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1. Objective of PhD thesis committee

A thesis committee supervises the progress of a PhD thesis work. It serves the PhD student since the adequacy of his/her activities is evaluated regularly by experienced scientists facilitating the progress towards the best possible PhD thesis within the intended period of time. The committee also monitors the progress in generating additional competences through graduating the Integrated Research Training Group (IRTG).

The committee should consider at each meeting: project strengths and weaknesses, realism of time table, student's familiarity with relevant literature, student's experimental strengths and weaknesses, adequacy of advice provided by the advisor and others, student's strengths and weaknesses in graduating the IRTG.

The committee should provide advice to both the student and primary supervisor. It decides whether the summary of the PhD student (4.1) describes goals adequate for award of a PhD and communicates this decision to the student and advisor. To provide as much support as possible to the PhD student, the committee should advice in as positive manner as possible.

The committee has the possibility to set deadlines for obtaining significant results on time.

Between the meetings, the members of the committee will be willing to meet the PhD student for further advice and discussions. The members of the committee have the possibility to meet separately with the advisor and the PhD student to have confidential discussions on any subject relevant for the student's progress and welfare.

2. Formation of PhD thesis committee

A thesis committee consists of the PhD student, the primary supervisor (professor or applicant of the project) and up to two additional committee members. One of the additional members should work at another research institution.

The members of the committee are chosen by the student in consultation with the primary supervisor. At least two of the committee members should be doctors (PhD or other designation) and have expertise in the area of the thesis research.

Another PhD student working in the same research area is allowed to attend the committee meetings. The composition of the thesis committee can be changed by the student in consultation with the primary supervisor if the thesis work proceeds in new directions or the student feels the committee is not meeting his/her needs.

3. Meetings of PhD thesis committee

One meeting of the committee per year is obligatory. The PhD student is responsible for organizing the meeting.

The initial meeting of the committee should be held within two month after the PhD student started to work on his/her thesis.

If necessary, the student or the committee may initiate more frequent meetings as requested.



4. Responsibilities of committee members

4.1 PhD student

The student is responsible for organizing the meeting including the invitation of all members and the preparation of the meeting itself.

For each meeting, the student must compile a written summary outlining the thesis project, progress on the work and objectives for completing the PhD thesis. This should include a timetable for all ongoing activities. This summary has to be reviewed by the primary supervisor before passing a copy of it to the Office of the SFB/TRR 51 for filing.

The student presents and discusses critically the experiments and publications at each meeting. The students will also present an updated extract from the electronic examination records of the University for discussing his/her progress and for planning the participation of other courses.

He/She is responsible for preparing a brief written report on each committee meeting for submission to the committee members and to the Office of the SFB/TRR 51. This report will include statements on the adequacy of the current student's work, the time table of the ongoing activities and a list of the courses attended until the meeting. Important issues that were discussed during the meeting and the conclusions also have to be mentioned briefly.

The student should be aware of current literature in relevant areas and be prepared to discuss broader issues of the research area in the committee meetings.

4.2 Primary supervisor

The primary supervisor acts as main advisor. He/She is responsible for overseeing the PhD student's research thesis work, providing a supportive research environment and mentoring the student. His/Her tasks also include advising the student in selecting appropriate courses of the IRTG, attending national/international congresses, organizing lab visits abroad and assisting in implementing a network with other scientists from the same or related research areas.

The primary supervisor must agree on the written summary prepared by the PhD student for each committee meeting.

4.3 Additional members

Since the members of the committee are experts in the research area of the student's thesis, their contribution is of high value for improving the quality and for facilitating the progress of the work. The members of the committee have the task of making suggestions for changes and improvements to the work of the doctoral student. They have to attend the committee meetings for discussing important issues, read the dissertation and participate at the defense.

5. Filed documents

The following documents of each committee meeting should be filed at the Office of the SFB/TRR 51 to record the progress of the PhD student's research thesis work:

- Reviewed summary of the PhD student
- Report of the committee meeting.

The files will be available for all committee members until the PhD student passes his/her dissertation.