



Guidelines and feedback form

Introduction

For each doctoral candidate of the IMPRS-STNS a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) is set up at the beginning of the research project. The TAC approves the research project, reviews the progress of the doctoral candidate and advises her or him on further training, studies and research. When it can be foreseen that a research project will not be successfully finished, the TAC can recommend to discontinue the project; this has to be confirmed by the IMPRS spokesperson.

The aim of the TAC is to support the doctoral candidate in the successful completion of the research project, i.e. to provide advice and feedback on any aspect of the doctoral training. Furthermore, the TAC should provide feedback to the IMPRS Office.

Members of the Thesis Advisory Committee

The TAC consists of 1) the doctoral candidate's supervisor, 2) a co-supervisor, and – optionally – 3) a mentor who can either be from academia, industry, or any suitable area, or a second co-supervisor. The TAC is quorate if two of its members are present.

General guidelines for TAC meetings

It is the doctoral candidate's responsibility to organize the meetings.

- Coordinate with all TAC members to find a suitable date in accordance with the time frame outlined below.
- Reserve a room suitable for the meeting (size, technical equipment) or arrange for an online meeting.
- Complete the form in Appendix A as the agenda for the meeting and send it to all TAC members well in advance (at least 1 week before the meeting).
- Inform the IMPRS Office in advance about time and agenda of the meeting.
- Request attendance of IMPRS coordination office if needed, e.g. in case of significant conflict.

The TAC meetings should occur based on the following schedule:

- *Start-up meeting* – no later than 6 months after the start of the project
- *Annual meetings* – months 12, 24, and 30¹ after the start of the project

As the doctoral training progresses, the TAC meetings may focus on slightly different aspects. These may include a general discussion of the goal of the research project, development of an individual training plan, assessing the doctoral candidate's progress in becoming an independent researcher, suggestions regarding the future development of the research project, and guidance for upcoming publications or writing up the doctoral thesis.

- *The TAC meetings are not intended to be a formal examination of the doctoral candidate. Rather, the style of the meeting should be informal as long as it serves the goals established by these guidelines and within the framework of IMPRS-STNS in general.*
- At the end of every meeting, the TAC members fill out the feedback form (Appendix B) and submit it to the IMPRS Office.

¹If the doctoral candidate intends to start writing up his/her doctoral thesis earlier than that, the meeting should be scheduled to an earlier date.



Appendix A: How to prepare for your TAC meetings

To be filled out by the doctoral candidate and distributed to the TAC members at least one week before the meeting.

1. Briefly describe your scientific progress (presentation slides) since the last TAC meeting. In case you just started, prepare your scientific concept (2-3 pages) and your preliminary work plan for the TAC meeting.

This should include, but may not be limited to

- advances and challenges in your research project²,
- publications, if applicable,
- newly acquired knowledge and skills, e.g. due to participation in courses and training events or “hands-on” instructions at the workplace as well as stays abroad or at other institutions.

2. Briefly define your goals for the time until your next meeting (or, in case of the last mandatory TAC meeting, until graduation) regarding

- your research project, short term objectives,
- next steps in your training, e.g. scientific courses,
- plans for attending conferences, workshops, summer/winter schools and other events,
- secondments, stays abroad/at other labs,
- support from your TAC.

3. Career planning

In order to support you with your next step in career, we would like to offer you a regular platform with your TAC meetings to discuss about your future career perspectives.

- Career objectives after PhD completion
- Long-term career objectives
- Do you have a need for career counselling?
- Which research activity or other training is needed to reach these objectives?

4. List any other issues you would like to discuss with your TAC during the meeting.

² This brief description is not meant to replace the presentation of the current status of your project during the meeting. So please keep it concise!



Appendix B - Feedback form after TAC meeting

To be filled out by the TAC members at the end of the meeting and submitted to the IMPRS Office which shares the document electronically with the doctoral candidate.

Name of doctoral candidate

TAC meeting date

Please provide a general assessment of the doctoral candidate's performance since the last TAC meeting/since the beginning of the research project (project plan):

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Satisfactory with concerns*
- Not satisfactory*

*) In these cases please describe your concerns below.

Feedback on mentoring from TAC and doctoral candidate (e.g. frequency/quality of interaction, areas for improvement):

Feedback on work and plans for the next year / suggestion on trainings, workshops, internships:

Signature of supervisor
(Name in printed letters)

Signature of co-supervisor
(Name in printed letters)

Signature of mentor (if applicable)
(Name in printed letters)