

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE: FOR THE SUPERVISION OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS**

The advisory committee is a group of three or four experts who, by sharing knowledge and skills, constructively support the research supervisor in his or her doctoral supervision work, and provide advice to doctoral candidates throughout their training.

The advisory committee also aims to empower doctoral candidates with regard to their success and in meeting the quality criteria in their scientific, as well as personal and professional, development.

Assistance from an advisory committee is optional. It is created at the suggestion of the research supervisor or at the request of the doctoral candidate with the supervisor's agreement.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- Provide additional advice to the doctoral student and support his or her motivation.
- Support the supervisor in his or her role.
- Improve follow-up by interspersing the doctoral student's progress with regular feedback sessions.
- Accelerate project start-up time and encourage the student to meet success criteria within a reasonable time frame.
- Help overcome roadblocks in critical situations.
- Assist with better professional opportunities.
- Encourage interdisciplinarity.

<b>Benefits for students</b>	<b>Benefits for professors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They obtain additional advice about their project, their training and their future career.</li> <li>• The committee can help reduce interpersonal difficulties.</li> <li>• They are encouraged to enrich their scientific, personal and professional competencies.</li> <li>• They have access to regular in-depth assessment.</li> <li>• Contact with other people can help sustain their motivation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have support in facing the growing diversity of doctoral students' training programs, values, cultures and approaches.</li> <li>• They have help when facing difficult situations and to bolster doctoral students' motivation.</li> <li>• They can enhance the quality of doctoral students' work thanks to the stimulus provided by researchers and experts who are operating outside the project itself.</li> </ul>

## FORMATION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The advisory committee is made up of:

- the doctoral student
- the supervisor or co-supervisors
- at least two other members chosen jointly by the supervisor and the doctoral student.

## CHOICE OF MEMBERS

- The members may be professors (active or retired, within or outside Polytechnique), researchers (private or public sector), or recognized experts. Postdoctoral fellows may also be members.
- Every member is chosen to provide added value to the research project's quality and to the development of the doctoral student's competencies.

## CREATION

The advisory committee is created as soon as possible, **at the latest by one year after the doctoral candidate's enrolment.**

The creation of the advisory committee becomes official when the supervisor and doctoral student advise the graduate program co-ordinator of the choice of members. The supervisor must send written notice of each member's name, affiliation, specialty and level of university education.

## CHANGES

The thesis supervisor must send written notice to the graduate program co-ordinator of any change to the composition of the advisory committee, meaning the departure or addition of members. However, it is highly desirable that the same people accompany the doctoral student throughout his or her journey.

## LENGTH AND DISSOLUTION

The advisory committee is operational as long as the candidate is an active student. It is automatically dissolved if the student becomes inactive.

The advisory committee's approach rests mainly on meetings during which the members provide constructive feedback based on the "Parcours doctoral" (doctoral studies progress) document submitted and presented by the doctoral student.

## HOW THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORKS

### DOCTORAL PROCESS

For each meeting, the doctoral student writes up a “Parcours doctoral” (doctoral studies progress) document using the format chosen by the advisory committee. The document aims to lead doctoral students to reflect on and analyze their past and future progress – or challenges – as they work toward their success criteria. The doctoral process is discussed in the [Ensuring a successful doctorate](#) workshop.

The document is concise and discusses the following elements, among others:

- The project’s progress: context (bibliography), question/problem, objectives, progress made and expected progress, expected original material;
- Project management: planning, organization, resources, risks, deadlines;
- Success criteria and the extent to which they have been reached (those required by Polytechnique, those required by the supervisor, those set by the doctoral student);
- A reflection on the knowledge and competencies that must be developed based on the project and the candidate’s career perspective.

A sample document may be provided.

### FREQUENCY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Typically, the doctoral process is punctuated by the following meetings:

- An optional initial meeting, in the first year: feedback regarding a first draft of the doctoral process. This meeting may allow, for example, for discussions on the defined study plan and the research proposal.
- Formal meetings:
  - Formative meetings, at least once a year, for feedback on the doctoral process;
  - Meeting for the comprehensive exam followed by a formative meeting (meaning feedback) on the doctoral process;
  - Final meeting – dissertation defence (according to the rules currently in effect) followed by feedback for the candidate and a post-mortem about the operation of the advisory committee.
- One or more special meetings that can be called as needed upon the request of the supervisor or the doctoral student.

## MEETING PROCESS

- The doctoral student is responsible for organizing and planning the formative meetings, preparing documents and presentations, and writing the minutes, which must be sent to members promptly.
- For evaluation meetings (comprehensive exam, defence), the rules in place at Polytechnique and in the programs apply.
- At the first meeting, the members choose a facilitator to lead the meetings in a constructive manner.
- The members' roles are advisory at the formative meetings; therefore the supervisor and doctoral student's decision takes precedence should opinions be split.
- The facilitator and members are responsible for providing the doctoral student with formative feedback in writing after each meeting. The formative feedback document, about one page long, highlights the strong points and the points for the doctoral student to improve. Preferably it should be written on the spot and given to the doctoral student. A copy of the feedback document is sent to the GPC for information purposes.
- For evaluation meetings (comprehensive exam and defence), the rules effective at Polytechnique and in the programs apply.
- The members must respect the confidentiality of the work (as needed, they may sign a written agreement).