

# Guidelines for the PhD program Systemic Neurosciences

Welcome at the Graduate School of Systemic Neurosciences of the LMU (GSN or GSN-LMU).

The GSN is an interdisciplinary degree awarding institution, which functions on behalf of its participating faculties and institutions and has its own applicable study and examination regulations. The GSN awards the academic degree “Doctor of Philosophy” (“Ph.D.”).

As a GSN PhD student, you cannot register your thesis at another faculty! After graduation, you are permitted to call yourself “Dr. FirstName Surname” according to the German system (but not, e.g., “Dr. rer. nat.” or “Dr. phil.”).

To achieve a PhD degree, must be enrolled at the LMU (GSN) and fulfill all ECTS requirements according to our study regulations, which can be found online:

[www.gsn.uni-muenchen.de/download/study\\_regs/index.html](http://www.gsn.uni-muenchen.de/download/study_regs/index.html)

The academic year is divided into two semesters.

Winter semester: October 1 – March 31

Summer semester: April 1 – September 30

Please read the guidelines carefully. They should answer most of the questions you might have. In case you need help or additional information, feel free to contact the GSN office at the Biocenter of the LMU, Room B00.053 ([gsn@lmu.de](mailto:gsn@lmu.de)).

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## GSN forms and guidelines

All GSN forms and guidelines/study regulations can be found on our website:

[www.gsn.lmu.de/download/st\\_forms\\_checklists/index.html](http://www.gsn.lmu.de/download/st_forms_checklists/index.html)

[www.gsn.uni-muenchen.de/download/study\\_regs/index.html](http://www.gsn.uni-muenchen.de/download/study_regs/index.html)

Please **make sure to always use the most current form and guideline from the website**.

Most forms can be filled in on the computer, and some forms contain drop down lists. Please note that it is often not possible to use that function when opening the form in the browser, thus, better download it.

## GSN Affiliation

Please be sure to include your GSN affiliation on all publications/manuscripts which are related to your time within the GSN.

## Explanation of terms

**Doctoral Commission ('Promotionskommission'), and  
Joint Commission ('Gemeinsame Kommission') or  
Scientific Board:**

The members of the Joint and Doctoral Commission are the same. Legally, there is a difference, but that's not so important for you. The important thing to know: it is the **decision-making body of the GSN**. The chairman is Prof. Dr. Benedikt Grothe. Very often, you will hear talking about the 'Scientific Board', which is just another term for Joint or Doctoral Commission.

**Examination Committee = Examination Board ('Prüfungsgremium'):**

The members of the Examination Board (synonym: Examination Committee), normally four, are the defense examiners. For further information see chapter 'Handing in your thesis', page 13.

**Disputation:**

Is the defense of the doctor's thesis.

**Dissertation:**

Is the doctoral thesis.

**TAC (Thesis Advisory Committee; 'Betreuungskommission'):**

Please see chapter '[Form a Thesis Advisory Committee \(TAC\)](#)', page 4.

**TO form (Training objectives):**

Form to be filled in electronically at each TAC meeting. The form has to be submitted to the GSN office within a few days after the TAC meeting and uploaded online. See chapter '[Regular TAC meetings...](#)', page 5.

## Enrollment and maximum study period

**Enrollment at the LMU (GSN) is mandatory until the end of your studies.** The studies normally end with the thesis defense (disputation). If the dissertation is accepted with change requirements, changes have to be made after the disputation, before submitting the final version of the thesis to the university library. In this case, the studies end with the confirmation of made changes by your supervisor. The degree certificate will bear the date of the disputation, or of the above-mentioned confirmation, respectively.

**The maximum study period is 10 semesters.** This means that the thesis defense has to take place before the end of the 10th semester. If the thesis defense will not take place before that deadline, it is considered taken and failed; the thesis defense can be repeated only once within 1 year after the result as 'failed'.

