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PhD reform - CZ, MUNI and SCI MUNI

Update information for PhD supervisors at Faculty of Science MUNI

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To be distributed to all supervisors via Doctoral Boards

Objectives of the presentation

- Czech system of PhD studies is currently heavily discussed and scrutinized at all levels. Major changes are foreseen, which will **affect all PhD system - namely including financing of doctoral students.**
- Despite of many uncertainties, University, Faculty of Science (SCI MUNI) as well as Departments and Doctoral Programmes (Oborové rady) at SCI MUNI are taking necessary pre-cautionary steps to adapt for the foreseen changes.
- Following slides provide concise information to all supervisors of doctoral students at SCI MUNI.
 - *Disclaimer – the information here corresponds to status in March 2024; changes cannot be excluded with respect to continuing discussions at governmental level*
- The objective is to **raise awareness among PhD supervisors and clarify why new procedures and practices are implemented.**

Contex: ongoing major changes in PhD system

- PhD system in CZ, MUNI and SCI MUNI undergoes major changes that reflect and address ...
 - **Poor graduation rate** in CZ PhD (>50% dropoff), common very **long studies in CZ** (6+ years), **low socio-economic status** of doctoral students, governmental **per-capita doctoral scholarships are non-functional**
 - Voice of doctoral students and their representatives (including Academic Senates at MU) to improve socio-economic conditions and harmonize with international standards
 - Agreements of European Association of Universities (EUA) and its periodic conferences focused on PhD (KRECon)
 - Strategic documents of the Ministry of Education: translated into the **new Law on University Education** (novela Zákona o VŠ) - expected to be effective from January 2025
 - Requirements of the National Accreditation Body (NAÚ – Národní Akreditační Úřad pro VŠ)
 - Recommendations of MUNI ISAB (International Scientific Advisory Board)
 - Requirements of the MUNI Accreditation Body (RVH - Rada pro Vnitřní Hodnocení)
 - [Internal MUNI Strategy](#) 2021-2028

New University Law: main changes in PhD

- **Objective:** prevent malpractices (see previous slide), promote success in PhD studies through minimizing drop off (maintain ca current number of graduates but decrease - by ca 40-50% - total number of enrolled students, which were so far largely unsuccessful)
- Termination of per-capita payments → budgets are transferred to universities without link to individual students, university must assure **minimum doctoral income**
 - Doctoral income will be variable, depending on national economy
 - Obligatory: 1.2-multiple of „minimum income in Czechia“ (minimální mzda v ČR) for eligible students (i.e. 48 months, regular daily studies). 2024 minimální mzda: 18900 CZK x 1.2 = **minimum (netto) 22680 CZK/month**
 - Can be paid as (i) scholarship OR (ii) salary (contract, DPP, DPČ) OR (iii) combination salary + scholarship
 - Draft text of the Law states that **University is obliged to pay**, doctoral income is expected to be enforced since September 2025
- University with supervisors will take responsibility and must adapt new system of PhD management
 - Disclaimer: The final text of the law is still in discussion (government, parliament) but all parties must prepare the system - e.g. registration of income relevant for doctoral studies received from university or external grants or external institutes such as AVČR, etc.
- Other news in the University Law:
 - theoretical doctoral exams not obligatory

Most recent (current) changes in the Czech Republic

– Practice until 2023

- MU received from Ministry of Education monthly per-capita scholarship for each individual eligible student (11250 CZK/month in 2023, for 4 years of regular daily studies).
- Decision of MU rector: monthly scholarships 15000 CZK - faculties and departments forced to top on additional 3750 CZK monthly per each eligible student

– Change from January 2024

- Ministry terminated per capita payments of individual governmental scholarships
- MU receives one total budget for doctoral scholarships based on numbers of students in last 5 years & budget is proportionally distributed to faculties
- Within SCI MUNI, budget is **distributed to departments** that guarantee PhD programmes as follows: 80% according to numbers of students in last 5 years + 10% according to graduation rate (motivation to successfully finish PhD in 4+1 years) + 10% according to research performance - DKRVO – 2222 budgets (motivation to maintain performance)
- *University + Faculty + Departments with PhD boards now work on internal processes to assure monthly payments to all eligible doctoral students now and in the future (both to currently enrolled and all future students: for up to 4 years of standard daily studies)*

Financial impact

– **Minimum monthly payments to eligible students**

(status as of March 2024; changes cannot be excluded)

- Jan-Aug 2024 - 15000 CZK obligatory as scholarships (from this ca 11250/month are former governmental scholarships)
- From Sept 2024 – minimum 16000 CZK netto income - payments may consist of (i) obligatory minimum 12000 CZK in scholarship plus (ii) top-on from other resources (contract, DPP, DPČ, scholarships etc)
- From Sept 2025 – minimum ca 24000 CZK netto income (with foreseen annual increases, i.e. doctoral income according to new University Law)

Other necessary adaptations and changes

Changes require active involvement of supervisors in ...

- **Selection of doctoral** students only to supervisors with secured (extramural) funding that will **assure minimum doctoral income** during 4 years of studies
- **Detailed Individual Study Plan (ISP)**
 - To be elaborated **before enrollment** with description of financial commitments
 - ISP is a „contract“ between student AND supervisor (home institution/department of the supervisor) AND university – describing expectations and conditions (incl. financial)
 - ISP as contract is now implemented at departments and doctoral boards at SCI MUNI (especially for new candidates but optional for all students)
 - *(In parallel, ISP is being transformed into IS MUNI: Individual Study Plan > semestral reports)*
- **Adaptation of management and communication processes**
 - financial projections and budget planning at department level
 - developing reporting and controlling tools for doctoral income (contract + scholarships)
 - checks of students´ progress towards success (with early termination of not performing students)
 - standards of supervision (MU regulation is in preparation) & periodic feedback on (evaluation of) supervisors
 - better horizontal communication: larger programmes without specializations, students´ platforms
- **Implementation of other internal rules, such as**
 - Guide for **involving students into projects** ("Legal duties of superior employes“ [Link to IS MU](#))
 - Guidelines No. 1/2021 of Research Office of the MU Rector's Office **Principles and Recommendations for Effective and Quality Doctoral Studies** at Masaryk University. [Link to PORTAL MU](#)
 - Novel of the MU Study and Examination regulation (now in AS MU, to be effective since Sept 2024)

Summary

- All PhD supervisors are kindly asked to
 - be patient and respect the current turbulent situation with many uncertainties
 - be ready to collaborate on running and advancing PhD during transitional period
 - follow the requests and recommendations of SCI MUNI departments and doctoral boards

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Thank you for your support and attention!