

# Guidelines for Organizing a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting and Beyond

This document outlines the process for PhD students to organize and conduct their Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings. It applies for the PhD programme Data Science (PDS).

## Meeting Structure

- **Duration:** The TAC meeting should last 1 hour
- **Presentation:** 20-30 minutes for the student's presentation
- **Discussion:** 30-40 minutes for questions and discussion with committee members

## Student Presentation Content

### For First TAC Meeting

- **High-level project overview**
  - Research motivation and context
  - Main research questions or hypotheses
  - Project goals and objectives
  - Proposed methodology
  - Timeline and project plan
  - Expected outcomes and contributions

### For Subsequent TAC Meetings

- **Brief reminder of the overall project** (2-3 minutes)
- **Detailed updates on specific parts of the project**
  - Progress since the last meeting
  - Challenges encountered and solutions implemented
  - Changes to project direction or methodology (if any)
  - Results obtained
  - Next steps

### For All TAC Meetings

- **PhD requirement status**
  - State the requirements of the program (they differ across programs and not all TAC members may be fully familiar with them)
  - List of already fulfilled requirements (courses, teaching, etc.)
  - List of remaining requirements to be completed
  - Timeline for completing remaining requirements

## Scheduling Process

1. **The student is responsible for scheduling the meeting**
2. **Supervisor coordination**
  - First, narrow down possible dates when your supervisor is available
  - Identify 3-5 time slots that work for your supervisor
3. **Committee coordination**
  - Use a scheduling software (e.g., Doodle, When2Meet) to find suitable dates with other TAC members
  - Try to provide no more than 5 options to simplify the selection process
  - Consider time zones if any committee members are participating remotely
4. **Finalization**
  - Once a date and time are agreed upon, send a calendar invite to all TAC members (ideally using the university's MS Exchange calendar)
  - Include the meeting location (physical room or virtual meeting link)

## During the Meeting

- The student should arrive early to set up any presentation equipment
- The student, the supervisor or the TAC may decide to speak with the supervisor and student separately
- The student should take notes of feedback and recommendations

## Additional Support

- Students should reach out to their TAC members directly if there are problems that cannot be resolved with their direct supervisor. TAC members will assist in resolving conflicts and problems and treat the information of the student confidentially (unless approved otherwise by the student).
- TAC members serve as additional mentors and can provide guidance beyond the specific research project

## After the Meeting

- The student should submit the presentation slides as the official TAC meeting report and an updated proof of [performance record](#) via email to all TAC members for approval and signature.
- The slides need to contain all relevant information about teaching and coursework credits (otherwise it does not count as a report).
- A separate written report is not necessary.

## Required PhD Credits (Data Science Program)

PhD students in the Data Science program must earn at least 21 credits according to the following distribution:

1. **Research Program** (minimum 6 credits)
  - At least 3 credits from regular participation in research seminars (3 credits per presentation)
  - Participation in at least one field-specific conference with a talk or poster presentation (3 credits per participation)
2. **Teaching and Supervision** (minimum 8 credits)
  - Options include:
    - Lectures, exercises, and practicals (1 credit per 30 working hours; 1C max per SWS of the respective course)
    - Seminars (1 credit per supervised topic; 1C max per SWS of the respective course)
    - Co-supervision of project work (1 credit per project)
    - Co-supervision of Bachelor's theses (2 credits per thesis)
    - Co-supervision of Master's theses (3 credits per thesis)
3. **Elective Area**
  - Additional credits can be earned in all areas (subject-specific qualifications and key qualifications)
  - Credits are based on the credits of the respective course or its duration (1 credit per 30 working hours)

Also make sure that you attend the mandatory Seminar on Good Scientific Practice (according to §6(2) RerNat-O). The credits need to be collected on your Checklist for PhD Students ([proof of performance or Leistungsnachweis](#)).

**Note:** *Currently the CS department is developing a new course for good scientific practice. You can try to visit one of the other faculties but you might not be admitted. We are working on resolving the situation.*

## Further Links

All necessary forms and regulations can be found [here](#). This includes

- A checklist for your thesis submission (Countdown to doctoral degree)
- A list for collecting credits (Performance Record; also linked above)
- The regulations for your doctoral studies, examination and degree (RerNatO).

Please check the website and familiarize yourself with the regulations.