Please note that it will take 3-6 month after handing in your thesis until the defense can take place. **The extension beyond the 8<sup>th</sup> Semester does not happen automatically, it will need to be requested via MyGSN. The examination committee will consider the request for approval/rejection and the GSN office will notify you and the LMU Registrar's Office accordingly.**

For Fast-track students: your maximum study duration is 12 semesters, since your PhD phase starts in the 3rd semester (after the preparatory year), and thus, you automatically get a prolongation. **The extension beyond the 10<sup>th</sup> Semester does not happen automatically, it will need to be requested and then the examination committee will consider the request for approval/rejection.**

After the 6th semester you will need a special confirmation from the GSN office to be able to get enrolled until the 10th (or 12th semester, respectively) semester. This confirmation will be sent to you by the GSN office. Should you not receive it on time, please contact the GSN office.

For reasons not to be justified by the PhD candidate, the maximum study duration of 10 semesters can be prolonged.

For most of the reasons (e.g., illness, maternity leave,...) a **holiday semester** has to be **officially requested at the LMU 'Studentenkanzlei'**. The GSN office has to be informed about any holiday semester by submission of respective documents. Below you can find the link to the webpage of the 'Studentenkanzlei' with further information:

<https://www.lmu.de/en/workspace-for-students/abc-study-guide/leave-of-absence-semester/>

If there were problems with the PhD project, the GSN Doctoral Commission can decide about a prolongation. An official request for prolongation has to be submitted via MyGSN at least one semester before the maximum study period ends.

## Form a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC)

The first thing which should be settled is the formation of a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC). Every PhD student will be guided through their work by a TAC consisting of three people, **at least two of which must be GSN faculty members**. One member must be from a field of research more peripheral to the respective PhD research. It is possible to add a fourth TAC member who has an advisory function only.

It is important that there be no conflict of interest among TAC members, that there is no dependency (financial or other) between TAC members and that the TAC members do not all work in the same institute/department.

- *1<sup>st</sup> TAC member = 1<sup>st</sup> supervisor:* They will be your official supervisor, will evaluate the dissertation as first reviewer, and will be member of the Examination Board. They can be a GSN faculty member or a member of any other university or institution, and has to be an authorized examiner according to BayHSchG Art 62 Abs 1 Satz 2 and HSchPrüferV (in short: subject to the agreement of the GSN Doctoral Commission a “Habilitation” is not required, but teaching experience at university for at least one year, and assigned duties in teaching and research).
- *2<sup>nd</sup> TAC member = 2<sup>nd</sup> supervisor:* They will evaluate the dissertation as second reviewer and will be member of the Examination Board. They can be a GSN faculty member or a member of any other university or institution, and has to be an authorized examiner according to BayHSchG Art 62 Abs 1 Satz 2 and HSchPrüferV (in short: subject to the agreement of the GSN Doctoral Commission a “Habilitation” is not required, but teaching experience at university for at least one year, and assigned duties in teaching and research). They have to be member of the GSN faculty if the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> TAC member is not.
- *3<sup>rd</sup> TAC member:* They have to be member of the GSN faculty if the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> TAC member is not; or else they can be member of any other university or institution. They will not evaluate the thesis and cannot be member of the Examination Board.

There should be consent between PhD student and supervisor, as to who shall be part of the TAC, and proposed persons should agree to become TAC member. Before the first semester starts (normally October 1<sup>st</sup>) you should submit your TAC Initial Request via MyGSN (after login, click on My PhD) and follow the email instructions. Deadline: September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Please note: if your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> TAC Members have published together (or are currently publishing together), this does not disqualify them from serving on the TAC. However, for reasons of [good scientific practice](#), your 2<sup>nd</sup> TAC Member may not serve as the second reviewer of your thesis. Please discuss this with your supervisor / TAC and submit a TAC amendment accordingly in the middle/at the end of your PhD, the latest, with regard to the [DFG guidelines for good scientific practice](#).

