

## The Thesis Proposal in the Saarbrücken Graduate School of Computer Science

The thesis proposal is a new structural element on the way to your PhD and has two main purposes. Primarily, it serves as a milestone in the dissertation phase by providing early incentive to consolidate potential research fields and identify a thesis topic or at least a clear direction of further investigation. Secondly, public delivery of the thesis proposal talk is intended to foster and enhance both the exchange of information and social interaction among our many doctoral students and the various groups they work in. We believe this kind of networking is essential for a research location as large and varied as Saarbrücken. \*

Our thesis proposals are not intended to be exams that can be passed or failed and should not even really be considered a progress monitoring element (regular reporting to the progress committee is sufficient for this purpose). They are an opportunity for candidates to show that they have settled on a research topic that in all likelihood will lead to a dissertation, an opportunity to convey the excitement and significance lying in their topics, and also an opportunity to receive comments and feedback from a wider audience.

The thesis proposal should take place as soon as the general topic of the thesis work has become clear. Since experience shows that time is typically lost at the beginning of the dissertation phase, we will be pushing for this milestone to usually happen about a year after the qualifying exam. Of course, significant deviations are conceivable but PhD candidates and their advisors should generally try to meet this constraint.

The thesis proposals are organized as regular (monthly) events. Due to our experience in the past academic year, we have changed the format slightly. Now up to six candidates will present their research at each event. Each has 20 minutes for their presentation ( $\leq 15$  min) and the ensuing discussion. The events include opportunity and encouragement for general scientific and social interaction with snacks and refreshments after the talks.

The current planning for the thesis proposal events can be found here:  
[http://gradschool.cs.uni-saarland.de/events/talks/thesis\\_proposal\\_colloquium.html](http://gradschool.cs.uni-saarland.de/events/talks/thesis_proposal_colloquium.html)

All of our doctoral students and advisors are cordially invited to attend these events. We ask that the advisors of the students doing their thesis proposal presentations on a given occasion be present. Students in the preparatory phase are required to attend, since the thesis proposal events are a great opportunity to get acquainted with all the various research work going on in Saarbrücken.

Finally, a written record of the thesis proposal is expected, either as an approx. 5-page write-up or simply in the form of a copy of the slides used in the presentation.

\* Please let us remind you of the possibility of "common interest retreats" funded by the Graduate School, should common points of interest between at least two different groups be identified in the course of the discussion.