



Guidelines for PhD student for gathering the advisers for your PAC

The main objectives of the PAC process are:

- To discuss about science with several experts and develop critical thinking;
- Learning to take a wider perspective on your work, compared to your main field of research, the research backgrounds of the advisers, and the strategy of CCMAR;
- Identify and discuss successes, difficulties, solutions and rank priorities;
- Provide alternative critical views on the project and thus raising unexpected opportunities;
- Cement and strengthen relationships with external researchers (e.g. for widening experience or postdocs).

The steps to take:

- 1) You identify potential advisers (at least two).
- 2) You choose with your supervisors the advisers.
- 3) You invite the advisers
- 4) You schedule your first PAC meeting

1) Identify potential advisers:

To reach the objectives above, we recommend that your PAC include two to four advisers in addition to your supervisor(s). They may be researchers or business professionals, have different levels of seniority and come from different national or international institutions. Each adviser can provide different points of view, different options and opportunities. Thus, the diversity of background, seniority and expertise within a PAC is recommended. For example, your PAC can include i) a postdoc with whom you are working closely, ii) an external senior renown specialist of your field, and iii) a mid-career scientist, external to CCMAR, with a more distant expertise but more available and free than a more senior person. Researchers are usually happy to be part of these committees because it is a nice opportunity to chat about science. Ask scientists for the help of their brain, they will beg to help you! So feel legitimate to contact famous and busy scholars.

- a) Seek in your personal network who would you like to include (max 3). They can be postdocs in your lab, or senior scholar with whom you get along regardless of the expertise.

- b) In the literature, identify potentially interesting experts, perhaps those who wrote theories, opinion or reviews that are essential for your work (max 4). List for each one the email address, affiliations, and the papers that forged your opinion.
- c) Thinking about the technical difficulties of your research project, identify who are the expert in these technics (max 4). List for each one the email address, affiliations, and the papers that forged your opinion.

2) Choose with your supervisors

Bring your list of potential advisers to discuss with your supervisor(s) and make up together your ideal PAC); (s)he/they may know some of your suggestion and make different suggestions. If they know them personally, it may help but also may bias the committee. The PAC should include both genders, both nationals and internationals, different levels of seniority and scientific proximity. Its composition can slightly vary over the course of the PhD if one advisor becomes unavailable or you want to add someone.

3) Invite your advisers:

Once you have your list, contact them by email. Here you have an example of email to invite someone you do not know from Adam:

Dear Prof. XXX,
I am a PhD student at the Centre of Marine Sciences (CCMAR) in Faro, Portugal. My thematic of research is "Blablaba", under the supervision of Dr. XX and Dr. XY, based on the competitive FCT fellowship that I obtained. I am at the beginning of my project and of course some aspects may change. I am contacting you because, as part of the CCMAR Doctoral School, I would like to constitute a little committee of internal and international scientists/experts to help me progressing in my project (the dedicated name is PhD Advisory committee, PAC). The principle of the PAC is to meet approximately once a year (videoconference also possible) to discuss my science, my project, my results, my next studies, my next tasks, identify priorities and opportunities. Especially, the perspective of someone external like you is always extremely constructive in addition to the supervision of my main supervisors. Drs. WZ and ZZ have already agreed to be part of my PAT; with you and my supervisors, this will make a nice group for fascinating discussion and open new scientific views.
In terms of time commitment, the PAC meetings last about one to three hours annually, based on a presentation that I will prepare (and a short report that I send one week ahead of the meeting). Due to the distance, we will include you by videoconference, but I wish that at least one year we can invite you to Faro.
Please let me know if you would like to be part of my PAC and I will send you more "official" documents (one signature - one scan needed) to then schedule our first meeting.
All the best,

Then you will send the form "PAC Agreement" to all PAC members and send everything to the Doctoral School Officer.



4) Scheduling the first PAC meeting

First, agreed on time slots with a couple local PAC members such as your supervisors, at least two weeks ahead (at least 5 time slots over 2 weeks). Then contact all PAC members with a doodle to identify a time slot that is convenient for everyone, giving 3 days max to fill in the [doodle](#). Then confirm to everyone the date of the meeting with the agenda or program of the meeting. If someone is in a different time zone, do not forget to mention it.

To prepare the meeting itself, you can use the guidelines to prepare “guidelines PAC meeting.pdf” and “1st PAC – Project plan”.