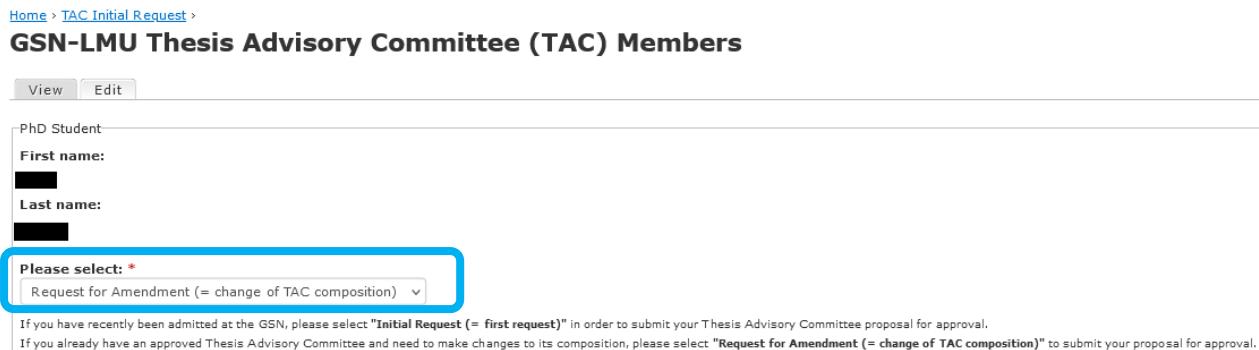
## Changes to your Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC)

Should a change of your TAC composition be needed at any point during your studies, please submit a TAC Amendment Request from MyGSN (after login, click on My PhD and generate the new form with help of the icon on the right) and follow the email instructions.



The screenshot shows the 'TAC Members' section of the MyGSN interface. At the top, there are three buttons: 'Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) Members' (with a green checkmark icon), 'Initial Request (= first request)' (with a red document icon), and 'TAC Amendment Request' (with a blue document icon). To the right, the text 'Deadline: September 30th' is displayed. A blue circle highlights the 'TAC Request' button.

Note: Students that joined the GSN before 2019 need to click on "Initial Request" and select "Request for Amendment" at the top of the form to make a change in their TAC composition:



The screenshot shows the 'GSN-LMU Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) Members' form. At the top, there are 'View' and 'Edit' buttons. Below that, there are fields for 'First name' and 'Last name', both of which are redacted with black bars. A dropdown menu labeled 'Please select: \*' is open, showing 'Request for Amendment (= change of TAC composition)' as the selected option. A blue box highlights this dropdown. Below the dropdown, there are two small text boxes with instructions: 'If you have recently been admitted at the GSN, please select "Initial Request (= first request)" in order to submit your Thesis Advisory Committee proposal for approval.' and 'If you already have an approved Thesis Advisory Committee and need to make changes to its composition, please select "Request for Amendment (= change of TAC composition)" to submit your proposal for approval.'

Subsequent TAC Amendments can be submitted by generating a new form with help of the icon on the right, as described above.

## Arrange your first TAC meeting

Regular meetings of the PhD student and the TAC are mandatory. During the initial meeting the PhD project should be outlined and, based upon that, a plan on how to achieve required credits should be documented in the **Training Objectives (= TAC report or TO form)**. The TO form can be downloaded from the GSN website and should be filled out electronically, in order to be uploaded to the designated folder on the LMU Bio cloud. **The first Training Objectives must be handed in by the end of the first semester (March 30<sup>th</sup>)!**

## Regular TAC meetings and updates of the Training Objectives (TOs)

Meetings between the student and the TAC must take place on a regular basis. The frequency is dependent on the project itself and on the completion stage of the individual project, however, one meeting per semester is recommended, and **yearly meetings are mandatory**.

In subsequent meetings the achievements of the current TOs are assessed. Fulfillment of TOs is a requirement in the study regulations towards completion of your degree! The student has to give a presentation about the status of his PhD project and show the last grade report received from the GSN office.

If any goals were not accomplished, the report must clarify and address adequate measures to change goals. If for any reason failure to meet goals lies not in the responsibility of the PhD student (e.g. technical problems, goals turn out to be too ambitious, time frame underestimated), this is clarified in the TO form with a new date of achievement and will therefore be of no disadvantage to the student.

A portion of the TAC meeting should be reserved for discussion between the PhD student and the TAC members without the 1st supervisor present.

