

## Oral Histories in the EMBL Archive

### Objective

The EMBL Archive exists to “collect, arrange, preserve and facilitate access to documentary heritage of enduring historical value created (naturally or necessarily) or received by EMBL as a product of its activities at any of its current and future sites. This specifically includes material from persons (e.g. current or former staff), and can include material from organizations closely associated to EMBL and/or the life sciences.”<sup>1</sup>

### Context and opportunity

Since January 2015, the EMBL Archive has been gathering historical and current material (physical and digital) from across the Laboratory. In parallel, the EMBL Archivist has been meeting with past and current EMBL staff, and individuals closely associated to the Laboratory; these meetings have highlighted that individuals have a wealth of personal and institutional knowledge about EMBL, and that they are willing to share it. Furthermore, there is a demand from the EMBL community to have access to personal testimonials.

Gathering oral histories of individuals involved with EMBL’s past and present ensures that individuals’ stories be preserved and shared. Doing this as part of the regular activities of the EMBL Archive will enable these testimonials to be put in context of EMBL’s archival holdings, and protect their long-term care and preservation. Gathering, preserving and sharing oral histories fully contributes to meeting the objectives of the EMBL Archive.

### EMBL Archive – Oral Histories Mission statement

The EMBL Archive – Oral Histories collection will gather interviews that, together, capture the **development, history and on-going missions and achievements of EMBL and its people** specifically and the (European) molecular biology landscape more generally. This collection will provide interested parties with coherent and comprehensive first-person interviews that will inform about EMBL as a European scientific institution.

### Implementation

#### Gathering interviews

The interviews will take place across the EMBL sites and at other locations if necessary (for the convenience of the interviewees). The EMBL Archivist will conduct the interviews; other interviewers might be arranged later. The format will be as consistent as possible, following a prepared interview grid. The interviews will be recorded in audio format only, through photographs can complement the audio file.

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<sup>1</sup> EMBL Archive Terms of Reference (2016): § 2.

9 January 2018



## Project Oversight

As this is part of the regular activities of the EMBL Archive, the oral histories programme is overseen by the EMBL Director General (to whom the EMBL Archivist reports). In addition, the EMBL Archivist will make every effort to receive input and feedback from relevant parties, including EMBL senior scientists, long-standing members of staff and the EMBL Alumni Association. Specific advice will be sought regarding who should be interviewed and to help make collection of oral histories representative of EMBL and its community.

## Access to the interviews

All interviews will be catalogued in the EMBL Archive within the Oral Histories collection, following the usual cataloguing processes. This interview will be unedited. A transcript of the interview will also be made available, as would any photographs or supplementary documents.

In line with the consent form signed by the interviewee, the oral history will be made available for wider use within the EMBL community and beyond. The interviewee and the EMBL Archivist will discuss, prior to the interview being recorded, access to the recorded interview and transcripts, and the interviewee will be given the opportunity to impose restrictions on access to these.