

Mentor Criteria and Guidelines

Good supervision is central to the rapid progress of the doctorate and integration into the scientific community. Advice and support must not only be provided by the people who are responsible as doctoral supervisors. Good supervision also includes a network, which is offered e.g., within the framework of a graduate school, by experienced colleagues and by mentoring. Mentors are experienced GCB PhD supervisors from one of the faculties (Medicine, Science and Vetsuisse) jointly administering the GCB

The mentor is a member of one of the five GCB expert committees and represents the GCB in the PhD thesis committee of the student for whom he or she is a mentor. Each expert committee member should be prepared to serve as mentor for several PhD students.

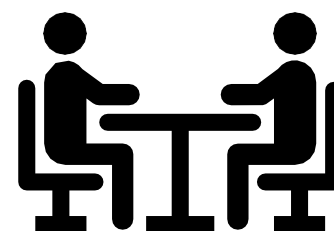
Qualifications: a mentor is a project leader, group leader (successful SNSF grant application or similar grant, SNSF professorship, endowed professor, or similar). Mentors commit to being a member of the PhD thesis team through to graduation, regardless of change in own circumstances, e.g., retirement, change in institution.

General duties and responsibilities of the mentor

- Interview meetings of the GCB expert committees are conducted three times a year to evaluate prospective PhD candidates. Mentors are expected to attend the interviews.
- A mentor is assigned to each PhD student after the interview.
- The mentor ensures that the GCB rules are observed. Thus, s/he must be acquainted with the most important rules of the GCB regulations, in particular the points which relate to course requirements (minimal ECTS) and examination regulations.
- The mentor does not require specific expertise in the research project but monitors the progress of the work in relation to the submitted research plan and intervenes if problems arise.
- The mentor is the primary contact for the PhD student and the supervisor if any conflicts arise between them.

Five main tasks are assigned to the mentor throughout a PhD project:

1. leads the mentor meeting
2. evaluates the annual progress reports
3. chairs the mid-term evaluation
4. chairs the thesis defense and writes the thesis protocol
5. mediates if required in case of conflict.



Mentor meeting:

- The purpose of the initial mentor meeting is to personally meet the student and his/her supervisor and to discuss the doctoral program (research topic, timeline, goals, key milestones, etc.), as well as agree on the mandatory curriculum (ECTS) planned for the student's first 12-18 months.
- At the mentor meeting, the **Doctoral Agreement** must be completed, dated, and signed.
- The doctoral agreement is expected in the GCB office within one to two months following the mentor assignment.

Progress reports:

- The mentor evaluates the annual progress reports both in terms of meeting the training requirements of the GCB (coursework and examinations, meetings with co-advisor, conferences) and the progress in the research project.
- The mentor intervenes on behalf of the GCB if issues or concerns arise or when asked to do so. Issues can range from supervisor and student working relationship issues to lack of research progress and more.
- Mentor's feedback to students is expected to be specific enough as to be informative and actionable.

Mid-Term evaluation:

- The mid-term evaluation is organized by the student to take place **between 18 and 24 months** after the GCB enrollment date (application date). Notably, the thesis defense may not be scheduled for the 12 months following the mid-term.
- The student prefills the known information on the mid-term evaluation form and forwards that form to the mentor.
- The mentor chairs the examination, records the salient points during the examination in the form, circulates the form for signature and submits the signed form to the GCB office.
- The ECTS are to be confirmed, as mandatory ECTS are expected to be completed prior to the mid-term evaluation.
- Feedback to the student is expected: project status, gaps needing to be addressed to ensure the successful completion of the PhD study, first author publication status, etc.
- During the discussion after the mid-term evaluation, potential external co-referee candidates should be presented by the supervisor to the student and mentor and discussed. A recommendation should be included on the mid-term evaluation in the appropriate section. The information should be complete as the GCB must enter that information into required fields in the doctoral database.

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