The TO form must be filled out electronically, printed, and signed on the first page by all TAC members and the student, and on each additional page by the 1<sup>st</sup> supervisor only. Attachments like, e.g., the grade report shown in the meeting or additional pages if space on the form was not sufficient, must be signed by the 1<sup>st</sup> supervisor.

The completed form has to be submitted to the GSN office within a few days after the meeting. A copy of the presentation held in the TAC meeting must be handed in as well (4-6 ppt-slides per DinA4 page). Please keep a copy of all documents for your own records.

*To ensure fast processing of your TO Form, please upload the electronic version of the filled out document, including attachments, certificates and presentation, in one PDF to the designated folder on the LMU Bio cloud. Please name your PDF document "lastname\_TO\_date.pdf" (eg. Mustermann\_TO\_03.12.2019.pdf) and make sure it doesn't exceed 5MB. This will drastically reduce processing times of the form. In the near future we aim at completely transitioning this process to the MyGSN portal, with electronic submission and approval.*

## Training Events/Coursework

Training events/Coursework should be planned together with the TAC. They can only be credited with the **approval of the TAC** (given via the TO form) and a **proof of participation**. The amount of ECTS points is based on the hours of workload (**1 ECTS = 30 hours of effort**).

In principal, all courses from the associated master programs in Neurosciences and in Neurocognitive Psychology are open to GSN PhD students. They offer a variety of courses in basic theoretical background, and also basic methods courses, especially suitable for students from adjacent fields. The course catalogue is available online; just follow the quick link 'LSF-LMU Course Listing' on the GSN webpage.

**ECTS are only awarded if all requirements were fulfilled (e.g. exam passed, protocol handed in, etc.) and the event was attended on a regular basis (80%).** Please ask the course leader if they will submit the participation list to the GSN office as proof of participation. If they won't, please use the confirmation form available on the GSN website (important: the course leader has to indicate the ECTS and sign the form).

On a regular basis, diverse transferrable skill (=soft skill) courses are offered by the GSN and are announced via email.

Courses/Training events offered by other institutions (MPI, HelmholtzZentrum, TUM, Stanford online courses, etc.) could also be acknowledged. If you do not get an official confirmation, please use our confirmation form (to be signed by the course leader), available on the GSN webpage.

Please remember to hand in original documentation for all approved coursework to the GSN office and **always keep copies for your own records**.

## How to fulfill ECTS requirements

In total, each student has to earn **180 ECTS points** within 3 to 5 years. The **maximum study period is 10 semesters**, including the defense. Please note that it can take up to 6 month after handing in your thesis until the defense can take place. Please see chapter 'Enrollment and maximum study period' (page 3) for details.

The total of 180 ECTS points has to be earned within the given modules (see table below). Simply said, ECTS have to be earned within the following fields:

*Hard Skills → 17 ECTS (Modules P1.1, P2.1, P3.1, P4.1)*

*Conferences/Retreats → 8 ECTS (Modules P1.2, P2.2, P3.2)*

*Soft Skills → 5 ECTS (Modules P1.3, P3.3, P4.2)*

*PhD Project, thesis and defense → 150 ECTS (Modules P5 – P7)*

If the PhD project was started before admission to the GSN, credits for participation in training events/conferences/etc., or for the PhD Project itself, might be awarded upon request. The acknowledgment of ECTS credits must be requested in your first TAC Meeting by the end of the first semester (usually March 31) as part of the TO form (page 4, please list all courses/classes/events you took before entering the GSN and enter YES for all courses you are requesting an acknowledgment for).

PhD students, along with the members of the Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC), are responsible for forming the curriculum of their degree program. Below are some guidelines for structuring the program, but actual coursework will vary dependent upon previous coursework and experience.

Module	Expected Semester	ECTS
<b>P1 Introduction to Selected Areas of System Oriented Neuroscience</b>		
P1.1 Orientation Courses (≈ Hard Skills, Lab meeting)	WS/SS (1.)	8
The orientation courses convey basic theoretical principles and practical skills in systemic neurosciences.		
P1.2 Retreat I (≈ Conferences)	WS/SS (1.)	3
Cross-links to related fields and disciplines discussed systematically. After participating in training events, students should be able to critically discuss the specific topics with reference (or in the context) to the broader area of study.		

