

Benjamin Towbin, PhD

Curriculum Vitae

SNSF Eccellenza Assistant Professor
Institute of Cell Biology
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Date of birth: 7 September 1982
Married, 2 children (dual career family)
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I am an Assistant Professor with an interdisciplinary background in quantitative Systems Biology and in Molecular Biology and Genetics. I strive to break new ground by research at disciplinary interfaces. I want to teach students to think outside their classical disciplinary training and keep learning beyond their comfort zone.

Research Experience

Nov 2019-present day **SNSF Eccellenza Assistant Professor**
Institute of Cell Biology, University of Bern Organismal Systems Biology Lab

Sept 2016-July 2019 **Independent senior postdoctoral researcher**
Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research, Basel (CH)
Host laboratory: [Dr. Helge Grosshans](#)

Mar 2013-Aug 2016 **Postdoctoral researcher**
Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot (IL)
Advisor: [Prof. Dr. Uri Alon](#)

Education

Dec 2007-Mar 2012 **PhD thesis in Genetics**
Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research, Basel (CH)
Thesis title: "Dynamics of subnuclear chromatin organization during *C. elegans* development: a role for H3K9 methylation"
Advisor: [Prof. Dr. Susan Gasser](#)

Sep 2005-Nov 2007 **MSc in Biomedical Sciences**
University of Utrecht (NL)
Advisors: [Prof. Dr. Ronald Plasterk](#), [Prof. Dr. Susan Gasser](#)

Sep 2002-Aug 2005 **BSc in Molecular Biology**
University of Basel (CH)

Supervision of junior researchers

PhD students: Joel Tuomaala (Bern, since Feb 2020), Sigma Pradhan (Bern, since Jan 2021)
MSc students: Franziska Schmid (Bern, Feb 2020 – Jan 2021), Ioana Gheorghe (Bern, since Nov 2020)
Undergraduate students: Stefano von Wytttenbach (Bern, Feb 2020 – May 2020), Julie Perey (Bern, Feb 2021 – May 2021), Aaditya Saxena (Bern, Nov 2020 – Jan 2021, June 2021 – August 2021)
Member of PhD committee: Stefan Lia (Fribourg), Christian Urzi (Bern), Ekaterina Shvetsova (Bern)

Teaching activities

2021 Systems Biology MSc lecture at University of Bern and Fribourg (full semester course)
2021 Scientific Presentation Workshop, Institute of Cell Biology, Univ. Bern (1/2 day)
2021 Introduction Bioinformatics 3rd year BSc: mathematical modelling, Univ. Bern (1 wk module)
since 2019 Guidance "Semesterarbeit" for BSc students, Univ. Bern (2 students/year)
since 2019 Microscopy course for MSc students, Univ. Bern (4 hours)
since 2019 Cellular and Genetic Networks, Univ. of Bern (2 hours)
2008-2009 Teaching assistant (TA) for biology tutorial, University of Basel (biweekly 2 hours)
2003- 2004 TA for introductory course in computer science University of Basel (weekly, 2 hours)

Memberships in panels, boards, and individual scientific reviewing activities

Editorial board member: *Frontiers in Physiology*, specialty section for Invertebrate Physiology

Served as reviewer: Scientific reports, *Frontiers in Cell and Developmental Biology*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, *Nature*, *Cell*, *Journal of Cell Science*, *PLoS Biology*, *Molecular Systems Biology*, *Genome Research*, *Genes and Development*, *BMC Biology*, ...

Prizes, awards, fellowships

2017	<i>Marie Skłodowska-Curie</i> Individual Fellowship, 2 yrs, €187,400
2017	<i>Engelhorn-Traudl foundation</i> postdoctoral-fellowship, 2 yrs, €155,200
2016	<i>Swiss friends of the Weizmann Institute</i> postdoctoral fellowship, 5 months, €16,000
2015	<i>Weizmann Institute Azrieli project grant</i> , €9000
2014	Award for best thesis at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Basel
2013	<i>HFSP</i> long-term fellowship, 3 yrs, €175,000
2013	<i>EMBO</i> and <i>FEBS</i> long-term fellowships, gratefully declined
2013	<i>SNSF</i> early post-doc mobility fellowship, 1 yr, €43,000
2013	Ed Fisher Prize for best PhD thesis at the Friedrich Miescher Institute

Selected outreach activities

- Workshop panellist organizer for Science and Youth school project (“Wollen wir 200 Jahre alt werden?”), 2020
- Tage der Genforschung, FMI, Basel, recurrent workshop leader, 2009-2019
- Numbers day, Gymnasium am Münsterplatz, Basel, guest lecturer, 2018
- Scientific presentation to Swiss politicians and business delegations at Weizmann Institute (Israel) for Swiss federal parliamentary group Switzerland-Israel (2016) Swiss business delegation (2015)

Career breaks

Paternity leave (dual career family): Nov 2011- Jan 2015 and Aug 2012 – Mar 2013