

Guide to PhD Advisory Committee (PAC) for MAIN and CO-SUPERVISORS

In addition to the individual supervision by their main supervisor, yDiv doctoral researchers are co-supervised and mentored by a **PhD Advisory Committee (PAC)** that meets at least annually. The aim of the PAC is to support the doctoral researcher to work on their PhD project and to plan their future career in science and other important fields like industry, politics, education or administration.

Why PACs are important:

The PAC should help and support doctoral researchers. This support can come in many forms, including PhD project development, help with methods, letters of recommendation and career development. Further, the PAC members can help mitigate and resolve issues between the doctoral researcher and the main supervisor. This can be as simple as a PAC member asking a doctoral researcher questions that the supervisor might not have thought about (i.e., have you thought about presenting your results at a particular meeting?). However, in some cases, the PAC member might identify problems (e.g., a supervisor having unrealistic goals for the PhD thesis), and be able to work with the supervisor and doctoral researcher to find a solution. PAC team members often offer the doctoral researcher new, interdisciplinary perspectives. PAC members are meant to support the doctoral research. The PAC meetings are not an evaluation.

Your tasks as a PAC member:

- Attend the PAC meetings and read the PAC documents prepared by the doctoral researcher.
- Make sure that the PhD project plan is clear and realistic, and achievable in the planned timeframe – help to adjust the plan when needed.
- Check the PhD progress against the set milestones and help to solve questions or problems.
- Give constructive and supportive feedback.
- Help in building a professional network and in aspects of career planning both academia and outside academia.
- Serve as personal contact for individual advice.
- Support in cases of problems and conflicts with the main supervisor.

Tasks of the doctoral researcher:

- Convenes the PAC and organises and leads the meetings.
- Reports about progress of the PhD project (i.e. milestones, publications, delays).
- Prepares PAC documents (supervision agreement, project plan, progress reports) and sends them to the PAC to read before the meeting.

Please note that the [iDiv Code of Conduct and Scientific Integrity](#) applies to all PAC members. It aims at promoting ethical behavior and best practices, in order to avoid scientific misconduct and any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Who forms the PAC?

- The main supervisor is central to the PAC, and should be present at all PAC meetings. He or she supports the doctoral researcher to form the PAC.
- Co-supervisors should be active researchers and hold a PhD degree. We encourage to have co-supervisors of different career stages.
- At least one of the co-supervisors should represent a different research group/field than the main supervisor. yDiv fosters interdisciplinary and integrative PhD projects, and it is important to include expertise from different approaches into the PAC. Co-supervisors can be external to iDiv.
- There is no upper limit to the number of co-supervisors, however a typical yDiv PAC has 3-6 members.

In order to monitor the PhD progress, it is required that the PAC holds regular meetings:

- At least once per year, the doctoral researcher invites you to the PAC meeting (starting with the kick-off meeting, followed by annual progress meetings).
- The doctoral researcher prepares the PAC documents (supervision agreement, project plan, progress reports) and sends them to the PAC and the yDiv coordination (please read those documents carefully).
- The yDiv coordinator usually attends the first PAC meeting to shortly introduce yDiv and the tasks of the PAC – you can invite the yDiv coordinator to the PAC meetings whenever needed (e.g. in cases of supervision conflicts).
- At the meeting, the doctoral researcher presents their project / progress / challenges / questions to the PAC (questions can also be related to e.g. PhD requirements at the faculty, trainings, conferences, career development).
- The PAC discusses the doctoral researchers' reports and advises them on the project and further questions.
- After the meeting, the PAC signs the (revised) report (digital signature is possible).

Schedule of PAC meetings at yDiv during your PhD time:



If you have any questions regarding your tasks as a PAC member or the PAC process please feel free to contact the yDiv coordinator Nicole Sachmerda-Schulz: nicole.sachmerda-schulz@idiv.de, phone: +49(0)341-97-33125