

PhD monitoring and PhD advisory board

The PhD-program promotes a **dynamic and constructive follow-up of the PhD advancement all along the three years of the PhD**. The following procedure must be considered as MANDATORY for all PhD students funded by an A*MIDEX-ICN PhD Program fellowship, as well as for INT PhD students. It is OPTIONAL for the others, considering that slightly different PhD monitoring procedures can be implemented in different labs.

Please, note that AMU **Health and Life Science Doctoral School requires a PhD progress monitoring meeting during the 2nd PhD year**, in order to assess each PhD student's academic performance, to evaluate the effectiveness of his/her training and to give advice about his/her career plan (see <https://ecole-doctorale-62.univ-amu.fr/fr/doctorant/suivi-theses>). For that purpose, an advisory board must be selected during the first year.

In addition to the general requirements of the Doctoral school, the PhD program proposes a slightly different process, with two successive evaluations as described below. The main reason is to allow for a better and earlier identification of potential pitfalls and offer timely alternative solutions, if needed. It is designed as a mentoring process and not a strict evaluation.

Contact persons for PhD monitoring within the ICN PhD Program:

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(1) PhD project

At the start of the PhD (within the first 6 months), the student and his/her advisor(s) write a short PhD project, according to the following scheme:

- 1) Project summary
- 2) Brief literature review, with a short bibliography
- 3) 3) Project description with an emphasis on aims and methods (1 page recommended, 2 pages max.).
- 4) Semestrial timeline with a description of the resources required for each step (animals, patients, materials, techniques, computing facilities...) and the main expected outcomes (1-2 pages max.).

This PhD project is sent to the PhD program, as well as to the members of the PhD advisory board as soon as they are selected.

(2) The PhD advisory board

The goal of the advisory board is to guarantee that the student's environment and the PhD project are adequate but also to make sure that the relationship between the student and his/her supervisor(s) is going well enough to allow the project to move forward.

The advisory board must include:

- the **PhD student**
- the **PhD supervisor(s)**
- an **AMU faculty member nominated by the PhD program** (suggestions by the student and advisor(s) are welcome)
- a **senior student** enrolled in the PhD program and nominated by the PhD Program committee (suggestions by the student and the advisor(s) are welcome).
- a **scientific expert**, who is neither a member of AMU nor a collaborator on the PhD project or on other recent projects of the supervisor(s). We highly recommend thinking of this expert as a potential external examiner for the PhD oral defense, and the above constraints are required for the eligibility of the expert. The expert is proposed by the PhD student and her/his supervisor(s), its choice must then be approved by the PhD program committee.

(3) PhD progress monitoring

The PhD progress monitoring is designed to guide and help the PhD student.

The PhD advisory board will meet twice during the three years of the PhD.

For each meeting, videoconferencing may be used. Of note, **the PhD Program cannot provide funding nor logistical help for inviting the external expert to Marseille.**

-> **The first meeting is scheduled between 6 to 12 months** after the beginning of the PhD studies.

During this meeting, the student presents his/her project, assesses its feasibility, exposes the risks and alternative strategies, details the accomplished work, with a particular emphasis on the match between the project and the resources available to the student, as well as a timeline/schedule for the following months.

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-> **The second meeting** (which is also mandatory according to the requirements of the Doctoral School) is **scheduled between 18 to 24 months** after the beginning of the PhD studies. During this meeting, the student presents his/her research accomplishments, the data displayed during national and international conferences, the published papers or expected publications, as well as a timeline/schedule for the following months (experiments, publications, postdoctoral opportunities, for example). During these meetings, some time is devoted to the potential problems or pitfalls encountered, and to propose solutions if needed.

Each of these two meetings are organised as follows:

- A 15-minute oral presentation of the student, in the presence of the PhD supervisor(s)
- A general discussion with the advisory board and the PhD supervisor(s)
- A confidential meeting with the student, without the PhD supervisor(s), followed by a confidential meeting with the PhD supervisor(s), without the student.

After each meeting, a report is written (based on the evaluation form inserted at the end of this document). Specific points on the risks and feasibility of the project after the first meeting (+ 6 months) and on the research accomplishments and publications after the second meeting (+ 18 months) must be addressed.

If needed, a meeting with the advisory board can be requested by the student and/or his/her PhD supervisor(s), at any time during the PhD studies.

=> Both reports are transmitted to the PhD program committee. A copy of the second report must be sent to the Health and Life Science Doctoral School (email: edsvs-direction@univ-amu.fr) and in any case, it is required by the Doctoral School if the student registers for the 4th year.

Templates for the two reports can be found at the end of this document

PhD EVALUATION FORM (+ 6-month meeting)

Student:

Date:

	A	B	C
Match between the project and the scientific environment			
Match between the aims of the projects and the technical resources available			
Relationships between the student and his/her supervisor(s) (availability, communication...)			
Projected timeline for the following months			

A: Very good

B: Good

C: Can be improved, might have to be reconsidered

General comments:

Advisory board recommendations:

The advisory board (names and signatures):

Student

Supervisor(s)

Expert

Student representative

*Local expert (approved by
NeuroSchool PhD Program)*

PhD EVALUATION FORM (+ 18-month meeting)

Student:

Date:

	A	B	C
Match between the project and the scientific environment			
Relationships between the student and his/her supervisor(s) (availability, communication...)			
Publications and perspectives			
Participation to conferences			
Projected timeline for the following months			

A: Very good

B: Good

C: Can be improved, might have to be

reconsidered **General comments:**

Advisory board recommendations:

The advisory board (names and signatures):

Student

Supervisor(s)

Expert

Student representative

*Local expert (approved by
NeuroSchool PhD Program)*