PRESS RELEASE

BIST and UPF launch the first Master of Multidisciplinary Research in Experimental Sciences

- **The only one of its kind in Spain, the Master offers practical training in experimental research in various disciplines at centers of excellence**
- **An academic event, on September 12, kicks off the Master, bringing together 14 new students**

Barcelona, September 8th, 2017. On Tuesday September 12th, with a formal welcome ceremony for the first 14 students, the **Master of Multidisciplinary Research in Experimental Sciences**, a joint academic program between the Department of Experimental and Health Sciences of the Pompeu Fabra University (DCEXS, UPF) and the Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology (BIST) officially kicks off.

Oriented to equip students with the skills that guarantee incorporation into a research career in an increasingly complex and competitive environment, this one year Master is the first of its kind to launch in Spain. It emphasizes the importance of research (40 of the 60 credits of the master's degree are based on research work) and its multidisciplinary nature, which is evidenced especially - but not only - in the participation of each student in two research projects in different disciplines (in which they will work, respectively, for 6 months and 10 weeks), and which will be carried out in two different research centers.

In addition to the experimental training through these two research projects, students will receive training in cross-curricular subjects such as statistics and imaging sciences, responsible research, and scientific communication. Students will also participate in seminars and workshops in advanced research techniques, taught by top local and international researchers and specialists. The program includes a Winter School (February 2018) in Microscopy, Nanoscopy and Imaging Sciences, which will be given by specialists from ICN2, IRB Barcelona, CRG, ICFO and IFAE, and will allow students to receive theoretical and practical training in the most advanced techniques of this area, and its application to different disciplines. By the end of the master's course, which is **taught in English**, students must prepare a thesis with the results of their research and present an oral defense before the scientific community of BIST and DCEXS.

The Directors of the Master, **Roderic Guigó**, Professor at the UPF and Group Leader at CRG, and **Rob Sewell**, Staff Scientist and Coordinator of Academic Programs at ICFO, stressed: "*This program aims to give talented students the opportunity to launch their scientific career through intensive, in-depth research training in outstanding laboratories, an innovative and tightly-integrated training program, and the chance to interact with, learn from, and be inspired by leading local and international scientists.*"

David Comas, Director of the DCEXS at the UPF, said: "*This Master is a joint effort by the BIST centres and the UPF. Aimed at working on the most cutting-edge educational innovations and research skills, it opens the doors to a myriad of future scientific challenges*."

The faculty of the Master is made up of DCEXS researchers and BIST center researchers. International scientists who will participate in seminars and workshops include **Phillip N. Messersmith** of the University of California at Berkeley; **Mauricio Barahona** of Imperial College (London); **Serena DeBeer** of the Max-Planck-Institut Chemische Energiekonversion (Germany); **Luca Giorgetti**, of the Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research (Basel, Switzerland); **Ilaria Malanchi**, Francis Crick Institute (London); and **Alain Blondel**, Professor at the University of Geneva and Researcher at CERN.

To enter the new Master, students (graduates in experimental sciences in health care or engineering) have undergone a rigorous selection process and have had to choose from a range of 56 research projects, 6 months in duration, proposed by the BIST centers and the DCEXS. Together with their project supervisors, the students will decide on their second research project (which will last 10 weeks and be completed with another researcher from another centre) to complement their interdisciplinary training.

This freedom in choosing their own training is one of the unique characteristics of this Master, which has been inspired by successful international programs such as the Master of Research - UCL CoMPLEX (University College London); the Master of Science at the Feinberg Graduate School (Weizman Institute, Israel); International Master's Program in Molecular Medicine (Charité, Germany); the Master in Research in Biomedicine (University College London); and the MSc in Biomedical Sciences, University of Edinburgh. Like the BIST-UPF Master, all these programs are designed to **prepare students to enter high-level international doctoral programs, equipping them with the necessary tools to successfully conduct complex and highly competitive research projects.**

Welcome event

The welcome ceremony for this first set of students will be held on Tuesday, September 12th (16:45h - 19:00h), in the Josep Marull room at the UPF Mar Campus. In addition to a course presentation by its Directors (Roderic Guigó and Robert Sewell), there will also be a talk by Dr. Niek Van Hulst, ICREA Professor at The Institute of Photonic Sciences (ICFO), entitled *Perspectives for New Scientists*.

The event will be chaired by Jaume Casals, Rector of the UPF, and Andreu Mas-Colell, President of BIST, who considers the new master's degree as one of the key projects in BIST's strategy.

Mas-Colell stresses that *"the Master of Multidisciplinary Research in Experimental Sciences brings together the BIST community in a novel way, drawing from its multidisciplinarity to create a unique opportunity for students to work in this world-class environment."*

Although this new Masters is launched from the hands of the UPF, the objective is for it to become an interuniversity program in the future editions. For BIST, this is the first of a series of training programs that it plans to develop with its research centers and associated universities (UB, UAB, UPC and URV), in order to contribute to the strengthening of research in Catalonia.

About BIST

The Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology (BIST) is an initiative of seven research centers of excellence in Catalonia that aims to increase their collaboration to build a common scientific project. Its strength lies in the research capacity of the seven centers and in their potential to promote leading multidisciplinary research projects. The centers that constitute the BIST are the Center for Genomic Regulation (CRG), the Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia (IBEC), The Institute of Photonic Sciences (ICFO), the Institute of Chemical Research of Catalonia (ICIQ), the Catalan Institute of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology (ICN2), the Institute for High Energy Physics (IFAE), and the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona).

About DCEXS-UPF

The Department of Experimental and Health Sciences of the Pompeu Fabra University combines the transfer and generation of knowledge thanks to the perfect integration of teaching and research. Innovation in education and research excellence are the foundation of their efforts. The DCEXS, accredited as an Excellence Unit by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, belongs to the Pompeu Fabra University, recently recognized in the international Times Higher Education ranking (THE Ranking, 2017) as the 1st place university in Spain and the 140th worldwide.

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NOTE: If you are interested in attending the welcome ceremony, please contact the BIST or UPF in advance.