



VDS PhaNuSpo

Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC), Annual TAC meeting & TAC minutes template



as of 1 March 2024

Applies to doctoral candidates who started their doctoral programme in 2024S or later.

The Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC)

The role of the TAC is not only to discuss and evaluate the progress of the dissertation through regular meetings with the doctoral candidate, but also to provide advice and support to the doctoral candidate throughout the duration of the dissertation project. In particular, the TAC provides external advice to the doctoral candidate and their supervisor(s). The TAC also provides formalised support for resolving any conflicts that may arise between the doctoral candidate, the supervisor(s) and other members of the research/training team.

The annual meeting of the TAC is summarised in writing. The summary is attached to the annual progress report of the dissertation project.

Composition of the TAC

- The doctoral candidate
- The supervisor(s)
- 2-3 advisor(s) selected by the doctoral candidate.

The advisor

- should be very experienced in the relevant research area of the topic of the dissertation, so that they can provide substantial feedback during the process;
- should be at least at the senior postdoc level and should have profound research experience.

It is recommended to select one internal (= from the University of Vienna) and one external advisor who are not actively collaborating with the doctoral candidate (e.g. holding a joint grant).

Important note: TAC members are not allowed to assess the dissertation.

The annual TAC meeting

Organisation of the TAC meeting

- The first TAC meeting should take place within the first 12 months of the candidate's enrolment on the doctoral programme¹, ideally well in advance of the [public presentation \(FÖP\)](#), to provide an opportunity to discuss the research proposal (often referred to as the *exposé*) written for the FÖP ([download exposé template here](#)).
- After the FÖP, the TAC will meet at least once a year, ideally close to the submission date of the [annual progress report](#) until the dissertation is completed, and may meet more frequently if needed.
- The TAC meeting is organised by the doctoral candidate. In order to provide a basis for discussion, it is recommended that the doctoral candidate sends the completed [annual progress report form DZ/V2](#) and the draft/submitted/published paper(s) for peer-reviewed publication OR the (draft) monograph chapters by e-mail to all TAC members at least two weeks before the meeting.
- The TAC meetings are not open to the public and are chaired by a TAC member appointed by the doctoral candidate.
- Optional: If requested, the Executive Manager of PhaNuSpo may act as chair as a neutral person. Please send an e-mail to vds.phanuspo@univie.ac.at if this is needed.
- After the meeting, a short summary must be submitted to vds.phanuspo@univie.ac.at as an annex to the annual progress report, documenting the date, participants, main issues discussed and agreed, and recommendations. Please use the [TAC minutes template](#) (page 4f of this document).

TAC meeting format

- 1) The doctoral candidate should give a short **presentation**, consisting of an introduction, the main key proof-of-principle experiments/empirical studies, etc. carried out and results obtained, achievements, timetable, as well as challenges or adaptations in the plan. The presentation should focus on the key points that the committee needs to assess for the dissertation project.
- 2) This is followed by a **discussion** of about 15-30 minutes on
 - i) the project, its progress and completion, and
 - ii) the development of the doctoral candidate, career planning and any difficulties encountered.
- 3) **Feedback round 1** without the supervisor(s), i.e. the doctoral candidate + advisor(s).
- 4) **Feedback round 2** without the doctoral candidate, i.e. the supervisor(s) + advisor(s).
- 5) **Summary** and feedback session.

¹ All tasks, responsibilities, etc. related to doctoral studies refer to the start of the doctoral programme and are linked to the respective curriculum and to the study regulations of the University of Vienna. I.e. the start date of the doctoral programme is the date of payment of the tuition fee/Students' Union (ÖH) fee after admission to the doctoral programme and NOT the start date of the employment contract).

TAC meeting: guideline for the TAC members

TAC discussion and assessment of

- What are the doctoral candidate's goals, achievements, problems?
- Is the doctoral candidate well on track to become an independent researcher?
- Is the proposed plan realistic?

The TAC will assess whether

- the expectations and perceptions of progress of the doctoral candidate and supervisor(s) align;
- regular meetings take place;
- resources and support are provided or targeted, and
- if the publication(s) and/or writing the dissertation and the public defence go as planned and the plan is realistic.

The TAC will offer

- To monitor the progress of the dissertation project: What is the main progress and what are the potential bottlenecks?
- Feedback on the proposed outlook, taking into account the timeline.
- Feedback on career perspectives and prospects.

TAC meeting minutes

Keep this report short, to the point and comprehensible.

Use this template, attach a scan version of it (PDF) to the annual progress report and send it to vds.phanuspo@univie.ac.at (Pharmacy; Nutritional Sciences) or to ssc.sportwissenschaft@univie.ac.at (Sport Science).

PhD/doctoral candidate	
Student ID number	
Meeting date	
TAC meeting number and reporting period	
(Working) title of the thesis	
Expected completion date (Month YYYY)	
Supervisor 1	
Supervisor 2 (optional)	
Supervisor 3 (optional)	
Advisor 1	
Advisor 2 (optional)	
Advisor 3 (optional)	
Optional: Executive Manager/Head	

Meeting Summary

Insert summary.

(A) What challenges, opportunities and milestones were addressed by the doctoral candidate and supervisor(s)?

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



(B) What are the specific recommendations concerning the project?

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

(C) Were there any changes to the research proposal (FÖP) and were they adequately justified?

e.g. an experiment could not be carried out because an analysis device was broken, etc.

(D) What are the recommendations to the supervisor(s)?

e.g. the supervisor(s) were recommended to meet with the candidate to brainstorm alternative approaches, etc.

(E) What are the recommendations to the candidate?

e.g. the candidate was advised to attend a seminar on writing academic papers, or to contact a collaborator, etc.

(F) What are the recommendations with regard to the development and career planning of the doctoral candidate? Primarily for candidates in their final year.

Insert recommendations

Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate that feedback was given.

Feedback round 1: Doctoral candidate + TAC; without the supervisor

Feedback round 2: Supervisor + TAC; without the doctoral candidate

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

With my signature, I confirm that I have attended this meeting and agree to the assessment.

PhD/doctoral candidate:

Supervisor(s):

Advisor(s):