



CRC/TRR205 Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) Programme

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1 General information

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2 Introduction and aims of the programme

The CRC/TRR205 Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) programme was developed to provide maximum support to PhD/MD candidates. It aims to improve the progression and outcome of PhD/MD theses and, to strengthen the collaboration among all CRC/TRR205 member institutions. A comprehensive mentoring procedure is established for each PhD/MD student in order to monitor and evaluate the progress of the research and individual development of each candidate. For PhD students, a duration of 3.5 years (maximum duration: 4 years), and for MD students, a duration of 1 to 3 years (flexible to improve compatibility with the study) for length of research and submission of thesis is recommended.

3 Structuring and duration of the programme

The CRC/TRR205 TAC consist of three CRC/TRR205 members from at least two different universities. It focuses on rigorous supervision of each candidate. The direct supervisor is the postdoc or group leader in whose laboratory the scientific work is carried out (Figure 1). The second supervisor is chosen on the basis of the supervisors' research topic to provide the scientific expertise required to realise the project. Most likely this is the PI of the associated CRC/TRR205 project or the lead professor of the group (senior researcher). The third supervisor is also a senior researcher (professor), chosen for their research field but is hosted in one of the partner institutions within the CRC/TRR205. The fourth member of the TAC is facultative and is a leading researcher at an external university (national or international). Furthermore, for PhD candidates, at least one supervisor should have a clinical background; for MD candidates, at least one mentor should specialise in biomedical research. This facilitates objective assessment of the research topic and the progress of the respective project. The candidate chooses her/his supervisor with the support of his first supervisor. The process will follow a defined schedule (Figure 2). The initial report meeting will take place three month after the project proposal is submitted followed by the annual TAC meetings. The meetings will include written reports (1-3 pages) and oral presentations (20 min). The results and quality of each meeting (e.g., presentation skills and scientific progress) will be assessed and documented in the prescribed CRC/TRR205 Report (Appendix B) and CRC/TRR205 Evaluation (Appendix C).



Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) Programme

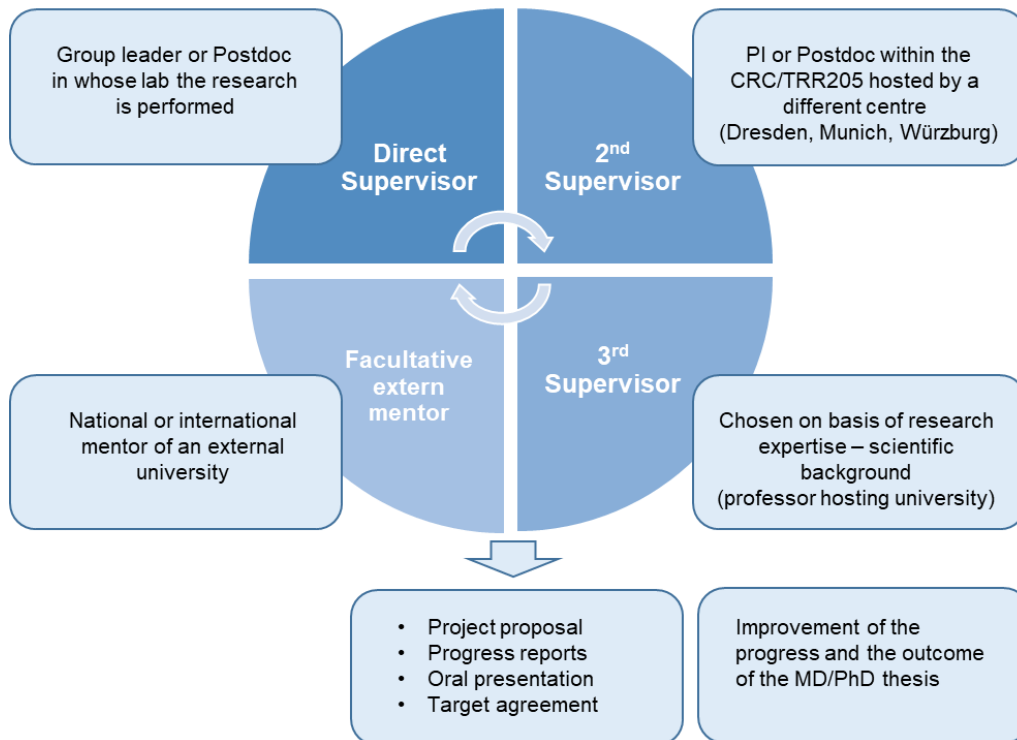


Figure 1: Structure of the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme.

