Adaptation Plan

Topics for Discussion

For New PhD Candidates

Dear PhD Candidates,

You are now holding an Adaptation Plan designed to make the start of your doctoral studies easier and support your successful integration into the academic environment of the Prague University of Economics and Business (VŠE).

The plan provides a set of topics and prompts for discussions between PhD candidates and their supervisors. Its aim is to encourage open and effective communication, help both sides align their expectations, and provide a framework for discussing important topics throughout the first year of doctoral studies. It complements the essential information about doctoral studies available on the Doctoral Hub website (phd.vse.cz/english). As the website is continuously updated, we recommend using it as your primary source of up-to-date information and practical guidance.

Doctoral studies are a unique stage of both professional and personal development. Alongside study requirements, research activities and involvement in the academic community, they bring many new experiences and challenges. The individual sections of the Adaptation Plan contain topics recommended for discussion during the first year of study. They are intended to help you address important questions at an early stage, including study requirements, research activities, time management, professional development, the working relationship between the PhD candidate and supervisor, and how your faculty and the University operate.

The first meeting between a PhD candidate and their supervisor after the start of doctoral studies is particularly important. It provides an opportunity to discuss mutual expectations, agree on how you will work together and communicate, plan study and research activities, and introduce the key systems and services you will encounter during your doctoral studies.

We recommend adding notes, agreements and other important information to this document as you progress. This can make it a useful tool that you can return to throughout your studies. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions regarding the Adaptation Plan, please do not hesitate to contact the Doctoral Hub.

We wish you a successful start to your doctoral studies, an inspiring collaboration with your supervisor, and every success, both professional and personal, on your doctoral journey.

Your Doctoral Hub

VŠE / DOCTORAL HUB

For the sake of readability, this document uses gender-neutral language wherever possible and is intended to include all persons regardless of gender.

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Adaptation Plan

Adaptation plan for the first year

The Adaptation Plan summarises the key topics that should gradually be discussed with your supervisor during the first year of doctoral studies. Below you will find an overview of the recommended meetings between the PhD candidate and supervisor focusing on the adaptation process, including their approximate timing and the main topics to be discussed at each meeting.

ADAPTATION MEETINGS WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

During the first year of doctoral studies, we recommend having five meetings with your supervisor specifically dedicated to the adaptation process. These do not include other meetings between the PhD candidate and supervisor focusing on research and publication activities, day-to-day or operational matters, etc. The suggested timing is indicative and may be adapted to the individual needs of the PhD candidate and supervisor.

First Meeting	At the start of doctoral studies. The meeting focuses primarily on setting mutual expectations and communication, discussing study requirements, work arrangements and other practical aspects of getting started with doctoral studies.
Second Meeting	Recommended after the first month of doctoral studies.
Third Meeting	Recommended after the first three months of doctoral studies.
Fourth Meeting	Recommended approximately halfway through the first year.
Final Meeting	Recommended towards the end of the first year of doctoral studies. Its main purpose is to review the first year as a whole and plan the next steps.

First Meeting

First Meeting

Date:

Information about the first administrative steps, including where and with whom individual matters should be arranged, is available on the Doctoral Hub website in the Getting Started section. Go through this overview together with your supervisor and check that you have completed all the necessary steps. If anything still needs to be arranged, discuss it together and agree on the next steps.

CHECKLIST

Enrolment in doctoral studies	☐
Access to the University network / Eduroam	☐
I know who my Doctoral Study Coordinator is and how to contact them.	☐
ISIC card	☐
Keys, office / workspace, laptop, equipment, etc.	☐
Accommodation scholarship (optional)	☐
Parking card (optional)	☐
Application for a doctoral scholarship (full-time PhD candidates only)	☐
Basic set of Moodle training courses (if required)	☐

VALUES, EXPECTATIONS AND PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION WITHIN THE SUPERVISOR'S / RESEARCH GROUP

(What do you value within your group? What do you appreciate and what do you consider less desirable? For example, quality/quantity of work, completing agreed tasks, punctuality, flexibility, communication, etc. Consider discussing the VŠE Supervisor Standard.)

