

Synopsis:

The Advisory Panel (AP) system is the central tool for structured, continuous supervision of doctoral studies. Each IMPRS-ESM PhD candidate is accompanied by an AP of three (optionally four) scientists. The IMPRS-ESM Executive Committee appoints, in consultation with the Principal Advisor, the AP for each PhD candidate. AP and PhD candidate meet twice a year to discuss the research progress, the remaining work, and the time frame. The AP will adjust plans where necessary. The Panel Chair reports to the Executive Committee.

Advisory Panel structure and function:

The ***Principal Advisor*** is appointed prior to the start of a PhD study. The Principal Advisor takes primary responsibility to the scientific supervision and quality control of the PhD candidate's research and academic training. The Advisor is an expert in the candidate's field of study. The Advisor is easily available for questions and to solve urgent problems.

The ***Co-Advisor*** is also an expert in the field, ideally possessing particular technical skills of importance for the PhD candidate's research. A Co-Advisor may be external with respect to the institution joined by the PhD candidate. For interdisciplinary studies, Principal Advisor and Co-Advisor should cover the two major fields, so that the PhD candidate has broadest access to technical help. To provide expertise and best guidance in a special research field, an additional scientist can be appointed as Co-Advisor to the AP.

The Principal Advisor and/or the Co-Advisor should be available to the PhD candidate on a day-to-day basis; the person 'most responsive' to the candidate's questions must be appointed at the very beginning of the study. One of the two advisors should be a more senior scientist.

The main function of the ***Panel Chair*** is that of peer supervision of direction and progress of the doctoral work. The Chair serves as a link to the IMPRS-ESM Executive Committee. The Panel Chair is neither directly involved in the doctoral study nor a member of the research group joined by the PhD candidate. Preferably, the Chair is an external expert or an expert in the broader field of the particular PhD study.

One of the three AP members should have the status to grant the PhD degree (*Promotionsrecht*) at the University of Hamburg. Any other university may be accepted by the IMPRS-ESM Executive Committee upon request supported by the AP.

The AP informs the Executive Committee in writing about changes in the arrangement.

Modus operandi:

The AP has to be identified within the first two months after the PhD candidate joined the IMPRS-ESM. The Executive Committee, in consultation with the Principal Advisor, appoints and invites the scientists to serve on the respective AP position.

PhD candidate and AP first meet shortly after formation of the AP (ideally also within the first two months). The PhD candidate is arranging a date with all Panel members as well as a meeting place. Regular AP meetings occur preferably every six months; at least one AP meeting each year is mandatory. PhD candidates follow the instructions given in *Appendix 1* and send prior to the meeting two documents (Progress Report; Panel Report Form) to the AP members. The Panel Chair fills in the Panel Report Form (*see Appendix 2*), which all participants confirm by their signatures.

To ensure that the PhD candidate is on the right track, the discussion during the AP meeting should focus on

- the ongoing research (quality and progress),
- further plans (remaining tasks, conferences to attend, publications),
- additional academic training, and
- the time schedule.

AP meetings are not the forum to discuss recent scientific problems in detail, since these are solved with the Principal and/or Co-Advisor. However, if a problem has a major impact on the progress and aim of a PhD study, the AP has to discuss and possibly help modify the research plan. If the discussion reveals topics that would improve the research quality but are not addressed by the study yet, the AP should suggest including them. The Chair directs the meeting and keeps the record. Such focusing will make AP meetings effective and constrain the duration to 30 – 60 minutes. However, possible problems concerning scientific practice should be addressed between Panel Chair and doctoral candidate solely and separately. In a separate meeting - preferably prior to a regular Advisory Panel meeting – Chair and PhD candidate may also address non-scientific aspects.

PhD candidates are expected to complete the PhD study within 3 years. Towards the end of the 3rd year, the PhD candidate can request an *academic extension*, should this be necessary. The request is directed in writing at the Executive Committee, states the reasons for the delay, and must be endorsed by the AP. This endorsement occurs by explicitly stating the request in the ‘summary’ section of the cumulative Panel Report Form. The Executive Committee grants or rejects the proposed continuation of the study within the IMPRS-ESM PhD program. This decision is independent of a possible extension of the financial support (*financial extension*). The latter issue is to be resolved by the PhD candidate and the Principal Advisor.

Appendix 1: Progress Report - Implementation details

Please prepare one document named ‘**Progress Report**’ comprising:

1. A concise (updated) **thesis synopsis** (about one page) that clearly states the new contribution of this PhD research to the field. What is the gap in the existing literature that will be filled? Which specific research questions will be addressed? The synopsis shows how the PhD candidate plans to translate the research questions into a thesis structure (main chapters). This synopsis should evolve as the doctoral study progresses.
2. A brief **status report** (~ 2 pages) showing what was done since the previous AP meeting. This report should include the 2-3 most important, new graphs showing the latest results. This report should also include the concrete plans until the next AP meeting.
3. An updated **time schedule**, which mirrors the thesis structure and fits the individual tasks into the time frame available for the dissertation project.