Excellent supervision will be ensured by three to four mentors from inside or outside the CRC/TRR205. This should improve the progress and outcome of the PhD/MD thesis and will be monitored by annual reports.

During the TAC meeting, targets are set for the next meeting. The initial report includes a detailed overview of the proposed project, the theoretical background necessary for successful progress, and planning of future experiments. The integrative structure of the TAC provides excellent opportunities for scientific exchange. The 3rd year meeting focuses on the remaining tasks that have to be addressed before finishing the thesis, define the time frame for writing the thesis and discuss the formalities necessary for successful submission. If the PhD thesis is not completed within 3.5 years an, additional TAC meeting is required to ensure that the maximum duration of 4 years is not exceeded.

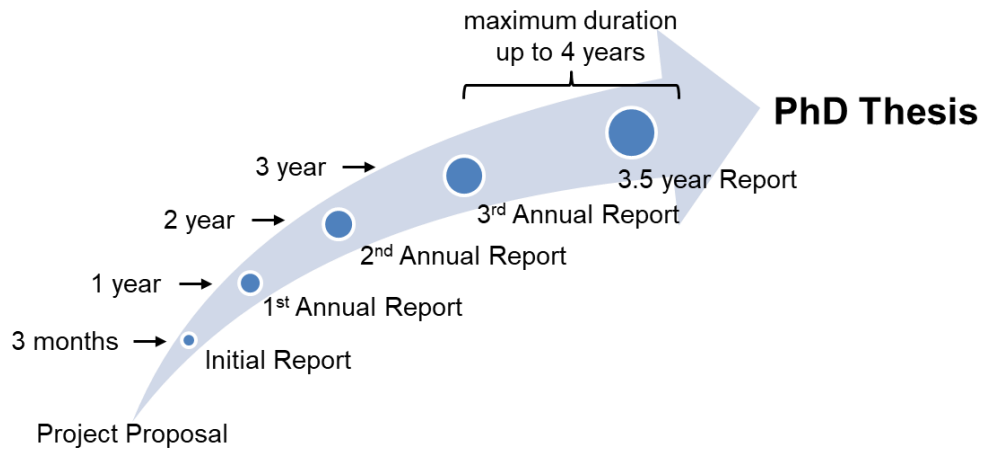


Figure 2: Timeline of the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme for PhD candidates.

The CRC/TRR205 TAC programme provides high flexibility for prioritisation of clinical work, student commitments, and research activities for MD candidates (Figure 3). Candidates choose from 3 different programmes. The one year programme is designed for students deferring clinical and student commitments for one year to focus completely on their research. In this case, intensive mentoring is provided, with the initial report meeting at 2 months, the second at 6 months, and the final at 1 year. The timelines of the two and three year CRC/TRR205 TAC programmes are summarised in Figure 3. These are designed for candidates that will balance their research activities with the obligations of medical school. The major goal of these timelines is maintaining focus on research in conjunction with other commitments.

