

## Guidelines for the PhD Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings

### The PAC

The PAC is a committee consisting of at least three senior scientists who guide the PhD researcher in all aspects of her/his PhD. The PAC includes

- the direct supervisor (IMPRS faculty member) **plus** an IMPRS faculty member from the same institution, in case the direct supervisor is not a faculty member,
- another IMPRS faculty member from the partnering institution (FSU Jena or MPI-BGC),
- an external scientist, ideally related to the foreign research visit

Other scientists strongly involved in the supervision should also participate in the PAC meetings.

### Preparation of the meetings

- The PhD researcher is in charge to initiate the meetings and to inform the IMPRS coordinator about the date and place of the meeting.
- In case finding the external advisor takes longer than 5 months, the first PAC meeting should take place nevertheless.
- PAC members and coordinator receive a proposal (for the first meeting) or a progress report (for subsequent meetings) not later than one week before the meeting.

### During the meeting

- max. 15 min presentation of proposal / progress report by the PhD researcher, then ca. 60 min discussion, guided by [the report form](#) (*details on next page*).
- PAC members or coordinator fill in and sign the report form and hand it to the coordinator.

### After the meeting

- de-briefing of the PAC meeting (with coordinator)
- possibly the PhD researcher submits a revised version of the thesis proposal to the PAC members and the coordinator by a specified time.

*During regular PAC meetings, the PhD researcher and all of the above advisors deliberate extensively about results, past and future development as well as strategic decisions regarding the PhD project.*

*Career planning and networking are also important aspects of the PAC meetings.*

### PhD proposal / progress report — check list

- clear development of the research questions out of a detailed overview of the recent research in this specific area
- method section on how to answer the research questions
- possible results and their implications for recent research in this area
- a timeline with defined milestones, including publications (Gantt chart)
- a preliminary program for the additional curriculum, tailored to fit this research program and considering the minimum requirements detailed in the IMPRS agreement (including a suggestion for 3-month research stay with foreign research group)

# Report of the PhD Advisory Committee meeting

(report form available on <http://www.imprs-gbgc.de/index.php/PhDInfo/PAC>)

## To be filled in by PhD researcher prior to the meeting

- Details about the meeting
- Topic of the thesis
- Project schedule

## Issues to be addressed during the PAC meeting

(One PAC member is responsible for filling in the form, in agreement with the other PAC members)

- Do you expect the PhD researcher to finish on schedule (i.e. within the agreed funding period)?
- Estimate the overall progress of the project so far.

- Please comment on the **research questions & the work plan** of the project (Original & relevant research? Enough focus, considering the funding period?).
- Which publications have been / should be written as part of the thesis project? When? Conditions to succeed? Is there a Plan B? Comment on the proposal.

- Which **conferences & meetings** should be attended?
- Which collaborations inside and outside the IMPRS are crucial for the project?
- What should be achieved during the foreign research stay? When should it take place? In which lab? (*Consider relevance for the PhD researcher's future career.*)

- Is the PhD researcher able to **orally present** his / her work adequately?
- Is the PhD researcher able to **present** his / her work in **writing** adequately?
- Which **methods** should be learned / improved? Any recommendations to improve the background knowledge?
- Do you recommend any **transferable skill or language courses**?
- Comments on the choice of courses and other elements of the additional curriculum (*During the period of the PhD project 20 credit points must be collected according to the guidelines of the IMPRS agreement in a way that is most beneficial for the scientific development of the PhD researcher.*)

- Please describe briefly the **working environment** of the PhD researcher  
List important facilities and equipment available to carry out the thesis project. The PhD researcher shall comment on the feasibility of the project from his / her point of view. Are there any problems? **The main adviser should leave the room for this part of the discussion** (3-5 min, and return for a wrap-up).
- **Discussion among PAC members**  
The PhD researcher should leave the room for some minutes.

- Fix a date for the next PAC meeting & the de-briefing of the PAC meeting  
PAC meetings should take place at least 5 months, 12 months and 24 months after the start of the PhD project. In between and afterwards on demand. The de-briefing between the PhD researcher and the coordinator should take place a few days after the PAC meeting.

If substantial changes to the work plan / the research questions have been discussed, the PhD proposal or progress **report** should be **revised** and circulated again. In this case, a deadline should be specified.