

NCRR / QGG / BiRC Journal Club

Overview

The departments NCRR (National Centre for Register-based Research), QGG (Quantitative Genetics and Genomics) and BiRC (Bioinformatics) have run a biweekly statistical genetics journal club since 2018. The journal club is intended mainly for researchers at the three departments, but anyone is welcome to attend. For each meeting, one researcher acts as the host, and is responsible for picking a paper and circulating it to others a few days beforehand, then for leading the discussion during the meeting. There is a general focus on papers proposing new statistical methods for analyzing genetic data, but no requirement (e.g., some hosts select papers in other areas of genetics, such as epidemiology). On average, 10-15 researchers attend each meeting (a mix of senior researchers, postdocs and PhD students).

Benefits to PhD Students

It is essential that a PhD student is able to read and understand scientific papers in their research field. In particular, it allows them to keep up-to-date with the latest developments, and should inspire new ideas and projects. Further, regular reading of papers will be beneficial when the student starts writing their own papers (i.e., gives clues of the common format and the amount of new content required).

Awarding of ECTS

We propose that PhD students should be able to earn ECTS for active participation in the journal club. Specifically, we propose a student should earn 3 ECTS per year if they satisfy the following:

- 1 – attend at least 10 journal clubs during the year, and actively contribute to the discussion
- 2 – act as host for at least one journal club during the year.

Note that the justification for 3 ECTS is that on average, it will take a student 3-6 hours to read a paper, 6-12 hours to prepare for being host, plus each journal club meeting is one hour. Therefore, to fulfil the above two requirements requires 46-82 hours commitment.

Documentation of Participation

To earn the 3 ECTS, the PhD student must make a word document containing the following:

- 1 – a list of the papers presented at the 10 journal clubs they actively contributed to. For each paper, the PhD student must write a paragraph (at least 300 words) describing the paper. This description can outline the methodology, the main results, or any criticisms / praise discussed at the journal club. Further, the document should list the question(s) and/or comment(s) raised by the PhD student.
- 2 – the name of the paper at the meeting for which the PhD student was host, and a copy of the slides prepared for the meeting. Note that the meeting format is flexible, so the host is only required to produce 1-2 slides (but often produces more).

The document should be signed by one of the journal club organizers (currently Zeynep Yilmaz, Bjarni Vilhjalmsson, Jakob Grove and Doug Speed) to confirm its accuracy.