

Yearly Evaluation of the Progress of the Dissertation by the Thesis Committee *Guidelines*

The curriculum of the Ph.D. Program at the Medical University Innsbruck states that the dissertation committee must evaluate the progress of the dissertation at least once a year. The PhD student and the thesis advisor are supposed to summon the meeting. It is in the interest of the Ph.D. student to demand this meeting. Furthermore, it is suggested that the evaluation will be conducted following a seminar where the student gave a progress report of her/his own work.

AIMS

- To monitor the progress of the thesis research; to reveal circumstances, which might compromise the successful completion of the thesis research within the usual time frame.
- To monitor the academic progress of the student; to ascertain that courses were taken and program requirements have been fulfilled to the expected extent.
- To identify potential difficulties inherent in the collaboration and interaction between the student and the advisor, and in the general working conditions (project funding, equipment...).
- To assess the progress of the project and help defining priorities and intermediate goals.
- To decide when the thesis is ready for submission and select objective thesis reviewers and examiners for the final exam.

CONDUCTING THE EVALUATION

1) Student's Report

- One week prior to the meeting, the Ph.D. student will send a summary of his/her thesis work (2-3 pages) to all members of the committee. This summary must be prepared by the student him/herself.
- The Ph.D. student will bring his/her portfolio and transcripts to the meeting, to allow the committee members the assessment of the academic progress.

2) Brief presentation

- The Ph.D. student will give a presentation of his/her experimental work in the presence of the committee.
- The discussion during and after the presentation is aimed at assessing both the technical and the scientific quality of the work and the scientific progress of the student.

3) Individual talks

- Following the general discussion, first the Ph.D. student, then the advisor will each receive the opportunity to individually talk with the two members of the committee.

4) Protocol

- Finally, a brief statement should be written that includes the major result of the evaluation and indicates whether the progress and plans adequately aim at reaching the goal of the dissertation. The *record of thesis committee meetings* should be completed and signed by the advisor and the other members. The student keeps the form in his/her portfolio. It serves as a confirmation of the evaluation. In the next meeting, possible problems listed in the protocol must specifically be addressed.

Change of Advisor: Changes in the supervision require an (additional) thesis committee meeting (can be summoned by student or supervisor). At this meeting a plan shall be devised to guarantee the productive continuation of the thesis. Furthermore, the date of the next meeting shall be fixed (e.g. after three months) to monitor the execution of the plan or make adjustments where necessary.