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SFB 1123 - IRTG 1123

Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) Guidelines for PhD students (PhD ‘Medical Research’)

What is TAC?

TAC stands for Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) and is mandatory for every student member of the Integrated Research Training Group 1123 (IRTG 1123). The purpose of the TAC is

- To supervise the scientific work of the student
- To set milestones and follow the course of the project (checkpoints)
- To advice the student in planning her/his career

Who can be the main supervisor?

LMU Medical Faculty Member (Professor, Privatdozent/Habilitand or Emmy-Noether awardee; see §13 Promotionsordnung of the MMRS) or a member of a different Faculty or Institute.

Who can be the other members?

- In addition to the PhD student’s supervisor, the TAC consists of 2-3 additional Faculty Members (Professor, Privatdozent/Habilitand or Emmy-Noether awardee).
- At least 2 of these members have to belong to the SFB 1123
- As an exception, external PIs, not member of the SFB 1123, can become TAC members (max. 50%, e.g. 2 out of 4 TAC members).

For PhD students who are enrolled in the Program ‘Medical Research’ at the MMRS (LMU):

- Two members of the TAC have to belong to the **Medical Faculty** of LMU. (*Example: if the supervisor is not LMU Medical Faculty member, the other TAC members have to be.*)

Guidelines to be followed by the PhD student, the TAC members and the IRTG 1123 coordinator:

1. **Regular meetings** of the Thesis Advisory Committee are arranged **with every student**. All meetings will be planned and **arranged by the student**.
2. The **first meeting**, which has to take place **during the first six months** after the start of the project (at the end of the first year **at the latest**), will define the project and set the scientific goals (**milestones**) to be achieved on the basis of a written **research proposal** prepared by the student. Ideally, the student uses this proposal to also present it at the regular lab meetings at her/his institute.
3. The **written research proposal** will also be **sent to the IRTG 1123 coordinator’s office** where all the activity of the individual thesis advisory committees will be monitored.
4. **Follow-up meetings** of the thesis advisory committee have to be organized by the students and have to take place **at least once a year**. During those follow-up meetings, the progress of the thesis work should be monitored and future goals be defined. A **report of these meetings**, written **by the student, commented by the supervisor** and approved by the other members of the TAC, should be sent to the IRTG coordinator’s office within one week after the meeting. A template of the protocol will be provided by the IRTG 1123 coordinator.
5. **TAC members should not be exchanged** and initially set **milestones should be followed** during the course of the PhD thesis. However, if necessary, the composition of the TAC and the set milestones can be altered (project-based or personal requirements; written documentation in the TAC protocol).
6. If a TAC member agrees to participate in a TAC, she/he also agrees **to follow the TAC guidelines**. Students or TAC members that do not adhere to the guidelines cannot participate in the Graduate Program or in other TACs, respectively.
7. During the final year, or whenever the research project yields outstanding scientific results, the thesis project may also be scheduled as a formal presentation in the SFB1123 seminar series.



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Detailed instructions for a TAC meeting:

Before the meeting:

The student arranges a convenient date and location for a TAC meeting with all members and **informs the coordinator** of the Graduate Program about the time.

The student defines a **list of topics** she/he wants to talk about. This list should be available for the TAC members at least three working days before the TAC meeting. Preparation of such a list is obligatory for all TAC meetings.

Usually not all achieved data can be presented during the progress report. Therefore the PhD student brings along data that she/he would like to discuss (“labeled”blots, gels, pictures, graphs, protocols, etc.)

For **the first meeting**, the student sends a general project outline (**research proposal**) **to all TAC members** before the meeting. This should include a general introduction into the research topics, an overview about the techniques used and ideally a rough time schedule for the first year of the research. **The outline should be available for the TAC members at least three working days before the meeting. A copy of the research proposal has to be sent to the IRTG 1123 coordination office (before the meeting).**

During the meeting:

All TAC members should attend.

After the PhD student’s presentation, the TAC members discuss all matters of the PhD project in a closed session. The supervising PI chairs the discussion according to the student’s “Topic List” to assure an efficient discussion and avoiding time-consuming discussions.

In general, the TAC session should focus on moving the PhD project in terms of problem solving, possible alternative strategies, time management, and probable output (publications).

At the end of the meeting, the PhD student as well as the supervising PI will have the opportunity to talk with the TAC members in the absence of the group leader or the student, respectively.

The results of the TAC meetings are summarized in a protocol written by the student, approved and commented by the supervisor. The protocol has to be signed by all attendees and sent to the coordinator’s office within one week after the TAC meeting.

PhD students who are enrolled in the PhD Program “Medical Research” at MMRS: the Doctoral Supervision Agreement and the Target Agreement have to be prepared by the student and signed by all TAC members. These two documents have to be sent to the IRTG 1123 coordinator to forward it to the MMRS.