

In case you are not familiar with the workings of the GSGS, here is an overview.



Graduate School
of Geosciences

Supervision agreement

Signing a supervision agreement with a doctoral candidate is an important first step in what we call "[structured guidance](#)", which should normally take place in the first 3 months of a candidate's project. It should be the start of an open dialogue between candidates and their doctoral committee, which is what the GSGS aims to promote.

Detailed research plan, meeting and feedback

The next step is handing in a detailed research plan (follow [this link](#) for guidelines) by the candidate (in the first 6 months), followed by a meeting with all doctoral committee (DC) members. First and foremost, in this meeting, the candidate receives feedback to his or her work from you. This should not only include their work's progress, but also other aspects of their development toward being an independent researcher, such as training courses or attending (inter)national conferences. What is discussed during the meeting is largely a matter between you and your candidate. We ask that minutes of the meeting are written by the candidate and are signed for by you during your next meeting; the minutes do not need to be submitted to the GSGS office. We leave up to you to make clear to the candidate which form these minutes should have. We just think that writing useful minutes is an important skill to have and experience teaches that having a meeting without any minutes can lead to confusion or disagreement later on. See the "[guidelines for doctoral committee meetings](#)" for further information; these include a check list with some suggestions of what you could talk about apart from any specialist topics.

We ask that you fill out a [DC feedback form in the meeting](#) when you meet to discuss the candidate's research plan. In case a meeting with all DC members at the same time is not possible or undesirable, separate meetings can be held, if necessary by video-link. We still ask that one DC feedback form be filled out for each meeting. This form allows the GSGS Office and Steering Committee to get an overview of candidates' progress and of any training/funding needs anticipated. Candidates submit this form together with their detailed research plan by email to the GSGS Office within two weeks after the meeting.

Progress reports and further meetings

Subsequently, candidates report to their DC regularly. The default reporting period is 9 months (+/- 2 months to allow for absence/ fieldwork etc.). Progress reports are typically up to 3000 words; please follow [this link](#) for further guidelines. The aim of progress reports is that candidates practice and learn writing down their science in a structured and concise way as early as possible. It is up to you to provide them feedback to these reports. The GSGS monitors the process.

If you think that your candidate is ready to hand in a draft version of an academic paper, you can suggest them to use it as a progress report. Obviously, for paper drafts there is no length limitation; we advise that the candidate include an extended discussion or outlook section. Some advisors allow their candidates to hold an extended presentation (30-45 minutes) instead of a progress report. In this case, all DC members should be present during the presentation (e.g. during an institute colloquium) and the slides are handed in as a progress report.

Each progress report (in whichever form) is followed by a DC meeting, where it is discussed, and the feedback form is filled out. Further procedures are as those following the research plan submission.

Further compulsory items are:

* the attendance of a full induction module (parts A/B/C; two days in total). This includes a half-day workshop on "Good Scientific Practice";

* at least one poster presentation at a GSGS Research Conference, organized by GSGS members for everyone in the Department and beyond.

GSGS points

GSGS Points can be collected for a [range of activities \(see the Catalogue of Activities\)](#). They have no value outside the GSGS and are solely used to monitor members' activities and for a transcript/supplement. Members need 5 GSGS points on average per semester to be eligible for a GSGS Travel Grant and 30 points in total to earn a supplement that lists all activities after they have defended their thesis. I give all candidates instructions on how to apply for GSGS points in the first induction meeting ([more..](#)). The principal supervisor (advisor) has to sign the appropriate form and might have to provide an explanation for certain activities. Candidates can partake in any GSGS activities without collecting GSGS points.

Your views and questions

Should you have any suggestions for improvement or any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Karin Boessenkool, the manager of the GSGS via gradschool-geosci@uni-koeln.de.