

## Advisory Panel System Guidelines

### 1. What is an Advisory Panel and what is its function?

The Advisory Panel (AP) system is the central tool for structured, continuous supervision and support of doctoral candidates in the IMPRS-UFAST.

Each IMPRS-UFAST PhD candidate is accompanied throughout their doctoral research by an AP of 2-3 scientists. AP members are experts in the PhD candidate's field of research. They can be contacted for discussions, advice, and in case of problems. They can also be consulted on matters of academic training within the IMPRS.

The IMPRS Executive Board appoints, in consultation with the Principal Advisor, the AP for each doctoral candidate. AP and PhD candidate meet at regular intervals throughout the doctoral studies to discuss the progress made, the remaining work, and the time frame. The AP may adjust plans where necessary. A report of each meeting is submitted to the IMPRS office.

### 2. Structure and Requirements

- a) An Advisory Panel (AP) consists of a **Principal Advisor** and a **Co-Advisor** as a minimum; a **Third Advisor** may be appointed to provide further input.
- b) Principal Advisor and Co-Advisor should ideally not be from the same research group. Where Principal Advisor and Co-Advisor are members of the same group, a Third Advisor must be appointed.
- c) The Principal Advisor and/or the Co-Advisor should be available to the doctoral candidate on a day-to-day basis; the person „most responsive/available” must be determined at the beginning of the doctoral project.
- d) The Principal Advisor must be a faculty member of the IMPRS-UFAST. The Co-Advisor may be a) an IMPRS-UFAST faculty member or b) a colleague from the University of Hamburg or one of the IMPRS member institutions and who is not involved in the IMPRS-UFAST. Where it is of benefit for the doctoral research, an external scientist may be appointed as Co-Advisor with the permission of the IMPRS Executive Board.
- e) The Principal Advisor is responsible for monitoring the academic training of the doctoral candidate.
- f) At least one of the two, Principal Advisor or Co-Advisor, must have the right to supervise PhD studies (=Promotionsrecht<sup>1</sup>) at the university awarding the doctoral degree. This normally is the Universität Hamburg. She/He must also be registered as “official” doctoral advisor with the academic department at the University (see *University Requirements*).

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<sup>1</sup> The right to supervise PhD Studies is normally granted to *habilitierte* members of the faculty of a department or faculty members who have a full-time professorial appointment. Doctoral regulations allow for exceptions to this rule; senior scientific staff and/or scientists who head a junior research group may be invested with the same rights. Further advice can be obtained from the IMPRS Office.

### 3. IMPRS Advisory Panel and University Requirements for Doctoral Advisors

#### *University requirements*

- a) The doctoral regulations of the Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences (MIN) state, that each doctoral candidate must register at least one doctoral advisor with the department. It is also possible to register 2 advisors, or a panel of 3 advisors.
- b) All advisors registered must have been invested with the right to supervise PhD studies (= *Promotionsrecht*, see footnote on page 1).
- c) The Advisor(s) is (are) registered as part of the application for admission to PhD studies as well as in the supervision agreement (*Betreuungsvereinbarung*). Both documents must be submitted to the relevant academic department at the University.
- d) The main doctoral advisor will normally also be appointed as first reviewer of the thesis at the end of the doctoral studies (*Dissertation*).

#### *IMPRS Advisory Panel*

- e) The IMPRS Advisory Panel is determined separately and registered with the IMPRS Office.
- f) The members of the AP may, in total or part, be the doctoral advisors registered with the academic department at the University.
- g) At least one AP member, either the Principal Advisor or the Co-Advisor, must also have been registered as doctoral advisor at the University. This means that one AP advisor must have the *Promotionsrecht*.

### 4. Meeting Objectives, Preparation and Panel Report

AP and doctoral candidate meet at regular intervals throughout the doctoral studies to discuss progress made, the remaining work, and the time frame of the research project.

The meetings are not intended as examinations but rather as an opportunity to review past work and discuss further proceedings. They enable the AP members and the doctoral candidates to discuss milestones of the research project, problems encountered, choice of methods, and to assess whether the suggested time schedule is appropriate.

AP meetings are *not* the forum to discuss recent scientific problems in detail, since these should be solved with the Principal Advisor and/or Co-Advisor. However, if a problem has a major impact on the progress and aim of a PhD project, the AP members have to discuss and possibly help modify the research plan. If the discussion reveals topics that would improve the research quality but are not addressed by the student yet, the AP should suggest including them.

Such focusing will make the AP meetings effective and constrain the duration to 30-60 min.

- At least one meeting per year is mandatory.
- The scheduling of the meetings is the responsibility of the PhD candidate.
- The IMPRS Office must be informed of the date of the next AP meeting, once agreed.
- All information discussed at a panel meeting, the panel report and all materials submitted by the PhD fellow for the meeting are to be treated confidential.

- a) **Doctoral candidates prepare** the following documents for each AP meeting:
- i. a short status report of 3-5 pages
  - ii. a concise thesis outline, structuring research question into sub-units/chapters
  - iii. the (latest) time schedule covering the duration of the thesis project (preferably including mile stones)

All listed documents must be sent to the Advisory Panel Members and the IMPRS office by email a few days before the AP meeting.

- b) **AP members produce** a brief report of each AP meeting which will be filed in the IMPRS office. The report will include a brief summary of the status quo of the doctoral research, as well as record any agreed changes or modifications to the original project plan.

Individual meeting reports included in a cumulative AP report for each student, which will be made available to the Panel for the next AP meeting. The cumulative report will also be used in the decision making process on the *academic extension* of a PhD candidate.

AP members complete the form at the end of the meeting, a template will be provided. The report must be signed by all members and returned to the IMPRS Office.

## 5. Schedule

Year of study/ Meeting	Timeframe (month of project)	Item
Y1	Beginning of PhD project	Principal Advisor and PhD candidate meet to discuss/define research topic and a general plan of action
Y1	Within 2 months of start of PhD project	Identify and appoint Advisory Panel
Y1-M1 (optional)	6 months after start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progress report/summary for the AP in advance of the AP meeting</li> <li>• AP meeting and report</li> </ul>
Y1-M2	End of Y1 (month 10-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progress report/summary for the AP in advance of the AP meeting</li> <li>• AP meeting and report</li> </ul>
Y2-M1	End of Y2 (month 22-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progress report/summary for the AP in advance of the AP meeting</li> <li>• AP meeting and report</li> </ul>
<i>IMPRS Executive Board decides on an academic extension</i>		
Y3- M1	Approx. 6 months after last meeting (month 28-30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progress report/summary for the AP in advance of the AP meeting</li> <li>• AP meeting and report</li> </ul>
End of Y3		Submission of thesis

## Academic and Financial Extensions

Towards the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year the Executive Board together with the AP decide whether the doctoral candidate is allowed to continue as proposed (*academic extension*), whether particular modifications of the research proposal should be requested, or whether the doctoral candidate is asked to abandon the project entirely and leave the IMPRS. The information provided in a cumulative AP report is fundamental in the decision making process.

Students are usually expected to complete their doctoral studies within 3 years. Towards the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, the doctoral candidate can request a *further academic extension*, should this be necessary. The request must be endorsed by the relevant AP. The Executive Board grant or reject the proposed continuation of the study within the IMPRS-UFAST programme. This decision is independent of a possible extension of the financial support (*financial extension*) or continuation of the doctoral project outside of the IMPRS. Both are to be resolved by the doctoral candidate and the Principal Advisor and, where a student is a recipient of an IMPRS or UHH stipend, in consultation with the IMPRS coordinator.