P1.3 Key Qualifications I (≈ Soft Skill)	WS/SS (1.)	1
This module aims specifically towards improving soft skills, especially pertaining to presentation skills. Students shall be able to securely present scientific contents with an adequate use of different media.		
<b>P2 Advanced Studies of Systemic Neurosciences</b>		
P2.1 Advanced Methods of Systemic Neurosciences (≈ Hard Skill)	WS/SS (2.)	3
Contents of this module are advanced practical and theoretical methods courses needed for the PhD project. Student should be prepared to independently conduct demanding scientific studies in the context of their research projects.		
P2.2 Retreat II (≈ Conferences)	WS/SS (2.)	3
Retreats should cover topics relevant for research conducted within the GSN-LMU. The student shall acquire advanced knowledge in the respective topic to enable them to critically discuss current experiments and approaches in systemic neurosciences.		
<b>P3 Individual Training for Advanced Students</b>		
P3.1 Methods for Advanced Students (≈ Hard Skills)	WS/SS (3.)	3
Special advanced methods courses which complement the individual research project of the student. The student should be able to directly integrate these acquired supplementary methods into their ongoing project.		
P3.2 Retreat III (≈ Conferences)	WS/SS (3.)	2

<p>Events should pertain to topics directly related to the PhD project. Participants shall acquire theoretical and experimental knowledge especially useful for their individual research projects, and thus be able to carry out differentiated discussions on their scientific work.</p>		
P3.3 Key Qualifications II (≈ Soft Skills)	WS/SS (3.)	1
<p>This module aims specifically towards improving soft skills, especially aiming towards improving scientific writing skills. After successful participation, students shall be able to write a scientific manuscript independently.</p>		
<p><b>P4 Special Competencies for Advanced Students</b></p>		
P4.1 Special Methods Course (≈ Hard Skills)	WS/SS (4.)	3
<p>This module is geared towards additional proficiencies which are specifically fitted to individual research projects prior to completion.</p>		
P4.2 Key Qualifications III (≈ Soft Skills)	WS/SS (4.)	3
<p>This module aims specifically towards improving soft skills, especially mediating qualifications for grant writing, leadership and project management. ECTS points for teaching can be earned for this submodule.</p>		
<p><b>P5 Graduate Training and Research I</b></p>		
P5.1 PhD-Project 1	WS/SS (1.)	18
P5.2 PhD-Project 2	WS/SS (2.)	24
<p><b>P6 Graduate Training and Research II</b></p>		
P6.1 PhD-Project 3	WS/SS (3.)	24
P6.2 PhD-Project 4	WS/SS (4.)	24
<p><b>P7 Graduate Training and Research III</b></p>		
P7.1 PhD-Project 5	WS/SS (5.)	30
P7.2 PhD-Project 6 - Dissertation	WS/SS (6.)	10
P7.3 Disputation	WS/SS (6.)	20
<p>Please indicate the semesters passed as shown exemplarily below (WS=winter semester, SS=summer semester) After acceptance of your thesis (dissertation) by the GSN Scientific Board and successful defense, you will be awarded the respective ECTS directly without further confirmation.</p>		

## How ECTS credits are awarded

The amount of ECTS earned by a PhD student depends on the hours of effort.

Generally: **1 ECTS = 30h of effort** (incl. attendance, preparation, study times, etc.)

For courses offered or organized by the GSN, the course instructors should determine the ECTS. All coursework must be documented in the form of a confirmation indicating attendance dates, effort, and/or ECTS.

At each TAC meeting, remember to list on the TO form all training events which were performed since the previous meeting along with the hours of effort or the ECTS to be earned for the respective event. The GSN examination office will enter the credits in your grade report after verification and correction if needed. **Credits can only be awarded if all required documents are handed in** (for all activities including lab meetings etc.: **TO form and confirmation of participation**; for conferences: TO form, confirmation of participation **and a copy of your poster/talk**).

**Grade reports will be sent to you on a regular basis (approximately at the beginning of each semester).** If you have questions concerning your credits, please contact the GSN office.

