

Czech Research-Intensive Universities and their Perspective on Doctoral Schools

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Doctoral Training in Czechia

General overview

- **21 413** Doctoral candidates enrolled in doctoral programmes ([MEYS statistics](#), Jan 2022)
- **30** Czech HEIs carry out doctoral programmes (24 public, 2 state, 4 private)
- **2 077** Doctoral graduates ([MEYS statistics](#), Jan 2022) - **only 40 % complete doctorate**
- **Standard length** of a doctorate is **3** or **4 years** (in full-time form) - **5.5 years is average completion time**
- The length depends on the accreditation of given doctoral programmes - **only 7 % complete it in standard length**
- **Form: full-time** and **part-time** (=combined form). Doctoral candidates who fail to complete their doctorate in the standard length of full-time form can be transferred to part-time (combined) form



Doctoral Training in Czechia

Doctoral degree programmes - defined by [Higher Education Act](#) (Section 47)

- Aimed at **scientific research** and **independent creative activities** in the area of research or development, or independent theoretical and creative activities in the area of the fine arts.
- **Standard length** of studies: no less than three and no more than four years.
- Studies are subject to **individual curricula under the guidance of a supervisor**.
- Doctoral studies are **completed** with a **doctoral state examination** and the **public defence** of a doctoral thesis.
- Awarding of the academic degree of “Doktor” (“Doctor”, abbreviated as “Ph.D.”, used after the name).
- **Monitoring and evaluation** by a **doctoral programme board**.



Doctoral Training in Czechia

Accreditation of Doctoral programmes - defined in [Government regulation on standards for accreditation in higher education](#)

- **Content of study:** **Compulsory specialised courses** (not identical with compulsory courses in BA/MA programmes), **study duties** (international mobility or collaboration), **submission of outputs** (as precondition for public defence of doctoral thesis)
- **Academic staff:** **Guarantor** of the Doctoral programme (appointed professor or associate professor). **Supervisors** (only associate professors and professors and possibly other experts with scientific academic degree approved by relevant Scientific Board or Artistic Board), **Doctoral programme board** (consists of only those persons, who have carried out creative activities for the period of last 5 years)
- **Creative (scientific) activities:** Corresponding (international) scientific or artistic activities



Association of Research Universities

Network of research-intensive universities

Developing **cooperation** and disseminating views on research, innovation and higher education in selected areas (**legislative** and **funding environment, doctoral training, research assessment** and **research infrastructures, international cooperation**).

Charles University (CUNI)

Czech Technical University in Prague (CTU)

Masaryk University (MUNI)

Brno University of Technology (BUT)

Palacký University Olomouc (UPOL)

University of Chemistry and Technology in Prague (UCTP)



Association of Research Universities

Focus on Doctoral Training

- Following upon planned **reform of doctoral training** by MEYS and identified structural flaws in doctoral training
- **Strategic plan** of MEYS and institutional plans
- Need for boosting the **quality and effectiveness** of the training
- More intensive **collaboration** and sharing of good practice
- **Early-Careers** within and beyond academia

University	Doctoral candidates Jan 2022	Doctoral graduates Jan 2022
CUNI	6 693	608
MUNI	2 688	302
UPOL	1 490	149
CTU	1 825	186
UCTP	835	75
BUT	1542	128
Total	15 073 (21 413 Total)	1 448 (2 077 Total)

Source: [MEYS statistics](#), [MEYS database](#)



Perspectives on Doctoral Schools

1. Supported services for doctoral candidates and supervisors

- **Onboarding** activities for doctoral candidates
- Providing **transferable skills** courses
- **Career and development support** services (mentoring, coaching and career planning, professional development training for supervisors)
- Activities to support **international** and **interdisciplinary collaboration**
- Organization of (in)formal social **activities for integration** of doctoral candidates in the research environment
- **Support in case of conflict** with a supervisor (head of the department or chair of the disciplinary board)
- Other support services



Perspectives on Doctoral Schools

2. Strategic management of the university, link to doctoral programmes

- **Infrastructural support** for doctoral education (doctoral candidates/doctoral training programmes, supervisors, ect)
- **Methodological and conceptual activities**
- **Quality assessment** of doctoral programmes in relation to the fulfilment of accreditation requirements
- **Collecting, monitoring and communicating data** about doctoral education at universities
- **Career tracking of PhD graduates, work with PhD alumni**
- **Support for supervisors and guarantors** of doctoral training programmes