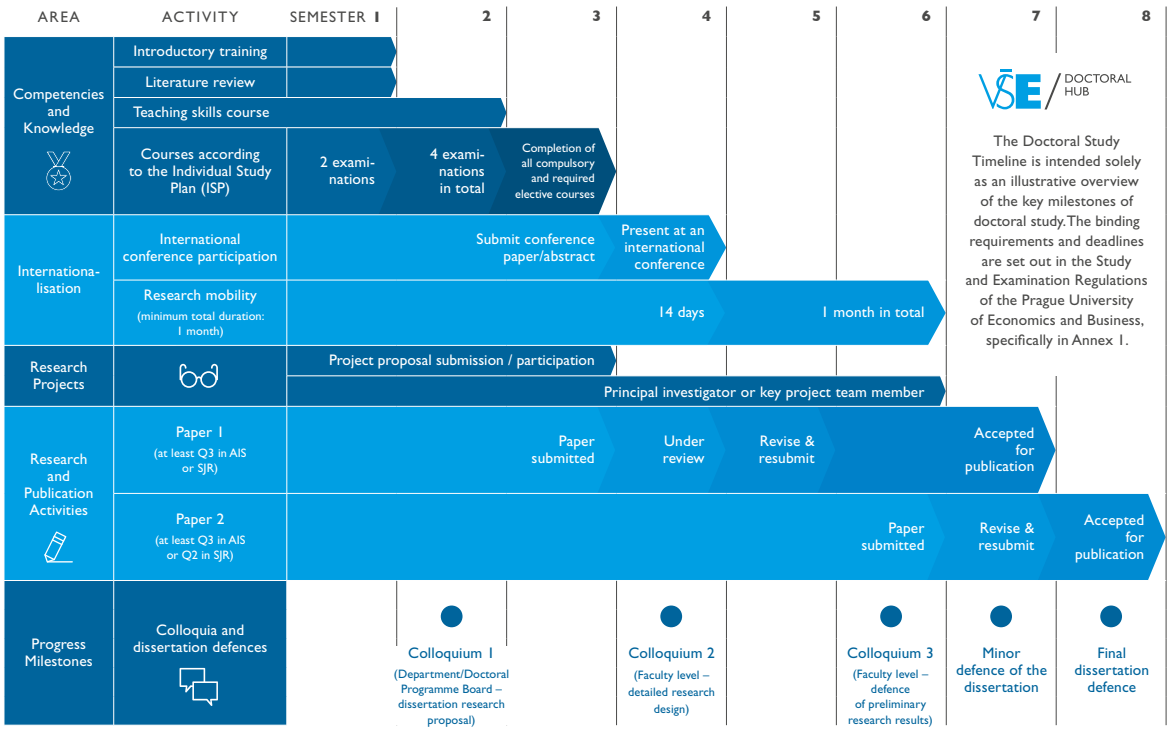
Study Requirements

Go through your study requirements and the plan for completing them together with your supervisor. You can use the Doctoral Study Timeline below as a framework for your discussion. It summarises the main requirements arising from the University-wide regulations of VŠE. For clarity, separate timelines are provided for full-time study and part-time study (combined form).

Specific requirements may vary between faculties. Always check the regulations and documents of your faculty for details.