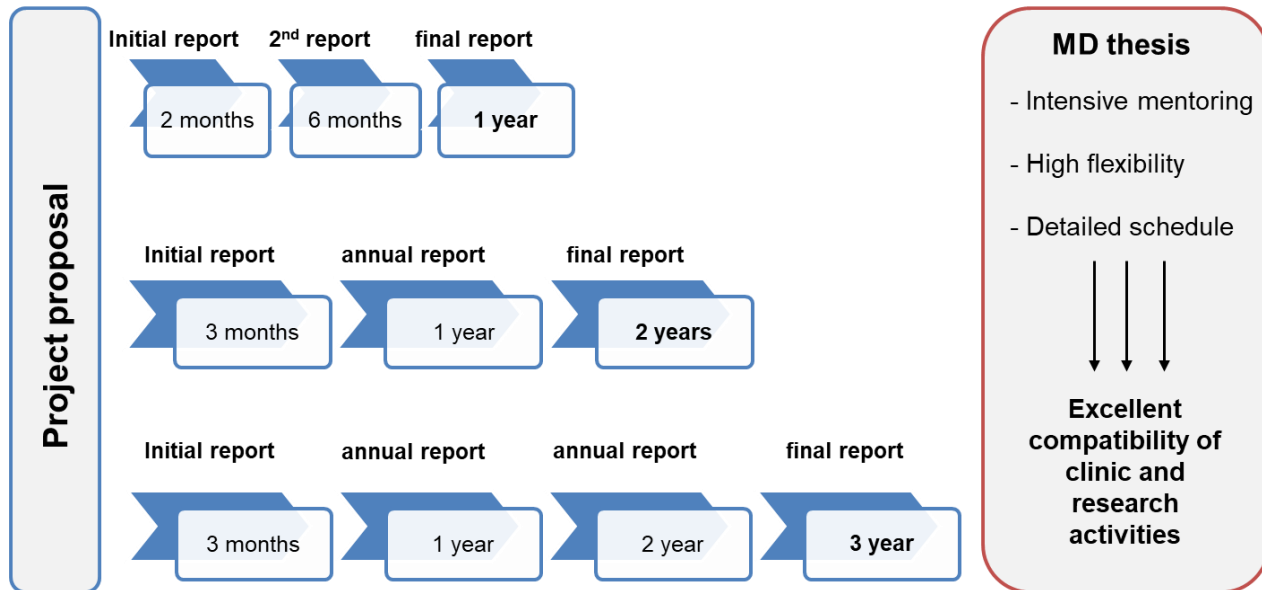


Figure 3: Timeline of the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme for MD candidates.

4 Selection of supervisors and mentors

To provide maximum support for PhD/MD candidates, the CRC/TRR205 TAC consists of four different members. The candidate selects the supplemental supervisor in concurrence with the first supervisor. Secondary supervisors are chosen for their scientific background. Potential supervisors within the CRC/TRR205 are summarised in Table 1. For PhD candidates, at least one TAC member should have a medical background; for MD students at least one TAC member should have a biomedical background. Upon selection, the binding CRC/TRR205 TAC agreement ([Appendix A](#)) is signed by all TAC members and the PhD/MD candidate.



Table 1: Potential supervisors within the CRC/TRR205

Dresden	Munich	Würzburg
Vasileia Ismini Alexaki	Anna Riester	Hamed Alborzinia
Cynthia Andoniadou	Axel Walch	Irina Chifu
Nicole Bechmann	Christoph Bidlingmaier	Martin Fassnacht
Stefan Bornstein	Felix Beuschlein	Jose Pedro Friedmann Angeli
Triantafyllos Chavakis	Thomas Gudermann	Carmina T. Fuss
Graeme Eisenhofer	Henriette Uhlenhaut	Stefanie Hahner
Ali El-Armouche	Elisabeth Kemter	Michael Hudecek
Angela Hübner	Marily Theodoropoulou	Max Kurlbaum
Waldemar Kanczkowski	Martin Reincke	Laura-Sophie Landwehr
Barbara Ludwig	Hermine Mohr	Martin Fassnacht
Ralph Müller-Pfefferkor	Natalia Pellegata	Silviu Sbiera
Christina Pamporaki	Nicole Reisch	Andreas Schirbel
Jens Pietzsch	Svenja Nölting	
Andreas Schedl	Tracy Ann Williams	
Charlotte Steenblock	Eckhard Wolf	
Ben Wielockx		

5 Implementation of TAC reports

TAC reports include a written report and a meeting between the candidate and all TAC members. The written report (**1-3 pages, English**) summarises the progress of the project and outlines the planned experiments. The candidate must also complete the CRC/TRR205 Report Form (Appendix B) in compliance with defined guidelines (Section 6). TAC meetings should be performed either face-to face or via conference call and include all members. Financial support for traveling can be requested from the administrative coordinator (Noelle Pavlista). In the first 20 minutes of the meeting the PhD/MD candidate presents the progress of the project, indicates problems, and outlines planned experiments. The presentation is given in English. Focus of the second part of the meeting should be the **scientific discussions (40 minutes, English or German)**. Problems within the project and new experiments should be discussed. Afterwards, all TAC members discuss the progress of the project and the presentation of the candidate. The first supervisor is responsible for the completion



and the submission on time of the **CRC/TRR205 Report form** (Appendix b and c) to the programme coordinators).

