



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 progress and outcome of PhD/MD thesis and, to strengthen collaboration among all CRC/TRR205 member institutions. A comprehensive mentoring process was established, in order to monitor and evaluate the progress of the research work and to support personal development of each individual candidate. A programme duration of 3.5 years with a maximum of four years for PhD students is strongly advised. Due to requirements of clinical training MD students are given the flexibility to complete within one to three years.

3. Inclusion criteria

All PhD and MD candidates financed by the CRC/TRR205 take part in the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme. Associated students working on CRC/TRR205 related topics but paid from external funding sources can also participate. In this case, the first supervisor or the candidate inform the programme coordinators about their intention to participate in the programme. Upon inclusion the associated student is a full member of the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme and the CRC/TRR205 Young Scientists programme.

4. Programme structure

The CRC/TRR205 TAC consists of three CRC/TRR205 members from at least two different universities. It focuses on rigorous supervision of each candidate. As direct supervisor acts the postdoc or group leader of the laboratory, in which the scientific work is carried out (Figure 1).



CRC/TRR205 TAC programme

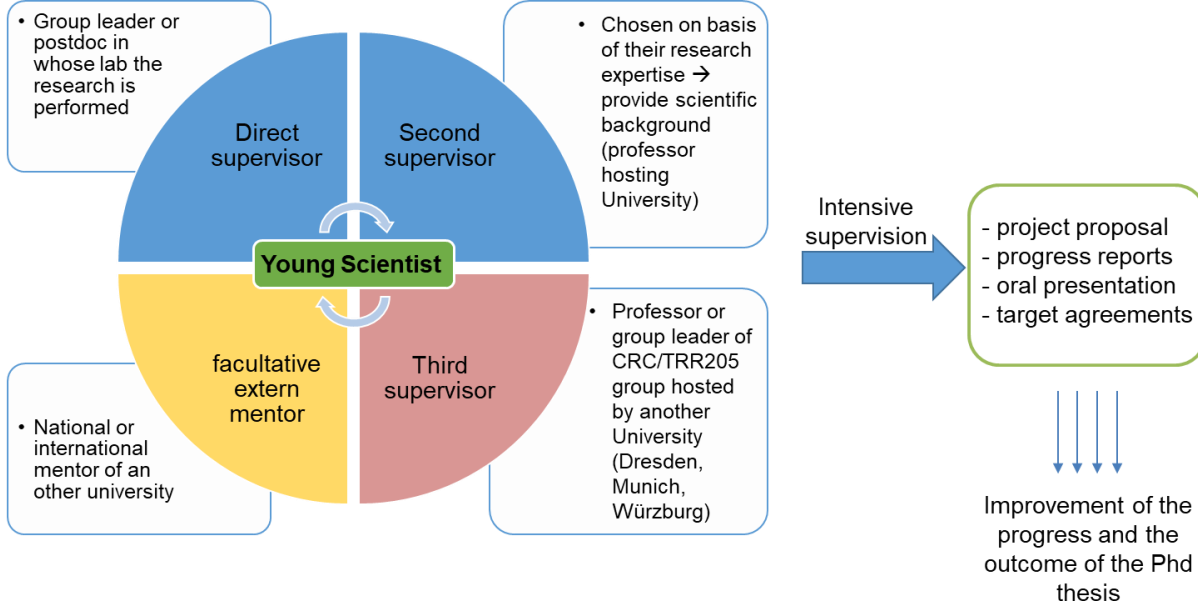


Figure 1: Structure of the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme.

Excellent supervision will be ensured by three to four mentors from inside or outside the CRC/TRR205. Progress and outcome of the PhD/MD theses is monitored through annual reports.

The candidate together with the first supervisor chooses the other members of the TAC. The second supervisor is selected based on the research topic to provide the scientific expertise required to realise the project, e.g., a PI of the associated CRC/TRR205 project, the respective department head or a senior researcher from the same institute. The third supervisor is a senior researcher with expertise in a relevant scientific field, but is affiliated with another institution within the CRC/TRR205. The fourth member of the TAC is facultative and could be a leading researcher from 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. These measures will facilitate objective assessment of the research work and progress. Potential supervisors within the CRC/TRR205 are summarised in Table 1. All TAC members and the PhD/MD candidate sign a binding CRC/TRR205 TAC agreement (Appendix A).