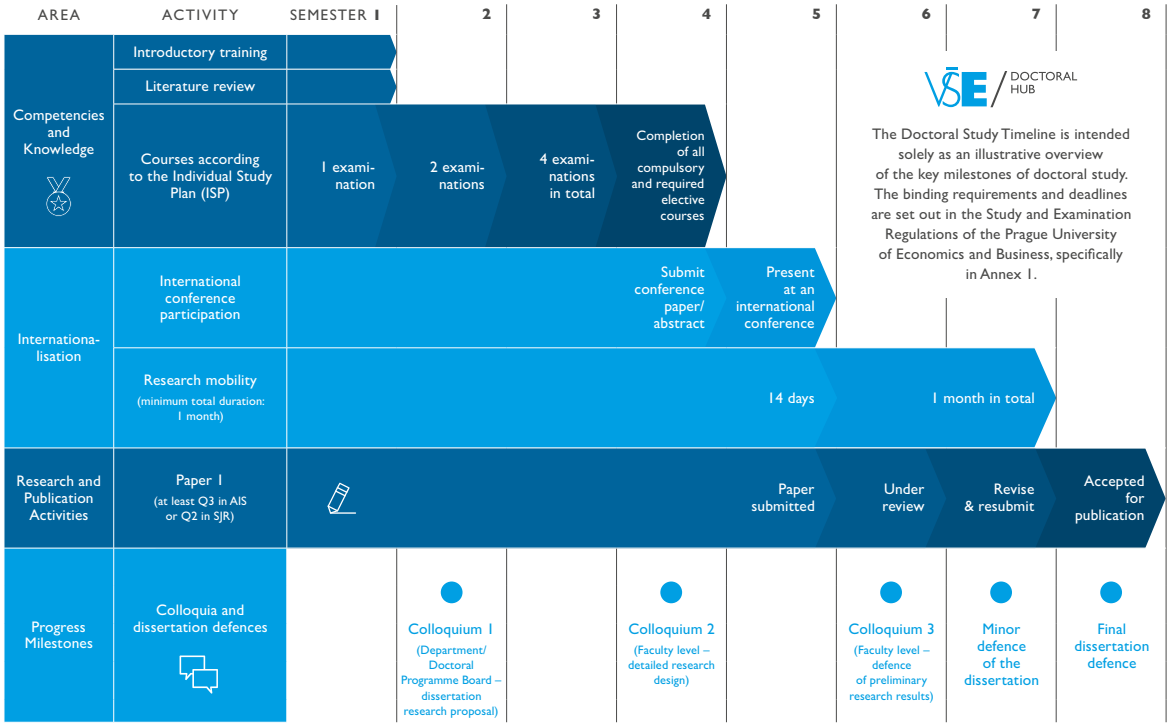
Doctoral Study Timeline

FULL-TIME STUDY



Doctoral Study Timeline

PART-TIME STUDY (COMBINED FORM)



INDIVIDUAL STUDY PLAN (ISP)

(Discuss when you will prepare the Individual Study Plan together. Is any action required from the PhD candidate before then? The ISP is entered into the system by the supervisor.)

INTRODUCTORY TRAINING

(How is introductory training for PhD candidates organised at your faculty? You may also wish to discuss the PhD Welcome Day organised by the Doctoral Hub in October.)

TEACHING SKILLS COURSE (FULL-TIME PHD CANDIDATES ONLY)

(Supervisors should inform full-time PhD candidates about the Teaching Skills Course, including where to find further information and how and when to register.)

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

(What are the requirements? Which international conferences would the supervisor recommend to the PhD candidate? When should this requirement be completed?)

RESEARCH MOBILITY (MINIMUM TOTAL DURATION: 1 MONTH)

(Doctoral studies also include a compulsory period of research stay abroad, the length of which is set out in the applicable legislation and the University's internal regulations.
We recommend discussing options for completing this requirement with your supervisor during the first year. Will the PhD candidate undertake 14 days of research mobility and complete the remaining 14 days later, or undertake the full period at once? Are there any preferences regarding the destination?

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECTS

(Among other things, discuss the Internal Grant Competition. What are the requirements of the relevant faculty? Can the supervisor also involve the PhD candidate in their own research project?)

PUBLICATION ACTIVITIES

(What publication outputs are expected from the PhD candidate? In which academic journals should the research results be published?)

COLLOQUIA

(Discuss the purpose and format of the colloquia, what the PhD candidate can expect, how they are organised and what needs to be prepared in advance. For example, what are the requirements of the faculty / Doctoral Programme Board for Colloquia 1, 2 and 3? How long should the research proposal be? How many key sources are expected? When is the colloquium usually held?)

ADDITIONAL STUDY REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIC TO THE FACULTY

(Discuss any faculty-specific requirements not mentioned above, for example requirements arising from a Dean's directive.)

Role of the PhD Candidate and Expectations

At the beginning of doctoral studies, it is useful to discuss what will be expected of the PhD candidate throughout their studies and what their main study, research and, where applicable, teaching activities will be. The discussion should help clarify expectations on both sides, identify areas in which further development may be needed, and establish a realistic plan for the PhD candidate's professional development throughout their doctoral studies.

EXPECTED SKILLS

(For example, foreign-language proficiency and use, presentation and communication skills, data skills, programming languages such as Python/R, understanding of the publication process, etc.)

FURTHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

(Discuss training and development opportunities available across VŠE that can help the PhD candidate further develop their knowledge and skills. These may include methodology courses, transferable skills courses offered by the Doctoral Hub, CIKS courses, RSSE seminars, training for employees available on SharePoint, and others.)

