

Implementation of Thesis Advisory Committee - Frequently Asked Questions

1. When should the TAC be set up?

TAC members should be selected and appointed during the semester Autumn 2019. *The proposal of TAC members* on a set form should be delivered to the PhD Studies Manager at the Department of Strategy and Science by the end of January 2020 (future students will deliver the proposal by the end of the first semester of study). The PhD Studies Manager submits proposals of all students of the field to the approval of the Doctoral Committee.

2. What is the role of the supervisor in the TAC construction?

Setting up the TAC is the responsibility of the student, but the selection of committee members is carried out in cooperation between the student and the supervisor.

3. What is the role of the chairperson of the TAC?

The role of the chairperson is not meant merely as an honorary function, but as the person who conducts the TAC meeting, summarizes its conclusions and finalizes the assessment report; and also, as the person who would have the final say in potential problem situations. Closer communication between the chairperson and the Doctoral Board is not expected, except for some extremely problematic situation that would require it.

4. Should the student contact the members as first contact or rather the supervisor?

There is no prescribed procedure, although the activity is expected from the student. However, according to the experience, it is more effective when the supervisor addresses the external members first.

5. What are the requirements for the composition of the committee members?

The TAC consists of the chairperson and at least two other members. One of the members (not the chairperson) is the supervisor, and two members are from outside the supervisor's research group, one of them is an external member = outside the CEITEC MU. The appointment of a specialist from abroad is beneficial. Female students are advised to have a woman in the committee.

6. Can there be two TAC members from the supervisor's research group?

Yes, but one of them is an extra member (i.e., the 4th member), as the obligation of two members from outside the group still applies.

7. What number of TAC members is regarded as reasonable?

The lower limit is three members, but there is no upper limit on the number of TAC members; however, the TAC consisting of up of 4-5 members, including the supervisor and one external member, can be considered as optimal. In some specific cases, even higher number of members might be reasonable, but organizing meetings will be more difficult.

8. What are the requirements for the TAC members' experience with the supervision of students?

Three TAC members should have experience with the supervision of doctoral students. The member without any such experience should be either an extra member (i.e., the 4th member) or the TAC composition must be assessed individually by the chair of the Doctoral Committee.

9. Who is considered as the external member of the TAC?

Any member outside CEITEC MU – he/she can be from other faculty of MU, from other CEITEC institutes – CEITEC BUT, etc., or from other institutions.

10. Can the TAC have more external members?

Yes, the TAC can consist of the supervisor and two external members.

11. Are there any funds to cover the travel expenses of external members?

No funds are allocated for this purpose. It is assumed that either the TAC meeting takes place on some other occasion (joint conference, planned visit of the external member in Brno etc.), or the online TAC meeting is organized (via skype).

12. Can one external specialist be an external TAC member for more students?

Yes, it is possible.

13. How to proceed when I am not sure at the stage of formation the TAC, who to appoint as a chairman?

You have the opportunity to submit a proposal of the TAC members without specifying who the chairperson is. The appointment of the chairperson may be decided during the first TAC meeting, and in that case, it has to be stated in the TAC Assessment Report.

14. What to do if we are still in doubt regarding the composition of the committee?

Communicate the considered list of TAC members with PhD Studies Manager.

15. Can the appointed member of the TAC be replaced?

Yes, it is possible, even more members of the committee can be replaced if needed.

16. What is the purpose of TAC?

The TAC is not a controlling body, but it should help and support the student. It should consist of specialists in the field, who should help the student from the scientific point. TAC should be involved and well informed about the student's project.

17. Does the TAC Meeting replace the former *PhD Progress Day*?

Yes, the TAC meetings, together with a *CEITEC PhD Conference*, replace the current system of quality assessment and progress reporting represented by *PhD Progress Day*. Only advanced students who started their studies before 2017, will continue in the current system of quality assessment (*PhD Progress Day + CEITEC PhD Conference*). However, the formal requirements of the study will still be checked annually by the doctoral committee.

18. What materials should be prepared for the TAC meeting?

Before the meeting, the student submits to TAC members a written material (either the thesis proposal - students, who are in Autumn 2019 in their 1st or 2nd semester of study; or the running report – advanced students). The format of the material is not defined; however, it must cover the criteria specified in the TAC manual. A soft copy of the material is sufficient.

During the meeting, the student gives a short (approximately 20 min.) presentation.

19. Are there any set terms for the meetings?

The term of the TAC meeting depends on the arrangement between the student and the TAC members, only periods when the meetings should take place are predefined.

20. When are the TAC meetings to be held for the first time?

- by the end of Spring 2020 (by the end of August 2020) - students, who are in Autumn 2019 in their 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th or 6th semester of study
- during the Spring or Autumn 2020 - students, who are in Autumn 2019 in their 3rd semester of study

21. Will the administrative staff be present at the TAC meetings?

The participation of administrative representatives in meetings is not necessary, and it is not the purpose of the meeting. However, if this is desirable in certain specific cases, it will certainly be possible. However, in specific cases, the participation of ombudsperson should certainly be considered in the first place.

22. If the conclusion of the TAC meeting indicates the student's progress as unsatisfactory, what will be the impact (especially concerning the scholarship paid)?

The conclusion of the TAC meeting does not have a direct impact on the scholarship payment, but the TAC Assessment report is the basis for the Doctoral Committee, that may decide to take special measures in serious cases.