



Thesis Advisory Committee Instructions

Purpose of the Thesis Advisory Committee

The purpose of the Thesis Advisory Committee work is to improve the quality of research and research training. The Thesis Advisory Committee meetings are arranged annually and aim to:

- ensure that the project is scientifically valid and suitable for a PhD project
- ensure that the doctoral student's coursework supports the PhD project and provides the expected skills
- evaluate the progress and future plans of the PhD project including overseeing the timely graduation of the doctoral student

The committee members act as mentors to the doctoral student throughout the project and guide and support the doctoral student in research and studies. All interactions within the Thesis Committee are to be considered confidential.

The Members of Thesis Advisory Committee

The Thesis Advisory Committee includes the doctoral student, the supervisor(s), and at least two external members. The Members of the Advisory Committee are suggested by the doctoral student and accepted by the TuBS graduate school board. The external members should have substantial knowledge of the field of the project to be able to give critical comments and to estimate the potential of the ongoing project to result in thesis defense. A membership in the Thesis Advisory Committee is a position of trust, aiming to guide the doctoral student throughout his/her PhD studies. The doctoral student can suggest changes in the composition of the Thesis Advisory Committee to the TuBS board.

Forming a personal study plan

The Thesis Advisory Committee is responsible of ensuring that during the PhD studies the doctoral student gains detailed knowledge of his/her research field as well as adequate understanding of related biomedical fields. In the first Thesis Advisory Committee meeting a personal study plan is formed, including both research and coursework.

Meetings and reporting

A Thesis Advisory Committee meeting is held once a year until the thesis defense. The nature of thesis advisory committee work changes according to the maturation of the doctoral student. In addition to the general follow-up on the progress of the project, each meeting has some specific aims:

Meeting 1: Forming a personal study plan together with the student

Meeting 2: Following-up on the personal study plan

Meeting 3: Following-up on the personal study plan, thorough check of research results, first preliminary future career plans (labs and funding).



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Meeting 4: Accepting the PhD project for faculty evaluation, having a thorough look into postdoctoral funding or other future career plans.

Arranging the meeting

1. Prior to the meeting the doctoral student prepares and sends a report to the Thesis Advisory Committee members. Thesis Advisory Committee members are expected to familiarize themselves with the report in advance.
2. During the meeting
 - a. The doctoral student presents the current status and future plans of the PhD project
 - b. Thesis Advisory Committee members evaluate the project and make suggestions for the continuation of the project
 - c. The doctoral student and the members of the Thesis Advisory Committee check the courses taken by the doctoral student and plan the studies to guarantee adequate knowledge and expertise in the field
 - d. The Thesis Advisory Committee meeting is approved by all members by signing the memo of the meeting written by the doctoral student
3. Based on the feedback at the meeting, the student revises the report and sends the revised report to the Thesis Advisory Committee members and to the TuBS graduate school by the end of May or end of October, depending on the TuBS board decision

The meetings also provide an important tool for the graduate school to keep updated on the current status of the PhD project. The Thesis Advisory Committee approves yearly the continuation of graduate school funding for the doctoral student. The annual meetings are compulsory and a prerequisite for salary payment to the doctoral student for the following year.

Please notice provision of Transferable Skills/Generic Skills in PhD training

1. Working with others/team working
2. Communication/presentation skills, both written and oral
3. Communication/dialogue with non-technical audiences (public engagement)
4. Project and time management skills
5. Problem solving
6. Research management -- research leadership
7. Creativity and the ability for abstract thought
8. Knowledge of research methods and technologies beyond the Doctoral project
9. Teaching skills
10. Research ethics
11. Enterprise skills (entrepreneurship, commercialisation, innovation, patenting and knowledge transfer)
12. Use of science in policy-making