist that will be an asset to every lab.

The main aim of her PhD project was to identify metabolic genes directly regulated by the Notch signalling pathways and to characterize the role of this regulation in the Notch stimulated growth of the wing disc tissue. The Notch directed metabolic reprogramming that she described could serve as a general model how the Notch pathway exerts its effects in other target tissues, such as the stem cells, immune cells, cell during development as well as in cancer cells. On top of that, she was also involved in several side projects that explored the other side of the coin - how the Notch pathway responds to changes in cellular metabolism. Some, but not all, of these results are part of her thesis. This gave her the opportunity to master a whole range of techniques as well as to broaden her scientific background. Besides cloning, luciferase assays, tissue culture work, protein isolation, baculovirus expression and analysis of metabolic parameters, she also performed numerous immunostaining experiments *in vivo*.

Verka was able to work independently and think in a wider context. I very much appreciated that she has always been willing to take criticism on board, think constructively and improve. It was a pleasure to work with her; not because we would not have disagreements (there were quite a few) but because these often lead to interesting discussions that pushed the project forward. One of the things that I appreciate on Verka the most is the fact that she is a team player. She likes to talk and she spreads a friendly atmosphere in the lab. She is down to earth and often she serves as a buffer zone for any conflicts that may have arisen amongst the lab members, simply because she is not afraid to tell what she thinks and she does not see things black and white. These are the attributes that make Verka successful, in science and outside it.

In summary, I believe the PhD thesis of Vera Slaninova represents a solid work and that she deserves to pass with the grade excellent.

Sincerely,