

## **Guidelines for PhD student for the preparation of their PAC Meetings**

The main aims of the PAC meetings are:

- Discussing about science and the conceptual framework that frame your research
- Learning to present a project in depth to researcher who are not familiar with it
- Update your PAC about your progress, the work you have done, the difficulties you encountered (earlier and currently) and the tasks you enjoyed
- Obtaining help from supervisors and advisors to discuss your methods and your results, identify opportunities, prioritize tasks, adapt the project if necessary.

The PAC meetings are made to help you, not to be a hassle. However, you need a minimal investment in preparation to this meeting to receive that help.

### **The content of the PAC meeting:**

If it is the first meeting, you should fill in the form “1<sup>st</sup> PAC – Project Plan” that is made to help you identify possible content of your meeting.

In general, during the meeting you should talk about (more or less in this order):

- ✓ Personal presentation, career objectives, personal challenges if relevant
- ✓ The wide problematic of your project (e.g. climate change, epidemiology, hunger in the world, absence of taxonomy) and the gap of knowledge you have identified
- ✓ The theoretical frame of your project, the answer that others have given to answer this problematic using different approaches, and the general question you are going to answer / the topic you are going to investigate
- ✓ Your specific objectives, chapters, work packages, collaborators
- ✓ Your hypotheses, predictions, assumptions, methods and observed results or expected results
- ✓ Your interpretations
- ✓ Your successes and your difficulties
- ✓ Your timeschedule of the whole project (Gantt chart?) and where are you at. How do you keep with objectives, milestones
- ✓ Past and future participation to courses, conferences, summer school
- ✓ Your progress on the thesis and on the doctoral program, your articles and drafts
- ✓ Your level of happiness and frustrations
- ✓ Acknowledgement



Once you have presented your specific questions, you should detail your project/progress for each one.

This list is non-exhaustive and non-mandatory, you may find other topics that you want to discuss. If you have some documents ready (e.g. annual report to FCT or other doctoral program, article draft or accepted, previous presentation), feel free to reuse them.

**In every meeting**, keep some time to remind your PAC the working title of your thesis, the big questions and the smaller questions. **Do not assume that anyone read anything to prepare the meeting** or that the advisers remember the last meeting. Even during the last meeting of your thesis, do not forget to present your past achievements.

In any case, the content must be adapted to the format you chose.

### **The format of the PAC meeting:**

The most common form of meeting is to prepare a series of slides to give a presentation (15-45 min) and then have a discussion with everyone. This can help to have visual support for the presentation and for the following discussion. However, the main danger is that the preparation focuses entirely on the visual slides and the following discussion is unstructured, the outcome may be difficult to clarify.

Others will prefer to prepare a series of topics to be addressed and the meeting is entirely oral. This is a format less adapted in videoconference.

An alternative format can be a long presentation with several chapters and a dedicated amount of time to discuss each chapter.

Plan a meeting between one and two hours, it is very difficult to be productive longer. Warn the PAC members ahead if you think the meeting will last longer than one hour.

In any case, the format you chose must be adapted to the content.

### **Organisation and logistics:**

To find a time adequate for a meeting, you can try to use a doodle ([www.doodle.com](http://www.doodle.com)). Generally, plan at least 2 weeks before.

If one of the PAC member will be present in visioconference, you can book a visioconference room in building 2 by contacting [helpmail@ualg.pt](mailto:helpmail@ualg.pt). The IT service of UAlg will prepare the room for you and set up a very simple system for everyone.

Finally, do not forget to remind the PAC members of the meeting about 5 to 2 days ahead.