Event	Requirements	ECTS (Modules)
Journal club	Regular (weekly) meetings, where current publications within a specific field of research are discussed. Approximately 1 hour a week. Candidate has to prepare the presentation of a paper once a year. To be certified by supervisor (via GSN form).	max. 0.5/semester or fractioned accordingly (P1.1)
Lab meeting/ Progress report	Regular meetings of a working group to discuss the developments and problems of the individual projects within the group. Candidate has to prepare a presentation on his/her own work at least once a year. To be certified by supervisor (via GSN form).	max. 0.5/semester or fractioned accordingly (P1.1)
Institute Seminar/ Research Colloquium	Regular meetings of members of different groups within a cluster/institute to discuss the developments and problems of the individual projects. Candidate has to prepare a presentation on his/her own work at least once a year. To be certified by supervisor (via GSN form).	max. 0.5/semester or fractioned accordingly (P1.1)
Scientific talks given by invited speakers	PhD students who visit scientific talks on a regular basis may be awarded ECTS. Talks can be offered by GSN or any of our collaboration partners (e.g. MCN, BCCN, GRK, IMPRS, Helmholtz, TUM). To be certified by host, NOT by invited speaker (use GSN form from our webpage).	max. 0.5/semester or fractioned accordingly (P1.1, P1.2, P2.2, P3.2)
Practical courses, lectures, seminars, etc. offered by the GSN	Courses offered by the GSN will account with the amount of ECTS as indicated in the LMU course catalogue (LSF). Participation list will be handed in by course leaders directly.	See LSF-LMU (P1.1, P2.1, P3.1, P4.1; Soft Skill: P1.3, P3.3, P4.2)
Courses, Lectures, etc. offered by the Graduate Center LMU or any other institution	The GSN examination office awards the ECTS according to the certificate (30h workload = 1 ECTS), if necessary after consulting the organizer.	According to certificate (P1.1, P2.1, P3.1, P4.1; Soft Skill: P1.3, P3.3, P4.2)
Teaching <b>PhD students should earn 1-2 ECTS for teaching activities!</b>	Maximally worth the same ECTS as it is for course participants, depending on proportion covered by PhD student. To be certified by main organizer or supervisor (via GSN form).	Depending on effort (P4.2)

Event	Requirements	ECTS (Modules)
Retreats, professional international conferences (e.g. SfN, Göttingen, FENS), etc	Talk preparation (app. 2 days)	0.5 (P1.2, P2.2, P3.2)
	Poster preparation (app. 1 day)	0.25 (see above)
	Event	0.25/day (see above)
To acknowledge ECTS, a copy of poster or oral presentation (if available) must be submitted to the GSN office in addition to the confirmation of participation. If no official certificate of participation is available, it is to be certified by the supervisor (via GSN form) in combination with your personal conference registration confirmation.		
ECTS might be increased if higher workload is certified.		

## Good Scientific Practice

All GSN members are expected to adhere to the DFG guidelines for safeguarding good scientific practice: <https://wissenschaftliche-integritat.de/en/>

The GSN regularly offers courses and workshops on Good Scientific Practice. Other resources include the following:

LMU Open Science Center: <https://www.osc.uni-muenchen.de/toolbox/index.html>

LMU Code of Conduct for Self-Regulation in Science: <https://cms-cdn.lmu.de/media/lmu/downloads/die-lmu/beauftragte/code-of-conduct-of-lmu-munich-for-self-regulation-in-science.pdf>

## Financial support

### Support for PhD projects

Generally, PhD positions are financed by the supervising labs. Only in very exceptional circumstances can the GSN, occasionally, provide funding for a limited time upon request.

The request should be written by the supervisor together with the PhD student, be addressed to the GSN Scientific Board and be submitted to the GSN office. It should shortly describe the project, outline detailed reasons why no other funding is available, and indicate the timeline for the project and for the requested funding period.

