

TAC Meeting Goals

The Thesis Advisory Committee (from here on referred to as TAC) is responsible for the individual supervision of doctoral candidates. The main purpose of TAC meetings is to keep track of and discuss the progress, and to offer advice on the thesis project's development. At least one mentor is not part of the (official) advisor's research group and thus provides an external view of the project and an independent opinion. If necessary, this independent mentor can mediate between the doctoral candidate and the (official) advisor. In cases of serious conflict, the TAC can hand over to dedicated ombudspersons. Additionally, the TAC should advise doctoral candidates on career planning and professional development.

TAC committee composition

1. The TAC consists of the advisor and, if applicable the official advisor, at least one mentor and the doctoral candidate. (In total 3 members plus doctoral candidate.)
2. Mentors should be experienced in supervising PhD projects. At least one mentor must come from outside of the research group(s) of the advisor and the official advisor (if applicable) in order to promote independence. Mentors may come from outside the University of Cologne.
3. All TAC members should be present at each TAC meeting (TAC meetings can be conducted using an online conferencing tool).

TAC Topics

1. Project progress and timeline:
 - The main focus of the TAC should be to provide scientific guidance to the doctoral candidate and offer scope beyond the input from the doctoral candidate's research group.
 - record of on-the-job training in (experimental) techniques, evaluation methods, theoretical background, literature, network, outlook /research plan /proposal
 - Adjustments to research plans /change of topic /unexpected developments
 - (First) results
 - Finishing up / getting the project "round"
2. Publication strategy, especially format of the thesis
3. Conference attendance
4. Career plans, recommended workshops/ trainings
5. Conflict prevention. In addition, the TAC should point out the different contact points at Department, Faculty and University level for complaint management.

Suggested TAC meeting format

- ca. 20 min scientific presentation by doctoral candidate
 - 20 – 40 min progress discussion with all TAC members
 - ca. 10-15 min talk with doctoral feedback (not including supervisor)
 - ca. 10-15 min talk with supervisor (not including student)
- ⇒ Duration: 1 - 1.5 hours

Fill in the feedback form, all parties sign and send a copy to the coordinator of the graduate school.

Glossary

Advisor / Betreuer*in des Promotionsvorhabens: Person usually at the research institution where the doctoral project is being worked on. This person signs section 5.1 of the Application for Admission as Doctoral Student / *Antrag auf Zulassung als DoktorandIn* (see <https://mathnat.uni-koeln.de/en/doctoral-candidates/forms-guidelines>)

Official Advisor / formale*r Betreuer*in: Person holding the right to supervise doctoral candidates at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (only necessary in addition to the advisor, if the advisor does not hold this right). This person signs section 5.2 of the Application for Admission as Doctoral Student / *Antrag auf Zulassung als DoktorandIn* (see <https://mathnat.uni-koeln.de/en/doctoral-candidates/forms-guidelines>)

Mentor: Person holding a doctorate or PhD degree who joins the TAC alongside the advisor(s), without having an advisor role.

Note: TAC members are not necessarily the people who will serve on the examination board for the thesis defence.

***Special Cases (see §15 Promotionsordnung)**

In case the advisor does not hold the right to supervise doctoral projects in the intended field at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, an official advisor needs to be chosen. This might be the case if the doctoral project is conducted externally (i.e. MPI, DLR, FZ Jülich, TH, Med. Faculty) or if the advisor is not yet a professor.

Official Advisor / formale*r Betreuer*in: Person holding the right to supervise doctoral candidates at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. He/she will be serving in addition to the advisor. Official advisor and advisor can be regarded as one person in respect to the reviewing process. The official advisor is the corresponding person for the central doctoral office.