



PhD Track Support Instructions

This document contains instructions on the PhD Track Support for the:

- PhD Track Advisor
- PhD candidate
- Supervisor(s)



Instruction for PhD Track Advisor:

In this document we explain the role of the *PhD Track Advisor* in the *PhD Track Support* of the Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School.

What is PhD Track Support

To improve the quality of the research and the supervision of our PhD candidates, PhD Track Support provides external input. The aim of this support is to avoid, minimize and recognize potential threats to the progress and quality of PhD projects at an early stage. In the PhD Track Support the supervisor invites a PhD Track Advisor halfway the PhD project. This PhD Track Advisor is a PI or senior researcher, preferably from another department or research group (or from another research institute or university) and is not directly involved in the PhD project. The interaction between PhD candidates and their supervisors is hierarchical and vulnerable, therefore transparent and independent feedback by the PhD Track Advisor is highly valued. Good mentorship, integrity, and independence in science need to be emphasized and enhanced by the monitoring procedure.

How to perform PhD Track Support

- Read the Progress Report that the PhD candidate has discussed with the supervisor. If the Progress Report does not give enough information, ask the PhD candidate to provide additional information.
- The PhD Track Advisor invites the PhD candidate to prepare a short presentation that gives an overview of the progress of the PhD project.
- Invite the PhD candidate and supervisor(s) for a meeting in which the PhD candidate gives a short presentation and in which you discuss the progress report together. Ask explicitly for feedback from the supervisor.
- Then, talk with the PhD candidate separately to address personal issues. Ask for quality of supervision and general well-being of the candidate. This conversation is confidential and does not need to be discussed with the supervisor(s); only if the PhD candidate indicates that this may be helpful.
- The conversation will be held in person. You may ask for additional information.

How to finalize PhD Track Support

- After the meeting you provide your advice on the PhD Track Support form and sign it.
- The signed PhD Track Support form should then be sent to the PhD candidate (so not to the supervisors). The PhD candidate also signs the form.
- It is up to you to decide whether this is a one-time meeting or follow-up meetings may be planned for further support/advice/mentoring.
- In case you wish advice concerning a confidential issue that was raised during the PhD Track Support meeting you may contact Janine Stolwijk, the director of the Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School (janine.stolwijk@amsterdamumc.nl).

More information and examples of PhD Track Support can be found on our website:

[PhD Track Support \(AMC/UvA\) \(amsterdamumc.org\)](https://www.amsterdamumc.org).



Instruction for the PhD candidate:

Together with the supervisor(s) you choose a PhD Track Advisor. You fill in the Progress Report as provided by the Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School and discuss this with your supervisor(s). You and your supervisor(s) sign the Progress Report. Then you send the Progress Report to the PhD Track Advisor. Plan a meeting with the supervisors and your PhD Track Advisor together. Prepare a short presentation that gives an overview of the project and the progress that has been made.

At the meeting you actively participate in the discussion with the PhD Track Advisor and the supervisor(s). In the private, confidential conversation that follows with the PhD Track Advisor, you may address personal issues. Note: the first part of the meeting is with the supervisor(s) and PhD Track Advisor together, while the second part is with the PhD Track Advisor only.

After the meeting the PhD Track Advisor will complete the PhD Track Support form, sign it and send it to you (not to your supervisors). You endorse the feedback in the form by signing it. Scan the signed PhD Track Support form and signed Progress Report as one document. Send this document to the Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School and save a copy for your personal file. Make sure your supervisors get a copy of the Progress Report. If beneficial, you can also send your supervisors a copy of the PhD Track Support form. However, you are not obliged to do that.

Sometimes your PhD trajectory is not going as planned. It might be hard to oversee how to tackle it. The Action Plan document, which can be downloaded from our website, is an optional tool meant to help you to develop an alternative strategy.

Suggestions:

- Try to find a PhD Track Advisor who can give you independent advice.
- Be honest in your Progress Report; e.g. if you think you cannot finish the project in time it is good to mention this in the Progress Report such that it can be openly discussed.
- Stay open for feedback to improve your project.
- Ask for a confidential conversation with the PhD Track Advisor.
- If needed, use the advice given in the PhD Track Support form to discuss issues with your supervisors.
- Use the Action Plan document if you need to develop an alternative strategy if your project is not going as planned. This is optional.



Instruction for the supervisor(s):

Together with the PhD candidate a PhD Track Advisor is chosen and invited by the supervisor(s). The supervisor(s) read the Progress Report and discuss it with the PhD candidate. Once all agree the PhD candidate sends the signed Progress Report to the PhD Track Advisor.

The PhD candidate prepares a short presentation that gives an overview of the project and the progress that is made. Following the presentation the supervisor(s) discuss the Progress Report with the PhD candidate and the PhD Track Advisor together. Then the supervisors leave the room to let the PhD Track Advisor talk with the PhD candidate in private on issues such as supervision, candidate well-being, etc.

After the meeting the PhD Track Advisor will provide feedback in the PhD Track Support form and send it to the PhD candidate. This form is also signed for endorsement by the PhD candidate who will send it to the Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School. You will receive a copy of the Progress Report, but not of the PhD Track Support form.

Suggestions:

- Try to find a PhD Track Advisor who can give independent advice to you and your PhD candidate about the PhD track.
- Ask the PhD candidate for feedback to improve your own supervision.
- Be realistic about the progress of the project.
- Give the PhD candidate feedback.
- Try to focus on the outline of this PhD project and not the details or on the broader issue.
- Use the advice given by the PhD Track Advisor during the meeting.