☛ *Note: the 1st AP meeting is a ‘stocktaking’ meeting in which the focus is primarily on the research questions, the knowledge gap(s) to be filled, and the strategy to be used to answer these questions.*

☛ *Note: the UHH faculties MIN and Economics have different requirements for a doctoral thesis, which are specified in the respective PhD regulations.*

☛ *The time schedule should cover the entire 3-years term. A graphical presentation of the time windows assigned to individual tasks is effective to evaluate the feasibility of a time plan.*

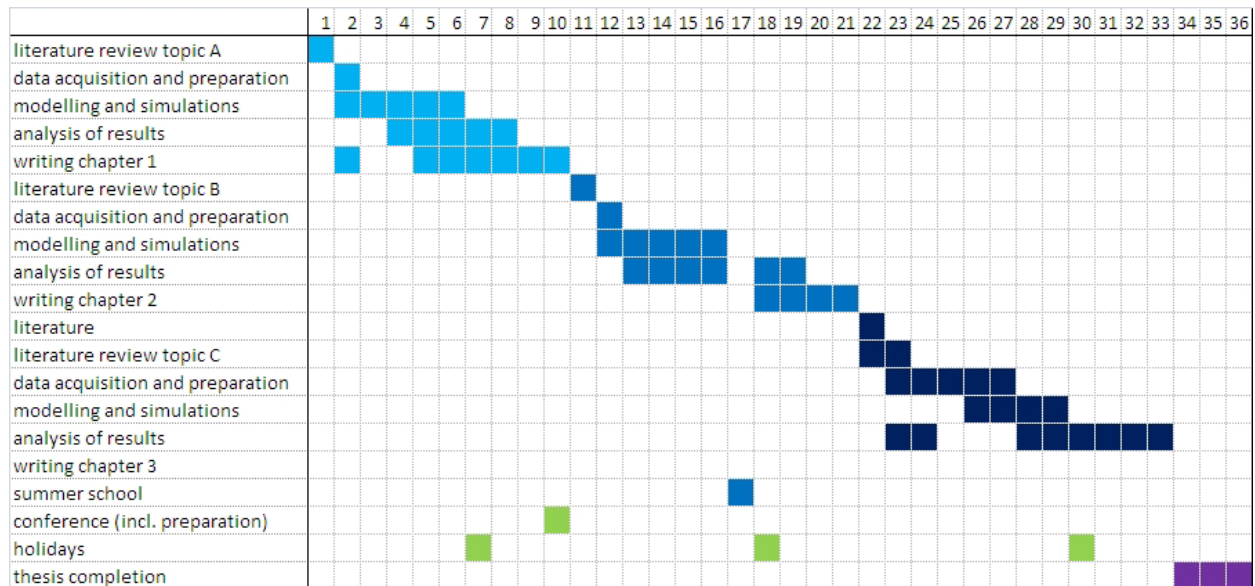


Table 1: Example for a possible time schedule

The IMPRS-ESM Advisory Panel System

Appendix 2: Panel Report Form

The (cumulative) **Panel Report Form** focuses on information that is requested by the Executive Committee to evaluate research quality and progress:

- current status (*administration, academic training, conferences, publications*)
- AP's assessment of status and progress of the doctoral research (*'state-of-the-art', problems, possibly required modification, time schedule, additional comments*)
- the assessment of the IMPRS-ESM doctoral program by the PhD candidate
- summary by the AP (*research quality, required actions, standing*)

When preparing for the AP meeting, the PhD candidate in cooperation with the IMPRS office updates the sections of the Panel Report Form detailing publications, participation in courses, summer schools, conferences, etc. The PhD candidate sends the updated Progress Report and Panel Report Form to the AP and IMPRS office some days before the AP meeting.

During the AP meeting, the Panel Chair fills in her or his brief notes, recording the discussion, summarizing the AP's conclusions and, if applicable, its request for actions. The participants decide on a date & time for the next AP meeting and confirm the minutes by signing the Panel Report Form at closure of the meeting.

The Panel Chair retains the editorial control over the Panel Report Form and hands it to the IMPRS-ESM office.

Proceeding after the AP meeting:

The IMPRS-ESM reviews the Progress Report and the Panel Report Form. As appropriate, IMPRS-ESM communicates the report to the Executive Committee for evaluation, and replies to the doctoral candidate and the AP concerning the status of the doctoral research. The IMPRS-ESM office archives the signed Panel Report Form.

☛ *Academic extension: Time period beyond 3 years that is needed for the preparation of the thesis including the disputation. Usually extensions are granted for up to 6-12 months; no financial support is implied.*

☛ *Financial extension: The PhD candidate and the Principal Advisor have to concern themselves about financial support beyond the regular 3 years granted for the doctoral study.*