MAIN ACTIVITIES

(For example, continuous work on the research project and publication activities, participation in departmental meetings and academic events, following the ISP schedule, involvement in research projects, and, where applicable, other work not directly related to the dissertation.)

TEACHING (FULL-TIME PHD CANDIDATES ONLY)

(Is participation in teaching compulsory at your faculty? What is the expected teaching workload? Which course(s) should the PhD candidate teach? Who can the PhD candidate contact regarding teaching arrangements? You may also wish to discuss participation in outreach activities, such as Open Days, visits to secondary schools, etc.)

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS DURING DOCTORAL STUDIES

(In addition to the income guaranteed by law – 1.2 times the minimum wage for full-time PhD candidates – can the PhD candidate expect any additional income? For example, employment funded through the supervisor's grant, an Agreement to Complete a Job (DPP), or an Agreement to Perform Work (DPČ) related to teaching? If not, are there alternative sources of funding available to the PhD candidate? For example, explore the Catalogue of Support Opportunities and information on the Internal Grant Competition. Is there also an opportunity to earn additional income at the faculty or University through work outside the scope of the dissertation?)

LONG-TERM CAREER GOALS

(Where does the PhD candidate see themselves five or ten years after completing their doctoral studies? Do they intend to pursue a career outside academia or remain in the academic sector? Do they see themselves staying in the Czech Republic or moving abroad? How does this perspective affect the course of their doctoral studies, for example in terms of publication requirements, involvement in research projects, or the choice of international conferences and research mobility?)

Organisation of Studies and Work

Doctoral studies involve a high degree of independence and flexibility, and some VŠE PhD candidates also work outside the University during their studies. We therefore recommend discussing with your supervisor how to balance doctoral studies and other work commitments so that they do not conflict. At the beginning of doctoral studies, it is also important to establish mutual expectations regarding the organisation of work at VŠE, availability at the workplace, the amount of time devoted to dissertation research, planning time off, and communication. A clear agreement between the PhD candidate and supervisor can help prevent misunderstandings and support effective long-term cooperation.

PRESENCE AT VŠE AND WORK ORGANISATION

(What are the expectations or requirements regarding the PhD candidate's presence at the University workplace? At what times are they expected to be present? Are there regular team or departmental meetings that the PhD candidate should attend?)

WORK COMMITMENTS OUTSIDE VŠE

(Does the PhD candidate work outside the University? If so, to what extent? We recommend discussing whether their work outside VŠE is or could be related to their research. Are there any potential synergies? Conversely, what risks may arise from conflicting demands between employment and doctoral studies?)

UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS AND UNPLANNED ABSENCES

(How should illness or another unexpected absence be communicated? Who needs to be contacted in such cases? What should the PhD candidate do if they are scheduled to teach and need to arrange a substitute at short notice?)

TIME OFF AND PLANNED ABSENCES

(How should longer periods of absence be planned? How far in advance should the PhD candidate inform the supervisor about planned time off? Are there periods when presence at the workplace is particularly important, for example because of teaching, conferences, data collection or departmental events?)

Communication and Cooperation

Open and regular communication between a PhD candidate and their supervisor is one of the key prerequisites for successful doctoral studies. At the beginning of the supervisory relationship, it is therefore useful to clarify mutual expectations regarding the frequency and form of communication, availability, feedback, and the organisation of meetings.

CONSULTATIONS AND MEETINGS

(Will consultations take place regularly or according to current needs? How often will the PhD candidate and supervisor meet? How will meetings be scheduled? Would it be useful to keep brief meeting notes or a list of agreed tasks? How will agreed tasks and deadlines be monitored?)

AVAILABILITY AND CONTACT

(When is the supervisor usually available for consultations? How can the supervisor be contacted during the working week? Are there periods when either party is regularly less available, for example because of teaching, stays abroad or business trips?)

PREFERRED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

(Which form of communication does the supervisor prefer for routine matters?
Which communication channel is appropriate for issues requiring a quick or urgent response?
When is a face-to-face meeting preferable to electronic communication?)

SUPERVISOR'S PREFERRED TOOLS AND PLATFORMS FOR SHARING MATERIALS

(Does the supervisor have preferred tools or platforms for sharing documents and other materials?)