6 Inclusion criteria

In principle, all PhD and MD candidates financed by the CRC/TRR205 take part in the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme. Furthermore, associated students working on a CRC/TRR205 topic paid from an external funding source can be included. Therefore, the first supervisor or the candidate has to inform the programme coordinators. Upon inclusion the associated student are full member of the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme and CRC/TRR205 Young Scientists programme.

7 Deadlines

In the second funding period of the CRC/TRR205, the deadline for the initial TAC report is the 31st of October 2021. The first annual TAC meeting took place during the Retreat in Schweinsburg (30th May – 2nd of June 2022). Within the Retreat, time is given to meet the external supervisors and have an intensive scientific discussion. If it is not possible for the candidate or the majority of the supervisors to join the Retreat, the initial meeting takes place after the Retreat via conference call. Deadline for the written annual TAC meeting report is the 30th of June 2022. The written report (1-3 pages) needs to be send digital to all TAC members and the programme coordinators. The oral report and the related scientific discussion must be each year. Each candidate is responsible to find a date with all TAC members and the programme coordinators must be informed. They also could help to find a suitable location. The filled CRC/TRR205 report must be send to the programme coordinators one months after TAC meeting by the first supervisor, who is responsible for the on time mailing of the documentation. Modifications are only allowed after consultation with the programme coordinators. For candidates that are included later in the CRC/TRR205 programme or that are included in the next funding period of the CRC/TRR205 it is valid that the initial report takes place 2 or 3 months after beginning. The prepared project proposal has to be send to all members of the TAC and the programme coordinators at the beginning of the scientific work.



8 Assessment and quality management

Compliance with all deadlines and formalities are monitored by the programme coordinators. Scientific progress are monitored by the core group (scientific leadership) of the CRC/TRR205. If problems arise the members of the core group provides support to achieve successful completion of the thesis. Additional meetings could be scheduled to provide further scientific support or a conversation with the first supervisor could be implemented if problems between candidate and supervisor arise. This needs clarification. All documents are retained by the coordinators until completion of the thesis.

9 Integration in the CRC/TRR205 Young Scientists programme

The CRC/TRR205 TAC programme is part of the CRC/TRR205 Young Scientists programme. Participation in both programmes is obligatory for all PhD/MD candidates within the CRC/TRR205. The CRC/TRR205 TAC programme is honoured by the credit point system embedded in the CRC/TRR205 Young Scientists programme.

10 Compatibility with other programmes

The CRC/TRR205 combines scientific institutions in Dresden, Würzburg and Munich in which partly already structured TAC and Young Scientists programmes exist. The CRC/TRR205 TAC and Young Scientists programme offers a programme for all PhD/MD candidates not involved in another structured programme or to link the existing programmes with the aims of the CRC/TRR205. PhD/MD candidates of the CRC/TRR205 that are already in an local structured TAC or/and Young Scientists programme can be a full member of the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme or can request to be an associated member (with form Appendix A). As an associate member the necessary TAC meetings and reports can be replaced by the reports and meetings of the local structured programme. All guidelines of the external must be met and all documentation, especially of the TAC meetings, must be provided to the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme coordinators. Furthermore, in order to ensure the exchange with the other institutions within the CRC/TRR205 at least one supervisor of the TAC should be hosted by one the partner institutions of the CRC/TRR205. If the existing TAC already includes four different TAC members, only of one CRC/TRR205 institution, an additional supervisor from different CRC/TRR205 institution must be selected. The additional supervisor must not be part



of the TAC meetings but gets informed about the progress of the project by providing of the TAC report and evaluation documents and will be available for questions.

11 Appendix

- a CRC/TRR205 Agreement
- b CRC/TRR205 TAC Report
- c CRC/TRR205 TAC Evaluation