CRC/TRR205 TAC programme

Table 1: Selection of potential supervisors within the CRC/TRR205

Dresden	Munich	Würzburg
Waldemar Kanczkowski	Svenja Nölting	Stefanie Hahner
Ben Wielockx	Anna Riester	Martin Fassnacht
Stefan Bornstein	Stephan Herzig	Matthias Kroiss
Andreas Linkermann	Henriette Uhlenhaut	Silviu Sbiera
Ali El-Armouche	Natalia Pellegata	Carmina Fuß
Angela Hübner	Martin Reincke	Andreas Schirbel
Barbara Ludwig	Felix Beuschlein	Isabel Weigand
Cynthia Andoniadou	Tracy Ann Williams	Josè Petro Friedmann-Angeli
Nicole Bechmann	Marily Theodoropoulou	Max Kurlbaum
Vasileia Ismini Alexaki	Axel Walch	
Christian Ziegler	Nicole Reisch	
Susan Richter	Holger Schneider	
Jens Pietzsch	Thomas Gundermann	
Graeme Eisenhofer	Eckhard Wolf	
Mirko Peitzsch	Elisabeth Kemter	
Charlotte Steenblock	Martin Bidlingmaier	
Katrin Köhler		
Andreas Schedl		
Holger Henneicke		
Tiago Alves		
Christina Pamporaki		
Ralph Müller-Pfefferkorn		

The TAC programme follows a defined schedule (Figure 2) starting with the submission of a short project proposal (one page). The initial report meeting is scheduled 3 months afterwards, followed by the annual TAC meetings. The initial report includes a detailed overview of the proposed project, the theoretical background necessary for successful completion, and a timeline for planned experiments. The candidate is required to prepare a written report (1-3 pages) and an oral presentations (20 min) for all TAC meetings. Results and quality of each meeting (e.g., presentation skills and scientific progress) are assessed by the supervisors and documented in the CRC/TRR205



CRC/TRR205 TAC programme

Report (Appendix B) and CRC/TRR205 Evaluation (Appendix C) form. During the TAC meeting, targets for the next meeting are agreed. During the 3rd annual meeting, thesis submission date and formalities necessary for successful submission are discussed. If the PhD thesis cannot be completed within 3.5 years, an additional TAC meeting will be required to ensure that the maximum duration of 4 years is not exceeded.

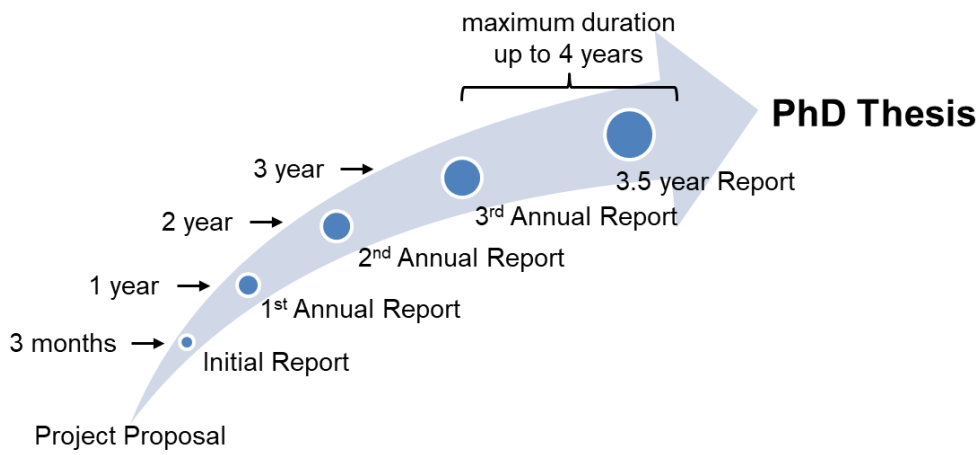


Figure 2: Timeline of the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme for PhD candidates.

The CRC/TRR205 TAC programme provides high flexibility for MD candidates, in order to best integrate clinical work, student commitments, and research activities (Figure 3). Candidates can select one of three timelines. The one year programme is designed for MD 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 after two months, the second after six months, and the final one after one year. The timelines of the two and three year CRC/TRR205 TAC programmes are summarised in Figure 3. These programmes are designed for candidates, who want to balance their research activities with the obligations of medical school. The major goal of these timelines are maintaining focus on research activities in conjunction with other commitments.