FEEDBACK AND ROUTINE COMMUNICATION

(What is the usual response time for emails or other routine queries? How will feedback on written work, presentations or other outputs be provided? How far in advance should the PhD candidate send materials for review and feedback?)

COMMUNICATION IN URGENT SITUATIONS

(What situations are considered urgent? How quickly can a response be expected in urgent situations?)

Orientation at VŠE

The beginning of doctoral studies involves becoming familiar with a new environment, workplaces and support services. PhD candidates coming from other universities or from abroad in particular may encounter a number of places and units they have not previously dealt with. We therefore recommend taking some time to become familiar with both your faculty and the University as a whole, and to get to know the people and units that may provide support during your doctoral studies.

FACULTY, DEPARTMENT AND WORKPLACE

(We recommend visiting the key locations together and introducing the PhD candidate to relevant people.)

Who are the key people at the workplace? Who are the main points of contact?

Where are the department office, academic staff offices and shared spaces located?

How is administrative support organised within the department?

Who should the PhD candidate contact regarding organisational or operational matters?

Who else can assist the PhD candidate with academic or administrative questions?

Specific Tasks Agreed by the Supervisor at the Next Meeting

Date of the next planned adaptation meeting:

Second Meeting

Second Meeting

Date:

REVIEW OF TASKS FROM THE FIRST MEETING

HOW HAS THE PHD CANDIDATE PROGRESSED DURING THE FIRST MONTH? WHAT HAVE THEY ACCOMPLISHED? WHAT ACTIVITIES HAVE THEY COMPLETED?

(Does the PhD candidate understand what they are expected to do and what is expected of them? A brief reflection is sufficient.)

PROGRESS WITH STUDY REQUIREMENTS

(For example, progress with the Individual Study Plan, which courses the PhD candidate is taking this semester, and whether they need any support.)

FAMILIARITY WITH UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES

(Does the PhD candidate need help completing applications or other documents? Are they planning to prepare a grant application? Do they know how to proceed?)

USE OF EXISTING PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

(Can the PhD candidate make use of their existing professional knowledge and skills during their doctoral studies? In which areas do they feel particularly strong, and where do they see potential to contribute to their workplace, faculty or the University?)

Self-Assessment and Supervisor Assessment

We recommend that both the PhD candidate and the supervisor complete the table independently before the meeting and then discuss their assessments together. The table is used repeatedly at each of these meetings. The assessment should therefore always reflect expectations appropriate to the current stage of doctoral studies and make it possible to track the PhD candidate's development over time.

The purpose of the assessment is not to assign a formal grade or to compare PhD candidates with one another. Its aim is to encourage mutual reflection, identify areas where the PhD candidate's and supervisor's perspectives differ, and, where appropriate, identify areas for further development. Where possible, the assessment should be based on specific situations and observable behaviour.

Rating Scale:

1 – significantly below the expected level for this stage of doctoral studies
2 – somewhat below the expected level for this stage of doctoral studies
3 – meets the expected level for this stage of doctoral studies
4 – above the expected level for this stage of doctoral studies
5 – significantly above the expected level for this stage of doctoral studies
N – cannot be assessed

Area	PhD Candidate's Self-Assessment	Supervisor Assessment
Independence Ability to work and make decisions without excessive support.		
Proactivity Taking active initiative in planning and carrying out work.		
Reliability Completing agreed tasks and commitments to an appropriate standard and on time.		
Communication Communicating effectively and cooperating constructively with others.		
Focus on Research Contribution Commitment to directing work towards a meaningful research contribution, rather than merely meeting minimum study requirements.		

Recommendation for the Follow-Up Discussion: Focus particularly on areas where the PhD candidate's and supervisor's assessments differ significantly. Try to identify specific situations that led to the differing assessments and agree whether anything in the given area should be changed or further developed. At subsequent meetings, it is also useful to reflect on changes compared with the previous assessment.

PhD Candidate's Assessment

ADAPTATION PROCESS

(Have any difficulties arisen? What needs to be done to resolve them appropriately?)

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK FROM THE SUPERVISOR

(How does the PhD candidate perceive the communication and feedback provided by the supervisor? Is it sufficient, useful and appropriate? Does the PhD candidate receive the information they need? Are responses provided in a timely manner?)

