



SFB1064 - IRTG

- Guidelines for a structured TAC-Meeting -

The Thesis Advisory Committees (TACs) are fundamental to the SFB1064 Integrated Research Training Group. Each student who is involved in the program should therefore assemble a TAC with the start of his/her PhD thesis.

This guideline was developed together with the SFB PhD students to better meet their needs concerning the Thesis Advisory Committees and to ensure a uniform quality of mentoring within the SFB.

General information

Who needs to have a TAC?:

All students who participate in the Graduate Program, whether or not they are funded by the SFB TR5 or by another program, must have a TAC. Students who are enrolled in other Graduate Programs (such as IMPRS, ENB,...) but participate in the SFB Graduate Program, should follow the TAC guidelines of the respective program.

How should a TAC look like:

A TAC should consist of minimally three, ideally four members. In addition to the student and her/his direct supervisor at least one other PI with relevant background and ideally one further senior postdoc or researcher with appropriate technical expertise should participate.

Additional notes:

- 1) The TACs do not have to be fixed for the entire PhD thesis. If needed the composition of the TACs can be changed (expanded) if there are project-based or personal requirements.
- 2) After the implementation, the Coordinator of the Graduate Program has to be informed about the composition of the TAC (students duty!).
- 3) If a TAC member agrees to participate at a Thesis Advisory Committee, he/she also agrees to abide the terms of this guideline. Students or TAC members that do not adhere to the guidelines cannot participate in the Graduate Program or in other TACs, respectively.

** Participation of an additional SFB PI and a supervising postdoc is recommended, but it is also possible to include non-SFB group leaders and postdocs in the TAC or to substitute the second PI by assigning an experienced postdoc.



When should the TAC meet?

The first TAC meeting should be held within the first 6 months of the start of thesis research. From then on the TAC meets annually.

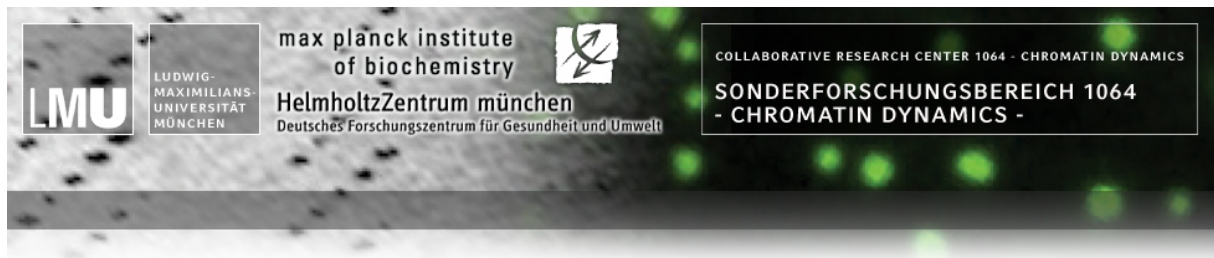
TACs are always coupled to a Progress Report, which is best integrated into the institutes lab meeting schedule.

During the final year, or whenever the research project yields outstanding scientific results, the Annual Presentation may be scheduled as formal presentation in the SFB seminar series (e.g. Wednesday evening).

Detailed Instructions for the TAC meetings

Before the (first) TAC meeting:

- The student arranges a convenient date for a TAC meeting with all members and informs the coordinator of the Graduate Program.
- The student sends a general project outline to all TAC members in advance of 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.
(This information should be available for the TAC members at least two days before the TAC meeting. The project description is only demanded for the 1st TAC or whenever there are major changes of the project.)
- The student defines a list of topics about which he/she wants to talk about.
(This list should be available for the TAC members at least two days before the TAC meeting. Preparation of such a list is obligatory for ALL TAC meetings.)
- Normally not all achieved data can be presented during the progress report. Therefore the PhD-student brings along all data that he/she would like to discuss about („labeled“ blots, gels, pictures, graphs, protocols, etc.)



At the day of the TAC meeting:

- All TAC members should attend the progress report.
- After the PhD student's presentation the TAC members discuss all matters of the PhD project in a closed session.

The PI chairs the discussion according to the student's „Topic List“ to assure an efficient discussion avoiding time-consuming, excursive discussions.

In general, the TAC session should focus on moving the PhD project in terms of problem solving, possible alternative strategies, timemanagement, 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 which is signed by all attendees and sent to the coordinator within the first week after the TAC meeting.