### Support for lab visits, summer schools, conferences, and others

The GSN can only provide support for students attending conferences, summer schools, for visiting collaborating laboratories, methods workshops, etc. in hardship\* cases and after a close evaluation of the request. In order to apply for travel funding, you and your primary supervisor must submit an application via email to the GSN Program Coordinator. See contact information here: <https://www.gsn.uni-muenchen.de/contact/index.html>

Financial support can only be requested **via email with the 1st supervisor in CC before** the event takes place, including the following information (please make your request at least 4 weeks in advance, for administrative reasons):

- Statement, that you request funding for ... (e.g. congress, summer school,...), including date and place of the event
- Reasons for hardship\*
- Detailed list of all expected costs
- Part of costs for which you request reimbursement by the GSN
- Matching funds (part of the costs that will be covered by your lab or other sources)
- Statement that your supervisor agrees on your participation and, respectively, on taking over part of the costs with your supervisor on cc.
- Short statement as to the relevance of the event for your PhD research

\*hardship cases are considered when labs have little or no funds available.

An official confirmation will be sent to you within 1-2 weeks, stating whether and to what amount the request will be granted. Money will not be reimbursed without that confirmation. Please note that **we cannot guarantee reimbursement if you book before receiving the confirmation and further information** about the reimbursement procedure. Thus, please send the request for support on time.

Please keep all original tickets/invoice/boarding pass to hand in to the GSN office for reimbursement. Costs for travel can only be reimbursed for 2<sup>nd</sup> (bus/train) or economy (flight) class tickets. Students are expected to search for the cheapest prices. You will find further information about the reimbursement procedure in the confirmation email.

**Please be sure to list the GSN as an affiliation on posters and presentations!**

## Towards the end of your PhD

Check the GSN homepage for the date of the next info session “Finishing your PhD” and attend. [http://www.gsn.uni-muenchen.de/seminars\\_events/info-sessions/index.html](http://www.gsn.uni-muenchen.de/seminars_events/info-sessions/index.html)

In the last TAC meeting, a plan is made on how to acquire any missing credits, and on when to submit the doctoral thesis. The supervisor and TAC should determine if your work is sufficient for a doctoral thesis and in which form (see below) the dissertation should be written and submitted. The final decision if a thesis is accepted as cumulative will be made by GSN Doctoral Commission.

- **Cumulative (no external review necessary):** At least (I) two (accepted) publications as first author required, or (II) one publication as first author and one significant publication as co-author. The individual publications/manuscripts must be framed by a general introduction and discussion (generally at least 10 pages) written in a comprehensive manner.
- **Cumulative-style (with external review):** At least two manuscripts. The individual publications/manuscripts must be framed by a general introduction and discussion (generally at least 10 pages) written in a comprehensive manner. An external reviewer (as defined by DFG guidelines) is required to evaluate the thesis.
- **Monograph (with external review):** The thesis should be structured in Abstract, Introduction, Material and Methods, Results, Discussion (generally at least 10 pages according to the standards of the corresponding discipline. An external reviewer (as defined by DFG guidelines) is required to evaluate the thesis.

### Further formal requirements for the thesis:

- Written in English
- Pagination
- Index
- Adhesive/Perfect binding (not spiral binding!)
- DinA4 format recommended
- Short CV (last pages)
- List of all your publications (last pages)
- Affidavit (page before last) - please download the wording from the GSN webpage
- Declaration of author contributions (last page):

A detailed declaration concerning the contributions to the different results must be given and signed by you and the lab head and, if applicable, all shared first-authors. It is also recommended that similar statements are provided at the beginning of each chapter (without signature). This requirement is independent of whether a dissertation is cumulative or not.

- The title page should indicate "Dissertation der Graduate School of Systemic Neurosciences der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München" and the date you finished your dissertation; on the inside the supervisor should be indicated; only in the final version (to be handed in after the defense) the supervisor, 2nd reviewer, and the 3rd reviewer, if applicable, should be indicated.
- Copyright of figures taken from publications: the permission has to be indicated in the figure legend.
- Copyright of your own publications used in the dissertation: the journals have the copyright of your publications (exception: open access). Since the thesis will be

published online via the university library after the defense, you have to request the permission from the journals to publish the articles in your thesis (check the webpage of the journals; sometimes you can find a section about this topic). If the journals will not agree, you could suggest publication of the dissertation with a blocking note (1 year; possible up to 2 years). Normally the journals agree on that. Keep the permissions for your own records and also submit them to the GSN office.