ATMOSPHERE AND WELL-BEING

(How does the PhD candidate perceive the atmosphere at the workplace? How do they feel within the department/faculty? Do they feel included in the department/faculty? Is the environment welcoming and stimulating?)

WHAT ADVICE OR SUPPORT DOES THE PHD CANDIDATE NEED?

(Does the PhD candidate need advice or support with anything? If so, with what, how and by when?)

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THE PHD CANDIDATE OR SUPERVISOR WOULD LIKE TO ADD OR ASK?

SPECIFIC TASKS AGREED BY THE SUPERVISOR TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING

(For example, identifying relevant journals for publication, conducting a literature review, preparing a data management plan, etc.)

Date of the next meeting:

Third Meeting

Third Meeting

Date:

REVIEW OF TASKS FROM THE SECOND MEETING

(Review the completion of agreed tasks.)

HOW HAS THE PHD CANDIDATE PROGRESSED DURING THE FIRST THREE MONTHS? WHAT HAVE THEY ACCOMPLISHED? WHAT ACTIVITIES HAVE THEY COMPLETED?

(Does the PhD candidate understand what they are expected to do and what is expected of them? A brief reflection is sufficient.)

FAMILIARITY WITH UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES

(Does the PhD candidate need help completing applications or other documents, for example in connection with a conference? Do they know how to create a travel authorisation request?)

PROGRESS WITH STUDY REQUIREMENTS

(For example, progress with the ISP, which courses the PhD candidate is taking this semester, whether any changes to the ISP are needed, and whether the PhD candidate needs any support.)

Self-Assessment and Supervisor Assessment

We recommend that both the PhD candidate and the supervisor complete the table independently before the meeting and then discuss their assessments together. The table is used repeatedly at each of these meetings. The assessment should therefore always reflect expectations appropriate to the current stage of doctoral studies and make it possible to track the PhD candidate's development over time.

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PhD Candidate's Assessment

ADAPTATION PROCESS

(Have any difficulties arisen during the adaptation process? For example, are there any uncertainties regarding study requirements or difficulties integrating into the team or workplace?)

USE OF EXISTING PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

(Does the PhD candidate feel that they are able to make appropriate use of knowledge and skills acquired elsewhere in their current work?)

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK FROM THE SUPERVISOR

(How does the PhD candidate perceive the communication and feedback provided by the supervisor? Is it sufficient, useful and appropriate? Does the PhD candidate receive the information they need? Are responses provided in a timely manner?)

ATMOSPHERE

(How does the PhD candidate perceive the atmosphere at the workplace? Do they feel included within the department/faculty? Is the environment welcoming and stimulating?)

WELL-BEING

(How does the PhD candidate feel within the department/faculty? Do they need any advice or support?)

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THE PHD CANDIDATE OR SUPERVISOR WOULD LIKE TO ADD OR ASK?

SPECIFIC TASKS AGREED BY THE SUPERVISOR TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING

(For example, identifying relevant journals for publication, conducting a literature review, preparing a data management plan, etc.)

Date of the next meeting:

Fourth Meeting

Fourth Meeting

Date:

REVIEW OF TASKS FROM THE THIRD MEETING

(Review the completion of agreed tasks.)

HOW HAS THE PHD CANDIDATE PROGRESSED DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS? WHAT HAVE THEY ACCOMPLISHED? WHAT ACTIVITIES HAVE THEY COMPLETED?

(Does the PhD candidate understand what they are expected to do and what is expected of them? A brief reflection is sufficient.)

PROGRESS WITH STUDY REQUIREMENTS

(For example, progress with the ISP, which courses the PhD candidate took during the previous semester, whether they completed them successfully, and whether they need any support.)

FAMILIARITY WITH UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES

(Does the PhD candidate need help completing applications or other documents, for example in connection with a conference or research mobility?)

PREPARATION FOR COLLOQUIUM 1

(How will the colloquium be organised and how should the PhD candidate prepare for it? Will the PhD candidate ask the supervisor to review or approve the presentation in advance? If so, by when should the draft presentation be sent?)

Self-Assessment and Supervisor Assessment

We recommend that both the PhD candidate and the supervisor complete the table independently before the meeting and then discuss their assessments together. The table is used repeatedly at each of these meetings. The assessment should therefore always reflect expectations appropriate to the current stage of doctoral studies and make it possible to track the PhD candidate's development over time.

