



SFB 956
Conditions and Impact of Star Formation –
Astrophysics, Instrumentation and Laboratory Research

SFB 956 THESIS COMMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

SFB 956 thesis committee targets:

Each SFB 956 doctoral candidate's research work is supervised by his/her principal supervisor. Additionally, supervision will be provided by an individual thesis committee consisting of one to two independent colleagues (min. postdoctoral researcher) preferably with scientific expertise in the field. The thesis committee provides supervision of the scientific development of the doctoral candidate in general by surveying the progress of the research work as well as the education of the doctoral candidate.

The existence of a thesis committee for each doctoral candidate has been defined as indispensable condition by the SFB 956 Board. Doctoral candidates who are supervised by an IMPRS or BCGS thesis committee are exempted from this regulation.

Mode of operation:

The thesis committee will meet for the first time latest 6 months after the doctoral candidate has started his work. Afterwards the committee will meet at least once per year for discussion and review. Upon request in special cases a representative of doctoral candidate's choice might take part in the meeting.

It is the responsibility of the doctoral candidate to initiate the first thesis committee meeting:

- make a meeting with your first supervisor, agree on the second supervisor and the supervision scheme (SFB 956, BCGS, IMPRS)
- if you agree on the SFB 956 scheme only, read all documents at <https://www.sfb956.de/students/docprogram/tc>, then ask your supervisors to sign thesis committee agreement (TCA), sign it yourself and submit the form (hard copy) to the scientific coordinator(s)
- while being in the process of signing the TCA make the appointment for the first supervision meeting and forward the date to the scientific coordinator(s) as well

The thesis committee meeting should be informal and wants to make sure that the:

- doctoral candidate gets the best possible support from his/her supervisor
- thesis project is sufficiently well defined and manageable in the course of three years
- project management and planning are in time
- project is reasonably well on schedule, and if not, to discuss how to fix that
- doctoral candidate can access all necessary data, numerical and experimental equipment, etc.
- doctoral candidate trains him/herself in the art of scientific presentation at internal occasions as well as at international conference
- doctoral candidate obtains international visibility via publications, conference participations and collaborations
- doctoral candidate, toward the end of the second year, is starting to think of – and prepare for – his/her career after the doctorate

Meeting structure:

- In addition to the initial supervision meeting the meetings should take place after 18 months and 30 months as a guideline. The doctoral candidate should prepare a short (<2 pages) report which should be submitted to the supervisors not later than a week before the meeting. It should summarize the topic of the thesis, the progress that has been made, any problems that have come up, the progress on manuscripts, conferences that have been attended or will be attended and any internal as well as external collaborations as well as a time line for the remaining time of the PhD project. At the second meeting a PhD thesis outline is requested.
- The supervision meeting starts with a 20 minutes presentation by the doctoral candidate outlining the status and perspectives of the PhD-project and will be followed by an open discussion.

The SFB 956 thesis committee supervision report (Feedback form) must be filled out by both, the first supervisor and the doctoral candidate, for reference for the committee members and the doctoral candidate and a copy must be sent to the SFB 956 scientific coordinator(s) by the doctoral candidate.

Assignment of the thesis committee:

The principal thesis supervisor and the doctoral candidate should jointly select one to two independent scientists – with expertise on the research topic to the possible degree – as committee members (one of them should be affiliated with a different institute). In case of discontinuation of a co-supervisor the principal supervisor should suggest a substitute in accordance with the doctoral candidate. In justified cases the doctoral candidate in accordance with the principal supervisor might request a replacement of a supervisor.

The first appointment for the supervision meeting will be coordinated by the doctoral student and the follow-up meeting will be arranged directly in the ongoing one. In case the doctoral student will need support on this or any other issue he/she is welcome to contact the scientific coordinator(s) (sfb956contact@ph1.uni-koeln.de) for support.

Note that registration of the doctoral candidate at the Faculty is a different process.

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