

GLOMAR Thesis Committee Meetings

The supervision of the doctoral project of GLOMAR members is in the hands of a thesis committee. The purpose of this committee is to provide the doctoral candidate with (a) more than one personal point of contact, (b) broad scientific and ongoing advice to keep them on track, and (c) sufficient cross-checking to maintain a consistently high level of quality in their publications and dissertation.

The thesis committee consists of at least three scientists, i.e. the main supervisor, a senior scientist from another research group or institution, a third scientist who may be the immediate research supervisor (often junior scientists such as assistant or junior professors and postdocs) and, if appropriate, other (also external) scientists. **The members of the Thesis Committee are chosen by the doctoral researcher.**

Thesis committee meetings should be held every six months. Thesis committee meetings are organised and chaired by the doctoral researcher. If possible, all members of the thesis committee should be present at the meetings.

Minutes of the thesis committee meetings must be submitted to the GLOMAR office (early-career@marum.de) within two weeks after each thesis committee meeting. The minutes must be signed by the doctoral researcher and their supervisor. The minutes also serve as a self- and time-management tool for the doctoral researcher. They should therefore be written with due care.

Thesis committee meetings are often experienced by doctoral researchers as “reporting” or “showing off for the supervisor”.

As a doctoral researcher, please remember that YOU are the one running the meeting. We encourage you to ask all the questions you have and to discuss your challenges.

Supervisors and advisors are encouraged to note that thesis committee meetings provide an opportunity for fruitful discussion with both your scholar and your colleagues. They are also intended to facilitate supervision.

**The following 9 topics should be discussed at a thesis committee meeting.
(minutes of the meetings should also follow this list)**

Topic 1 – Definition of the scientific goals of the research project

An informal presentation and discussion of the planned project, including

- What are the scientific goals to be met during the project?
- How can these be transferred into a publication strategy?
- How can these be transferred into a rough three-year time plan?

This topic is especially relevant for the very first TC meeting. Sometimes the focus of a research project may shift. In this case, the scientific goals should be re-discussed.

Topic 2 - Progress of the doctoral research project during the last six months

An informal presentation and discussion of the actual status of the project, including

- What has been achieved?
- Which questions have been raised?
- Are there any challenges (problems)?
- Discussion of milestones
- Further time schedule for the next 6 months and for the remaining time of the project

Topic 3: Achievement of goals in relation to the goals for the previous six months as set out in the last thesis committee meeting

- Were there any drawbacks?
- If so, which measures have been or should be taken to bring the project back on track?

Topic 4: Definition of goals for the following six months

- What should be achieved within the next six months?
- What are the needs with regard to lab- time, and contacts to external experts?

Topic 5: Research training programme

- Which knowledge and skills are needed to work successfully on the project?
- Which knowledge and skills are needed to support a further career? Where and when is this kind of training offered?*
- Which trainings/courses have been taken? Please list.

Definition of the knowledge and skills needed may change over time. It is therefore important to discuss this topic during every thesis committee meeting again!

** any feedback regarding the need for courses/trainings can be addressed to early-career@marum.de*

The doctoral researcher and the thesis committee are required to address the topic of **Good Scientific Practice** during the first and/or second thesis committee meetings. The committee should point out potential pitfalls to the doctoral researcher. Furthermore, every doctoral researcher is expected to participate in the 'Good Scientific Practice' course offered by MARUM/GLOMAR. Both, discussions and course participation, should be mentioned in the minutes.

Topic 6: International meetings

- Participation in conferences during the past six months
- Which upcoming conferences would be of interest (contribution)?

Topic 7: Research residence or placement in industry abroad

- Which institute/company can serve as a host institution?
- What research should be done?
- How to establish a contact

Topic 8: Future career

- What comes after graduation?
- What kind of network do I need and how can I establish it?
- Are there any needs regarding the improvement of transferable skills?

Topic 9: Date for the next meeting

An approximate date (or even better: a fixed date) for the next thesis committee meeting should be agreed on with all thesis committee members.

The **minutes of the thesis committee meetings** must also contain the following information:

- Name of the doctoral researcher
- No. of the meeting (e.g. "3rd Thesis Committee Meeting")
- Date of the meeting
- Members of the thesis committee and those who were present in the meeting must be clearly distinguished
- Signatures of both, the doctoral researcher and the main supervisor