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Recommendation for the Follow-Up Discussion: Focus particularly on areas where the PhD candidate's and supervisor's assessments differ significantly. Try to identify specific situations that led to the differing assessments and agree whether anything in the given area should be changed or further developed. At subsequent meetings, it is also useful to reflect on changes compared with the previous assessment.

PhD Candidate's Assessment

ADAPTATION PROCESS

(Have any difficulties arisen during the adaptation process?)

USE OF EXISTING PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

(Does the PhD candidate feel that they are able to make appropriate use of knowledge and skills acquired elsewhere in their current work, for example in the area of time management?)

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK FROM THE SUPERVISOR

(How does the PhD candidate perceive the communication and feedback provided by the supervisor? Is it sufficient, useful and appropriate? Does the PhD candidate receive the information they need? Are responses provided in a timely manner?)

ATMOSPHERE

(How does the PhD candidate perceive the atmosphere at the workplace? Do they feel included within the department/faculty? Is the environment welcoming and stimulating?)

WELL-BEING

(How does the PhD candidate feel within the department/faculty? Do they need any advice or support?)

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THE PHD CANDIDATE OR SUPERVISOR WOULD LIKE TO ADD OR ASK?

SPECIFIC TASKS AGREED BY THE SUPERVISOR TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING

(For example, identifying relevant journals for publication, conducting a literature review, preparing a data management plan, etc.)

Date of the next meeting:

Final Meeting

of the Adaptation Plan

Final Meeting

Date:

REVIEW OF TASKS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(Review the completion of agreed tasks.)

Review of the First Year of Doctoral Studies

(We recommend discussing this towards the end of the first year, but no later than at the beginning of the second year.)

HOW DOES THE PHD CANDIDATE ASSESS THE PAST YEAR? WHAT WENT WELL? WHAT DID NOT GO AS WELL?

PROGRESS WITH STUDY REQUIREMENTS

Overview of examinations completed according to the ISP, the PhD candidate's involvement in teaching and research activities, publication activities, active participation in conferences and seminars, and progress on the dissertation.

(Briefly discuss whether the progress in meeting these requirements is in line with both the supervisor's and the PhD candidate's expectations. The supervisor will also need a written overview of the items listed above for the purpose of completing the **Doctoral Study Progress Report**.)

HAVE ANY OBSTACLES OR COMPLICATIONS ARISEN THAT MAY AFFECT THE PROGRESS OF DOCTORAL STUDIES? WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE FUTURE TO OVERCOME THEM?

Overall assessment by the PhD candidate

HOW DOES THE PHD CANDIDATE ASSESS THEIR ADAPTATION?

(Was the overall onboarding process successful? What worked well and what did not? Do not hesitate to provide the supervisor with open and honest feedback.)

ATMOSPHERE WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT/FACULTY

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK FROM THE SUPERVISOR / RESEARCH GROUP

WELL-BEING DURING THE FIRST YEAR

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THE PHD CANDIDATE OR SUPERVISOR WOULD LIKE TO ADD OR ASK?

Looking Ahead

(Plan for the following academic years: remaining colloquia, research mobility abroad, planned publications, planned dissertation format, Minor defence of the dissertation and Final dissertation defence.)

We Would Appreciate Your Feedback

Do you have a question, comment or suggestion for improving the Adaptation Plan? Please do not hesitate to contact us.

We would also greatly appreciate your feedback on the Adaptation Plan as a whole. Your feedback will help us continue to improve and develop the plan so that it is as useful as possible for both PhD candidates and supervisors.

Scan the QR code and share your feedback with us.

Thank you!
Your Doctoral Hub

VŠE / DOCTORAL HUB

Adaptation Plan for New PhD Candidates

Author: Mili Viktorie Markvartová
Contributors: Tereza Frömmelová, Martin Lukeš, Alex Mičáň, Lenka Valerianová, Jan Zouhar
Graphic Design: Barbora Klufová
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22769494
Prague University of Economics and Business
W. Churchill Sq. 1938/4
130 67 Prague 3 – Žižkov

Doctoral Hub
phd.vse.cz

Spolufinancováno Evropskou unií

Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy