# **Doctoral Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC)**

The TAC’s main purpose is to discuss jointly with the student the working plan to ensure that it is feasible for timely completion of the thesis and that the student will obtain sufficient training in all the required research areas, but as well in career development and soft skills. Furthermore, co-mentors can act as mediators in case of divergent opinions between supervisor(s) and the student. The TAC is an opportunity to foster collaborations, encourage cross-disciplinary approaches, provide technical support as well as increase the research networks of supervisor(s) and the student.

The TAC-Meeting will be summarized in written form and annexed to the annual report of the doctoral thesis project.

# **TAC-Meeting**

* The TAC meets at least once a year, ideally shortly before the Annual Report/Fortschrittsbericht is submitted.
* Two weeks before the TAC-meeting, the PhD student should send the completed University Annual Report (form DZ.V2 Annual Report/Fortschrittsbericht) and the draft or submitted papers for peer-review publications to the TAC-members.
* TAC meetings are non-public, chaired by one TAC member or the VDSEE Executive Manager (if requested by the PhD-candidate or supervisor) and last for approximately 1.5 hours with the following format:

1. Presentation & Discussion

*20 min presentation + 30 min discussion*

*The student presents the thesis project and comments on current progress, achievements, goals as well as obstacles and ways to overcome/avoid these. This is followed by a discussion.*

1. Individual feedback rounds

*In each meeting, the student and supervisor(s) speak to the TAC co-mentors confidentially without the other party present. This time should be seen as a tool for the resolution of divergent opinions and a way for the TAC to strategically formulate its recommendations to the supervisor(s) and the student.*

1. TAC-Recommendations

*The TAC formulates jointly final recommendations to the student and the supervisor(s), this form (see below) has to be sent to the university along with the university annual progress report (DZ.V2 Annual Report/ “Fortschrittsbericht”).*

**Guideline for TAC-members**

**TAC discussion and assessment of:**

* What are the PhD candidate’s goals/achievements/problems?
* Is the PhD candidate on a good track to become an independent scientist?
* Is the proposed plan realistic?

**The TAC will check that:**

* Expectations and progress perception of PhD candidate and supervisor(s) are aligned
* Regular meetings between student and supervisor are happening
* Resources and support are in place or targeted
* Proposed plan for publication(s) and/or the PhD thesis writing and defense are realistic

**The TAC will offer:**

* Monitoring of project progression: What is the major progress and what are potential bottlenecks?
* Feedback on the proposed outlook, keeping in mind the timeline/funding
* Feedback on career perspectives

# **TAC Meeting Minutes**

PhD Student:

Date:

TAC-meeting number and reporting period:

Title of research project:

Expected PhD completion date:

Supervisor:

(Optional) Co-Supervisor:

TAC member 1:

TAC member 2:

(Optional) TAC member 3:

**Meeting Summary**

*Insert* *brief summary here*

**(A) What specific challenges, opportunities and milestones were addressed by the supervisor(s) and the student?**

*e.g. brief summary of the presentation focusing on major points*

**(B) What specific recommendations were made to the project?**

*e.g. scientific feedback about analyses, definitions, ways to overcome challenges etc.*

**(C) Have there been any changes to the research proposal? Was appropriate reasoning given for them?**

*e.g. fieldwork could not happen because snow cover had not receded enough yet on Ötscher*

**(D) What specific recommendations were made to the student and the supervisor(s) to improve the outcome of the project?**

to the supervisor(s):

*the supervisor(s) were recommended a meeting to brainstorm alternative approaches with their student etc.*

to the student:

*e.g. the student was recommended a paper writing seminar, or a summer school, potential collaborative contact.*

Primarily for PhD-candidates in their last year, the following recommendation for career planning have been made:

*Please tick that the respective feedback sessions took place.*

* Feedback round: PhD student + TAC; without the supervisor
* Feedback round: Supervisor + TAC; without the PhD-student

We, the TAC members, are responsible for the answers to questions (A) - (D) above together and were present at this meeting on the aforementioned date.

I have attended this meeting and agree with the evaluation with my **signature**:

PhD student:

Supervisor(s):

TAC members: