



SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT ON BACHELOR/DIPLOMA * THESIS

Name of the student: Stina Essmann

Study program: Biological Chemistry

Department/Institute: Institute of Biological Chemistry FS USB

Thesis title: Subcellular localization analysis of proteins non univocally located to the mitochondria of *Trypanosoma brucei*

Supervisor: Ignacio Durante, Ph.D.

Supervisor's affiliation: Institute of Parasitology, Biology Centre CAS, České Budějovice

Point scale¹ Points

(1) FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

Formal and graphical quality of the thesis	0-3
Ability to work with literature	0-3
Language and stylistics	0-3
Formal requirements – points in total	

(2) PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS

Fulfillment of the aims	0-3
Ability to understand the results, their interpretation, and clarity of the results, discussion, and conclusions	0-3
Discussion quality – interpretation of results and their discussion with the literature	0-3
Experimental difficulty of the thesis, independence in experimental work	0-3
Contribution of the thesis to the knowledge in the field and the possibility to publish the results (after eventual supplementary experiments)	0-3
Practical requirements – points in total	

POINTS IN TOTAL (MAX/AWARDED)

24

(0-24)²

* Choose one

¹ Mark as: 0-unsatisfactory, 1-satisfactory, 2-average, 3-excellent.

² Enter the number of points awarded.

Comments of the supervisor on the student and the thesis:

I apologize for the extensive comments, but given the current situation, I believe they are worthy.

This is the second and as far as I know, *last* chance for the student to defend the Thesis. After failure at the first attempt, that was due to lack of proper preparation and time dedicated to the writing of the Thesis.

The student did not contact me until two weeks before the deadline for submission of the new version, having months to rewrite the Thesis.

The handled material was almost unchanged from that originally failed. Additionally, due to the existence of “two versions” of something not explicated textually in an email from Prof. Štěřba, our exchanges would have to be supervised by him on CC. I performed an extensive correction of the Thesis, while other versions were arriving, all of course far from complete and even not considering observations previously made.

Aware of the status of the manuscript and the upcoming deadline, I wrote this warning with CC to Prof. Štěřba and Prof. Lukeř, transcribed textually here:

“ ... Hello all,

I attach my corrections to the Thesis. I apologize for the delay, but I already explained Stina, the Thesis needs extensive re-writing, so the process of correcting took time. I tried to do it as soon as possible. I CCed Julius in this email. I have some concerns about the situation regarding the Thesis that I would like to point out to all.

The first version of the Thesis was not admissible because it did not consider point by point Ondra’s observations. I worked with the second version, which did that only partially. Still is missing a detailed list explaining where and how you are addressing the corrections in Ondra’s review, but I nonetheless read the Thesis mostly because of time, which again is less. I did not work with the last version sent because I was already advanced in this one. Stina will have to compile both.

I am concerned about the repetition of mistakes that were explained several times, some of them regarding basic biology questions. At this point these types of confusions should not be present, but again I pointed them out, explained them and I hope this time will be properly considered.

I made an exhaustive reading of the text and added my corrections as comments. I did not intervene in the text because it is not proper to do that, otherwise I would be writing the Thesis. Besides, the last time most of tracked changes were not accepted, so I think comments are simpler to follow.

Again, we are with less time to solve these problems, and in the past few months, there was not a single discussion about the serious issues regarding the previous outcome. Not before two weeks

before the deadline. The previous time the ppt presentation was sent two days before and we only had the chance to go through the presentation the morning before the defence. I am worried that the same situation will repeat itself in this opportunity. I would not like that to happen again.

I offer my help as far I can provide it, but I consider that the effort and initiative should come from the student, to whom on the other hand I always tried to help throughout my experience in teaching. I hope we all can imply into achieving the best possible outcome in this opportunity. From my side, this is all I can do.

Best regards, ..."

Then, given the fact that alternative versions of the Thesis were still arriving and that the changes were not meeting the requirements of my corrections, I wrote the following, again with copy to Prof. Štěřba as required:

" ... Hello all,

I received the last version of the Thesis.

I must say that as far as I went through, it still needs to be extensively reformatted. Moreover, many changes that I pointed out were not addressed. I am also mostly concerned about mistakes about biology concepts that should be crystal clear at this point, but they are far from understood instead. The writing needs intervention that at its current stage could only be achieved if I would rewrite sections and re-organize the Thesis. I consider that under these conditions, if the Thesis is submitted within this deadline, it will be just to repeat the exact same outcome that we experienced already. This is not desired by any of us, I assume.

I must say that that I believe that here two main issues are met:

- a manifest lack of commitment to correct the flaws pointed out both by myself and the opponent's evaluation and insufficient time working on writing the Thesis, handling provided bibliography and understanding the principles that were explained and supposed to be learned during the project. This is clearly shown in the lack of proper citation and poor description of the methods, which are critical at this point of the scientific career. I am still correcting italicization and spelling mistakes. We are two days away from the deadline. Fooling oneself with the idea that the Thesis can be written without effort and in less time is pointless and dangerous.

- Not everything is to be blamed on the student. As educators, we should be aware of this. I cannot understand how a Bachelor student arrives to this point in the present state. Are there not scientific writing assignments and molecular biology courses that the student must have passed before this point?

We provided Stina with proper guidance during the experimental part of the Bachelor project that produced enough results to write a Thesis. I am correcting the manuscript in a circular manner now, which makes the current situation a dead alley. Therefore, I clearly do not recommend the Thesis for submission in the current state, and certainly not for defence until basic key concepts are studied and understood properly. Having teaching experience since 2010, I do not see the point to send a student to the slaughterhouse knowing it beforehand (as already happened once). We must protect the students even from themselves.

I encourage Stina to take this seriously, and I will be happy to help. I am confident that we all want the best outcome, so I also ask for something more cooperative than passive surveillance since this should be concerning us all. We should also bear in mind that correcting is always much easier than doing.

Best regards, ..."

After that, and without consulting nor including me in CC, the student asked for an extension to Prof. Grubhoffer (as far as I know) and was granted with a one week totally insufficient extension considering the tenor of my letter that pointed out serious problems. Yet, I was not notified of the extension but indirectly by Prof. Štěřba.

Taking all this into account, I decided not to continue with the correction of the Thesis, coherently with my points clearly explained above. The corrections I had provided so far were sufficient if considered seriously and consciously in an appropriate time devoted to study and internalization.

Given that it was her right to do so, the student handled the Thesis, that was however never delivered to me by her, not in electronic nor in hard copy version. Instead, I had to download it from the public repository.

On Sunday, only days before the defense, I received an email from the student with questions regarding the opponents' inquiries, and the presentation for revision. I handled my reply to the student's doubts the following day.

As it was pointed out by opponent Dr. Ondřej Gahura, who read the two versions of the Thesis, the current one shows improvements that directly reflect some of the corrections were followed. There are also weaknesses mostly pointed out by opponent Dr. Zdeněk Franta that also reflect the lack of proper dedication to the writing process and biology knowledge explained above.

Therefore, although the behavior of the student is questionable, the evaluation should be based on academic merit and solvency during the presentation and her ability to satisfactorily respond to the opponents' concerns.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I do not grade the Thesis and leave the decision entirely to the opponents.

In Ceske Budejovice, September 16, 2021