Perspectives on Doctoral Schools

3. Development of doctoral education/training programmes

- University **Strategy Plans** - vision/future priorities
- Interest of establishing a **doctoral school**
- **Barriers** in development of doctoral education
- **International collaboration** in doctoral education (EUA-CDE, PRIDE Network, European University alliances)



Survey on Doctoral Schools - outcomes

Supported services for doctoral candidates and supervisors - examples

- **Transferable skills** courses are provided both at C+F level, mostly Academic writing, but also pilot courses on Open Science and RDM - Research Data Management
- **Welcome day** (+) positive feedback, social aspect, general overview about structure, support services and financial possibilities, (-) need to optimise the communication to new doctoral candidates: additional info available on [Doctoral Study Hub](#).
- A "**Survival Guide**,,, both online and in the form of posters and leaflets. (+) Identification of key points at the beginning of the doctorate; easy orientation; guidance on where to go.
- **Mentoring programme** (+) consultation with an expert, insight from a different perspective; (-) not everyone knows about this opportunity; not every PhD candidate signs up for mentoring.



Survey on Doctoral Schools - outcomes

University strategic management links to doctoral training programmes

- **Central PhD office** - [Department of Doctoral Studies](#): primarily methodological, monitoring; transferable skills courses coordination at rectorate level; development of modules in Information System for DE. **Target group: supervisors, doctoral programme guarantors, vice-deans** with the agenda of doctoral education, **administrative apparatus** of faculties, and of of course **doctoral candidates**.
- **Providing data on PhD graduates** - a major effort into the presentation of doctorate as move to a "career decision, not another type of study" - Survey on "Employability of PhD Graduates outside MUNI" or DocEnhance **PhD Career Tracking Survey**
- **Data collection about DE at universities**: mostly automatically from Information System
- **Evaluation of DE**: usually once a year, concept of evaluation is prepared by Quality or R&TT Department, Internal QA Board or collegium of Vice-rectors for R&D



Survey on Doctoral Schools - outcomes

University priorities in development of doctoral training

- Developing a central **transferable skills** training offer
- Support for **quality of research outputs** and **openness**
- acquisition **international experience**
- meet **timeframe** of and **successful completion** of doctorate
- attention to the **socio-economic status** of doctoral candidates
- full **integration** into the scientific community as prospective colleagues
- Provision of **career guidance**
- Strengthening the **interdisciplinarity**
- balancing **work and family life**
- Development of the **concept of a doctoral school**



Survey on Doctoral Schools - outcomes

Barriers in development of doctoral education

- **Lack of staff capacity, finance and administrative demands**
- Conservatism, insufficient provision at the central level, little will to strengthen the doctoral agenda
- Unwillingness of faculties or insisting on their specificities
- Differences between disciplines
- Hard to find good supervisors
- Insufficient motivation to attract promising candidates
- Stipends is not competitive with foreign countries
- Low social prestige of PhD candidates



Survey on Doctoral Schools - outcomes

Interest of establishing a „doctoral school“

- CUNI: Not as specialized unit/department - umbrella of activities
- MUNI: **Yes**, at central and faculty level
- UPOL: **Yes**, at central level - ongoing discussion how to shape it
- UCTP: **Yes**, at central level - as comprehensive support for doctoral candidates and supervisors
- BUT: Not decided whether central or faculty level, i.e. CEITEC BUT has a [PhD School](#) since 2012
- CTU: Not yet decided



Survey on Doctoral Schools - outcomes

International collaboration in doctoral education

- European Alliances: CUNI: [4EU+](#) (1CORE), MUNI: [EDUC](#), UPOL: [Aurora](#), CTU: [EuroTeQ](#)
- [EUA-CDE](#): MUNI, UPOL, CTU, UCTP
- [PRIDE Network](#): CUNI, UCTP
- Other: [CESAER](#): CTU, BUT, [UNICA](#): CUNI, [COIMBRA Group](#): CUNI, [LERU CE7](#): CUNI

(+) Sharing experience and good practice of European universities, interdisciplinarity, networking, cooperation with European universities, support internationalisation

(-) Personnel and financial resources (fees, active participation required)

Many of the suggestions are difficult to implement due to different national legislation and regulations





Thank you!