## Handing in your thesis

Please find information on formal requirements in chapter ‘Towards the end of your PhD’.

All GSN PhD thesis forms to be handed in with your thesis could be found on our website:

[www.gsn.lmu.de/download/st\\_forms\\_checklists/phd/index.html](http://www.gsn.lmu.de/download/st_forms_checklists/phd/index.html)

Before handing in your thesis, please contact the GSN Examinations Office ([my.gsn@lmu.de](mailto:my.gsn@lmu.de)) to check your ECTS status (you have until your defense to fulfill the ECTS requirements).

In order to initiate the final evaluation of your PhD thesis, the following documents need to be handed in to the GSN office:

- Request for final examination (form on GSN website)
- 5 copies of your thesis, plus one pdf version, including the following:
  - CV
  - List of publications
  - Affidavit (“Eidesstattliche Erklärung”)
  - Declaration of author contributions
  - GSN affiliations listed on publications/manuscripts
- Proposal for examination committee and external reviewer (description see below; form available on GSN website). For **all proposed persons who are not members of the GSN faculty**, a short **CV and a list of publications** has to be submitted.

The PhD examination committee is similar, but not identical, to the TAC, and is also subject to approval by the GSN Doctoral Commission: Supervisor (TAC member; 1st reviewer):

TAC (at least 2 GSN Faculty Members)	PhD Examination Committee
1 <sup>st</sup> TAC-Member = 1 <sup>st</sup> Supervisor/1 <sup>st</sup> Reviewer	1 <sup>st</sup> Member (= 1 <sup>st</sup> TAC-Member)
2 <sup>nd</sup> TAC-Member = 2 <sup>nd</sup> Supervisor /2 <sup>nd</sup> Reviewer ( <i>independent from 1<sup>st</sup></i> )	2 <sup>nd</sup> Member (= 2 <sup>nd</sup> TAC-Member)
3 <sup>rd</sup> TAC-Member	3 <sup>rd</sup> Member (GSN Faculty not previously in TAC)
	4 <sup>th</sup> Member (GSN or external)
	<i>Optional: 5<sup>th</sup> Member (GSN)</i>
	<i>Optional: 6<sup>th</sup> Member (GSN)</i>

After approval of the proposal for examination committee, the chairman of the doctoral commission will formally request a written evaluation (review) of the thesis from your supervisor, a second reviewer, and if required, an external reviewer. Together with the request, guidelines about how to write the review will be sent to the reviewers.

After all evaluation reports have been submitted to the GSN examination office, the thesis will be made available to the doctoral commission and the examination committee for examination

and evaluation. Members will have 4 weeks during lecture time and 6 weeks in the lecture free periods to comment on the thesis and the reviews.

**The review phase (time between handing in and defense) usually takes 3-6 months.**

If the thesis is accepted by the doctoral commission and examination committee, the PhD student will be invited to the public defense of the thesis and subsequent examination (not public). The public defense will consist of a 45-minute oral presentation followed by approximately 10 minutes discussion. The final, non-public oral exam is 30-60 minutes.

You must hand in an additional 6 copies (PhD study regulations until 2017) or 2 copies (PhD regulations from 2018) of your PhD thesis to the department 'Publikationsdienste Dissertationen' of the LMU university library **within 1 year after completing the thesis defense!** You will receive confirmation of submission from the library, which you must turn in to the GSN office in order to receive your final degree certificates. **Please note that you will irrevocably fail, should you not hand in your final copies of the dissertation within one year.**

**Within 1-2 days after the defense, you will receive an email from the GSN office with further information about this final submission.** Please wait for this email before printing the final version of your dissertation.

After printing, the certificates must be signed by both the head of the GSN doctoral commission and the president of the LMU. **Please understand that this process can take up to 3 months. You may only use your doctoral title after you have received your final certificates.**

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We celebrate our graduates' accomplishments at our yearly **GSN Graduation Day**. We will inform you accordingly and very much look forward to your participation!