

Yearly follow-up during your PhD studies

Useful resources

-  [Skills and Competencies \(DOCX\)](#)

Study Right & Initial ISP

- Apply for study rights via study.info.
- After acceptance and at the start of the doctoral studies, the PhD researcher has 3 months to update the Individual Study Plan (ISP based on the document used to apply for the study rights).

Annual ISP Update & Follow-Up Committee

- The ISP must be updated once a year.
- As part of the yearly follow-up, the PhD researcher recruits a Thesis Follow-Up Committee (TFC).
- **Aim:** Promote successful progress of the thesis by providing subject matter and implementation expertise. If necessary, the study plan and research plan may be updated in response to the committee's discussions.
- **Composition** (recommended): 2 members (internal to AAU and/or external) + the supervisor(s).
- **Recruitment:** By the PhD researcher together with the supervisor(s).

Committee Meetings: Frequency, Roles & Confidentiality

- The TFC convenes **every year** until the thesis defence.
- The PhD researcher is responsible for organizing the TFC meetings.
- If problems related to the thesis work or supervision arise, the PhD researcher may contact the TFC committee members between scheduled meetings (also the ombudsperson).
- The PhD researcher must have the opportunity to discuss issues in confidence with the TFC.

Process Overview

Within the first 3 months of start

- Update the **ISP**
- **Recruitment** of the TFC.
- Organise the **first meeting** with the TFC

Before each committee meeting

- Update the ISP(including the research plan) and share it with TFC members at least one week before the meeting

During each committee meeting (≤ 90 minutes)

- 1) The PhD researcher (maximum 1h with questions): - Presents the doctoral training plan. - The presentation focuses on the graduation requirements: - Progress so far: - Courses - Funding plan - Scientific progress and publication plan
- Expected graduation date
- 2) The TFC gives constructive feedback on the graduation plan, research plan and the presentation skills. 3) After the presentation, the PhD researcher leaves for 10-15 minutes so that the supervisor can confidentially discuss with the committee any potential issues with the PhD 4) Final 10 minutes: supervisor(s) are dismissed; the PhD researcher comes back and continues confidentially with the committee to raise any supervision-related issues or concerns.

After each meeting

- The PhD researcher reflects on the discussion, writes brief minutes to share with all participants (at the latest within one week following the meeting), and makes final updates to the ISP for submission to the graduate school.

Quick Checklists

Startup (first 3 months)

- ☐ Update ISP based on the application documents
- ☐ Recruit two TFC members (internal and/or external) with supervisor(s)

Before each TFC meeting

- ☐ Update ISP
- ☐ Share ISP with TFC and supervisor(s)
- ☐ Circulate agenda and materials

During each TFC meeting (≤ 90 min)

- ☐ Graduation requirements & target date
- ☐ Progress (courses, research)
- ☐ Publication plan
- ☐ Funding plan
- ☐ 10 minutes without the PhD researcher (confidential)
- ☐ Last 10 minutes without main supervisor(s) (confidential)