CRC/TRR205 TAC programme

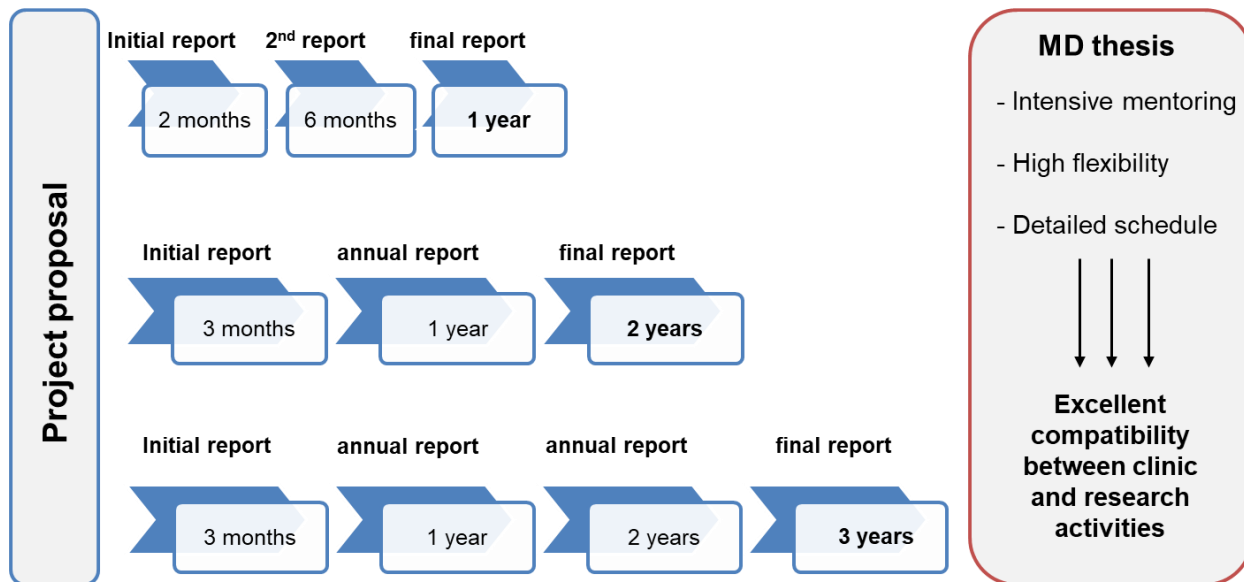


Figure 3: Timeline of the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme for MD candidates.

Three options are provided from which the candidate can select a schedule that is agreeable with his/her clinical commitments.

5. TAC reports and meetings

Together with the TAC meetings a written report summarising project progress and outlining future experiments has to be prepared by the candidate (1-3 pages, English). Additionally, the CRC/TRR205 Report Form (Appendix B) has to be completed in compliance with defined guidelines (section 4). TAC meetings between the candidate and all TAC members can be performed face-to-face or via video conferencing. Financial support for travel can be requested from the administrative coordinator at any time (Eva Spickenheuer). During the first 20 minutes of the TAC meeting, PhD/MD candidates present their progress, indicate problems, and outlines planned experiments. The presentation is given in English. The second part of the meeting focusses on scientific discussions (40 minutes, English) related to the candidates work. Problem solutions, alternative strategies and required support (e.g., resources or training) should be discussed. After the meeting, the supervisor team evaluates progress of the project and quality of the presentation. The first supervisor is responsible for completion and submission of the CRC/TRR205 Report form (Appendix A and C) to the programme coordinators.



6. Assessment and quality management

Compliance with all deadlines and formalities is monitored by the programme coordinators. Scientific progress is furthermore monitored by the core group (scientific leadership) of the CRC/TRR205. If problems arise members of the core group provide support necessary to achieve successful completion of the thesis. Programme coordinators are the first line of contact for the candidate in case of problems with the supervision process. Core group and coordinators are responsible to mediate and find solutions together with the candidate. All documents are filed by the coordinators until thesis completion.

7. 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.

8. Compatibility with other programmes

The CRC/TRR205 sites Dresden, Würzburg, and Munich combine different institutions, in which different structured TAC and Young Scientists programmes are available. The CRC/TRR205 TAC and Young Scientists programmes offer a structured PhD/MD programme to students not involved in other institutional programmes, but also link students in existing programmes to the CRC/TRR205. PhD/MD candidates of the CRC/TRR205 that are enrolled into local TAC or/and Young Scientists programmes can be full members of the CRC/TRR205 TAC programme or request to be associated (with form [Appendix A](#)). As an associate member, necessary TAC meetings and reports can be replaced by equivalent modules of local programmes. In this case, all requirements of the external programme must be met and all documentation, especially of TAC meetings, must be provided to the CRC/TRR205 Young Scientist coordinator. In order to ensure scientific exchange with the other CRC/TRR205 institutions, at least one supervisor of the TAC should be affiliated with one other CRC/TRR205 partner site. If an existing TAC includes four TAC members from the same CRC/TRR205 institution, an additional advisor from another CRC/TRR205 site must be selected.



CRC/TRR205 TAC programme

The advisor does not have to participate in TAC meetings but is informed about project progress through TAC reports and evaluation documents.

9 Appendix

- A CRC/TRR205 Agreement
- B CRC/TRR205 TAC Report
- C CRC/TRR205 TAC Evaluation