



Detailed Research Plan

No later than 6 months after beginning work on their doctoral project, IRTG members write a detailed research plan of approximately 1500-2000 words. This document forms the basis for discussion during a meeting (either joint or separate) with all members of the Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC). Therefore, it must be submitted to them at least 14 days before the meeting. Please remember to submit the research plan to the IRTG office no later than 14 days after the first TAC meeting.

The Detailed Research Plan should contain:

- An introduction to the current state of knowledge in the field, including all relevant literature;
- The aim of the research project / doctoral thesis, indicating the open questions that will be addressed during the project and their relevance to the field;
- Planned research steps (e.g. data collection, fieldwork, experimental program, modeling steps) explaining which methods and techniques will be used to address the problem and why;
- Approximate timeline and milestones.

Progress reports and timeline updates

The first TAC meeting will be held no later than 6 months after the start of the project; subsequent meetings will be held at least once a year. For details on the TAC process, please check our 'How to TAC?' guides, which are available for download from the [»IRTG webpage](#).

Check your personal TAC status report to see when your next TAC meeting is due and which documents have to be provided.

IRTG members prepare for the meetings, e.g., by submitting a written progress report to the TAC members.

Progress reports are the basis for discussion at your meeting with your TAC members. To give them time to prepare, you should give your TAC at least two weeks to read and comment on your progress report. After the meeting, you have another two weeks to submit your report and the other required documents to the IRTG office.

Progress reports should describe:

- Research questions and/or hypotheses (including recent changes);
- Progress made;
- Problems encountered, including a discussion of their causes and any solutions found to date;
- Future goals and a research plan for the coming period (including timeline);
- Publication strategy.
- Overview of activities to date (training, (AC)³ networking activities, publications, community service, communication/outreach activities, awards/grants etc.)

On the recommendation of the direct supervisor, the report may alternatively be written in the form of a (draft) publication. In this case, an extended discussion and outlook section should be added.

Another alternative to the written progress report is a collection of slides covering the above mentioned topics, which will form the basis of the TAC meeting.

Prior to each TAC meeting, review your progress against the original project plan and adjust the timeline. Discuss the updated schedule with your TAC and include the updated version in the documents submitted to the IRTG office.



Personal TAC status report

In general, TAC meetings are documented in the candidate's personal TAC status report. This report includes reporting sections for the doctoral researcher (marked in light blue) and the TAC members (marked in orange) and must be signed by all TAC members and the doctoral researcher. The TAC status report template can be downloaded from the [»IRTG webpage](#).

At each TAC meeting, the TAC will specify which documents (e.g., progress report, meeting minutes) in addition to the mandatory updated timeline and the pre-completed TAC status report, the candidate needs to provide for the next TAC meeting, and indicate this in section 2.5 of the TAC status report. The candidate ensures that the TAC meetings are documented and that the TAC status report at the end of the meeting contains all necessary information / feedback.

In preparation for the TAC meetings, the doctoral researcher will submit, the (updated) time schedule, the pre-completed TAC status report, and any required documents to all TAC members no later than two weeks before the first TAC meeting.

At the next meeting, the TAC will confirm the receipt of the required documents. The date of the next TAC meeting should be agreed on at the previous meeting and documented in the TAC status report.

The doctoral researcher submits a signed copy of the TAC status report (keep an unsigned copy!), updated timeline and any other documents to the (AC)³ IRTG office no later than two weeks after the meeting.

Please note that the (AC)³ Data Policy (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7570328>) and the DFG Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6472827>) apply to all TAC members. These guidelines aim to promote ethical conduct and best practices to prevent scientific misconduct and any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

For further information, please visit the IRTG webpage: <https://www.ac3-tr.de/phd/>

In case of questions regarding reporting or publication issues please feel free to contact the IRTG coordinator Christa Genz: irtg@ac3-tr.de.