**BIGS Neuroscience Thesis Advisory Committee

(TAC) Meeting and subsequent Evaluation**

***Purpose of the TAC Meeting:*** To ensure the progress of the thesis project in a goal-oriented and timely manner, the student must present **an annual progress report** to the members of the **thesis advisory committee (TAC)**. At least **three** **TAC members** should attend the meeting, additional PIs are welcome. The TAC members provide **feedback** on the student’s presentation and the progress of the PhD project. In addition, they give recommendations for the student's future development. This feedback is recorded on the TAC meeting form.

Carrying out a yearly TAC Meeting **and** submitting this evaluation form is a **mandatory** part of the **BIGS Neuroscience curriculum. For students pursuing a PhD degree** at the Faculty of Medicine, this is also a **mandatory part of their qualification phase** (§4, Section 2.2. of the PhD degree regulations at the Faculty of Medicine).

***Instructions for Students:***  Please fill in **sections 1-3** of the TAC meeting form with the **help and advice of your thesis supervisor**. Send the completed form **3 days before your oral progress report** to all the members of your thesis committee. Bring a printed copy of the form to the TAC Meeting and if you have evaluation forms from previous TAC Meetings, also bring them to the meeting.

The grey text is just an example; please delete it and fill in the details about your own project.

Be prepared to explain your research project, your experiments to date, and your plans for the next 6 months in the TAC Meeting and the subsequent discussion.

**TAC Meeting agenda**

**Progress report & discussion:**

* Students deliver a ~30 minute **oral report** on the progress of the thesis project
* **Open discussion** with the thesis advisory committee and, if applicable, members of the audience

**Closed meeting of student & members of the TAC (plus additional PIs, if desired):**

* TAC members (& additional PIs) give **feedback on the oral presentation** and provide **suggestions for improvement** (should be documented by TAC members in **part II**)
* TAC members (& additional PIs) provide **project-related feedback and questions**: *This is the opportunity for the students to demonstrate their* ***knowledge and ownership of the thesis project****. The students should be allowed to present their thoughts without interruption by TAC members*
* If applicable, TAC members and PIs should discuss **research obstacles** with student and thesis supervisor and suggest alternative approaches

**Closed meeting of members of the TAC (plus additional PIs, if desired) without the student:**

* TAC members (& additional PIs) evaluate the oral presentation (see **part II** of the form)
* TAC members (& additional PIs) briefly discuss the student’s overall professional development (see **part III** of the form)
* All comments will be shared with the student by the thesis supervisor afterwards

**Closed meeting of student & members of the TAC (plus additional PIs, if desired) without the thesis supervisor:**

* Opportunity for the student to discuss **whichever difficulties** with TAC members

After reviewing the results of this report with the thesis supervisor, the **student will upload a signed copy** to the BIGS Neuroscience online system. The original form should be kept by the student and brought to subsequent TAC meetings.

# Graduate Student TAC Meeting

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TAC Meeting number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Start of thesis: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Meeting date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TAC members (and additional PIs) present at the meeting:

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## Part I: Written progress report and future plans (to be completed by the student)

1. **Summarise your research findings and the status of the research projects (since the last meeting).**

This can include aspects of your project that are not included in your presentation

Example:

Project A: electrophysiology

* Uncovered a positive, feed-forward loop driving activity of hilar interneurons
* Increased “n” to levels acceptable for publication
* Completed control experiments with pharmacology to ensure the effect is specific…
* Have begun preparing figures for manuscript

Project B: animal model development

* Tested specificity of virus-driven expression of GFP, both false-positive and false-negative expression will be checked with immunos: result is that the virus is only expressed in PV cells (<3% false-positive) but many PV cells do not express GFP (67% false negative)
* Breeding colonies have been established for generating the required numbers of animals for behavioural experiments.

Course work and Professional development

* Presented ephys findings at annual meeting
* Have completed the required 2nd year course work
* Have completed the required participation in seminar series
1. **Goals/tasks of the student, which should be completed before the next meeting: (The student lists all points here)**

Project A: electrophysiology

* Begin recordings from virus injected animals to identify the cells types of GFP+ cells. Goal: 10 cells from at least 3 animals with proper controls for ChR2 activation.
* Control experiments in wt animals showing the pharmacological block of DA input. Goal: 20 cells with 3 different drugs
* Train new graduate student on using my ephys set-up; this also means that my recording time will decrease as I will begin to share the set-up.

Project B: animal model development

* Complete the pilot testing of at least 20 wt animals in the water maze task.
* Once the training parameters are validated, then training of 5 virus injected animals per week will begin.
* Anticipate completion of the behavioural testing by our next meeting, with >10 animals in both control and treatment groups

**3. Lay out an anticipated timeline for the project. Are there decision points that will change the direction or content of the thesis project? (Mark the most important steps with an \* or in BOLD)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Timeline** | **Months (6 months)** |
| Project Steps | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun |
| Project A: Electrophysiology |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Recordings from virus injected animals
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Control pharmacology with 3 drugs
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Develop analysis method for field potentials
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Project B: Animal model development |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Train wt animals in water maze task
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Inject virus into test animals
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Train test animals in water maze
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Part II: Discussion with student (to be completed by TAC members)

**Comments on the presentation considering the following points:**

1. Slides (style, clarity, organization)
2. Content (clarity, relevance, data)
3. Speech (language, logic, style)
4. Discussion (knowledge, poise)

**Project related questions:**

**For students beyond their 3rd year: What are the student’s post-graduation career plans? If desired, the TAC can give advice or support:**

## Part III: Discussion without student (to be completed by TAC members)

Student’s status: PhD - 1st year [ ]  - 2nd year [ ]  - 3rd year [ ]  - > 4th year [ ]

**Evaluation of the student’s professional development considering the following points:**

1. Grasp of literature
2. Ability to interpret data
3. Ownership of project (proposals to overcome obstacles)
4. Productivity
5. Contribution to experimental design
6. Clarity of future goals for the project
7. Responsiveness to advice/criticism
8. Students overall rate of progress

**5. Approximately how long until the thesis will be completed?**

2+ years [ ]  1-2 years [ ]  < 1 year [ ]  -

**6. Other comments**

**Signature of Thesis Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature of second TAC member: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature of third TAC member: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signatures of additional TAC members or PIs, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Signature of PhD Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**