



Thesis advisory committee (TAC) meeting guidelines

All TAC meeting instructions and guidelines are provided in your HBIGS account under “My TAC Meetings”.

The TAC

The TAC consists of the main supervisor (“FGA”), the second supervisor (“GGA”), and one or two additional members, i.e. 3 or 4 members in total. The TAC members should cover expertise relevant to the student’s project. They can be HBIGS faculty members or external experts from academia or industry. All TAC members must be independent group leaders. As a rule, not all TAC members can be affiliated to the same institute.

Time schedule for the TAC meetings

The first TAC meets within the **first 9 months** post commencement of the PhD (commencement = “Arbeitsbeginn” as stated on the “Annahme als Doktorand” letter issued by the Faculty of Biosciences). During the first meeting, the TAC, together with the student, defines provisional benchmarks that will later help judge the progress of the work. The TAC then meets with the PhD student on an **annual** basis **until the submission of the thesis**. This meeting also allows any problems, scientific or other, to be aired and discussed, as appropriate.

If a TAC meeting is delayed by more than 3 months or if the cumulated delays exceed 9 months, HBIGS membership will be terminated with immediate effect, unless barred by compelling reasons (e.g. severe illness proven by medical report, pregnancy).

The Progress report

The PhD student submits a progress report for the 1st TAC meeting describing the planned PhD project and the first experiments and results ($\pm$ 6 pages), and progress reports for the following TAC meetings ($\pm$ 6 pages) describing accomplishments and problems encountered within the past year. The progress reports are submitted to the TAC members at least **one week** prior to the TAC meeting.

The TAC meeting

The TAC monitors the student’s scientific progress and recommends future directions and strategies, as well as the structure of the curricular activities. All TAC members must be present during the TAC meeting.

The student gives a 20 min oral presentation of his/her work. The TAC discusses the progress of the PhD work with the student and advises the student on the future research



direction, including how to overcome technical difficulties.

Following the oral presentation and discussion, the TAC members should meet alone with the primary supervisor and with the student. Therefore, the TAC should:

- (1) invite the student to step out of the room momentarily
- (2) invite the primary supervisor to step out of the room momentarily

The TAC then should deliberate alone, to discuss and summarize their views and to formulate recommendations. For this reason, the TAC should:

- (3) invite both the student and primary supervisor to step out.

The quality of the written summary, the oral presentation and the discussion is evaluated. Critiques should be provided and suggestions for improvements specified. There should be a specific recommendation regarding the suitability of the proposed project as a “PhD thesis project”. Comments on the development of the student’s abilities are appropriate. The proposed future plans should be evaluated and recommendations concerning priorities should be made. There should be a specific statement as to whether or not the student’s progress is adequate and the assessment was considered to be satisfactory by the members of TAC. Following the 3rd Progress Report and Review, the TAC should make specific recommendations regarding the work to be completed before the thesis can be written.