Adaptation plan for new PhD candidates

Suggestions for conversation

UNIVERSITY OF
CHEMISTRY AND TECHNOLOGY
PRAGUE

Notes and instructions

- This document is the third version of the **Adaptation Plan** (AP) for new PhD candidates at UCT Prague. All the points listed here are optional and it is up to the supervisor or the PhD candidate to decide whether it is beneficial to address them.

- This AP is intended for PhD candidates **enrolled from the academic year 2025/26** including.

- It is recommended to **summarize** what the supervisor and the doctoral candidate have reached, what they have discussed, or what they have agreed upon in the spaces provided under each point (or in case of lack of space in the form of an annex). Some points may not require a summary, which is perfectly fine.
  The completion of the notes is purely voluntary.

- It is recommended that both the supervisor and the candidate have their **own copy** of the AP at the end of the interview, so that both parties can refer back to the notes.

- The initial interview is quite extensive, given the large number of points, and depending on the time available to the participants, it may be beneficial to divide it by a break or even into two days. The remaining interviews are shorter.

- Although the document has 32 pages in total, in practice it has only **3 distinct sections**:
  - **On-boarding interview** (section A ≈ 9 pp.),
  - **Ongoing interviews** (sections B, C and D are *de facto* identical; each ≈ 3 pp.) and
  - **Annual interview** (section E ≈ 4 pages).

Should you be interested in an editable text document which you could edit to your likings, or should you find an error in the document, please, don't hesitate to get in touch with us via **losmanom@vscht.cz** and/or **valisj@vscht.cz**.

If you were willing to give us any feedback, we would be grateful.

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Document legend:

ORDER OF CONVERSATION (A/B/C/D/E).POINT NUMBER WITH DESCRIPTION
(or subpoints)
(Information for supervisors on the point, examples and suggestions)
Space for meeting notes ↓

Selected abbreviations

AP	Adaptation Plan
Candidate	Doctoral candidate enrolled in the DSP
DPČ	Agreement on Work Activity (Dohoda o provedení činnosti): over 300 hrs/year and/or 10 000 CZK/month, but not an employment
DPP	Agreement on Work Performance (Dohoda o provedení práce): up to 300 hrs/year and 10 000 CZK/month, but not an employment
DSP	Doctoral Study Programme
EK	Ethical Codex (Etický Kodex)
FTE	Full-time Equivalent of Employment
IGA	Internal Grant Agency of UCT Prague
ISP	Individual Study Plan
NTK	National Library of Technology (Národní Technická Knihovna)
OSH	Occupational Safety Hazard (= BOZP in Czech)
PPE	Personal Protection Equipment (= OOPP in Czech)
SZŘ	Study and Examination Regulations (Studijní a Zkušební Řád)

First day

A

Date of the meeting: Name of the candidate:

A.1.
Motivation

When starting a new position and potentially a new university/faculty/institute, it is likely that the PhD candidate **will not be familiar** with, for example, the usual procedures or the specific scope of their work.

The Adaptation Plan (AP), which is part of the onboarding process, helps to **integrate** the newly arrived PhD candidate into the research group, institute, faculty and university quickly and efficiently by guiding the supervisor and the PhD candidate to clarify expectations, instruct them on the usual procedures and train them in the department and position at the time of entry and during the adaptation period. This document should serve as a **guide** for the development of the AP.

(Consider outlining the meaning of the AP to the PhD candidate so they understand the purpose of the meeting.)

A.2.
Overview of AP phases

(Just skim through for a general idea of the process. The order in 2.a and 2.d may vary.)

A.2. a) **At the start:**
- i. **enrolment at the Dean's Office;**
- ii. Interview with the supervisor;
- iii. PhD Office:
  - a. Support of PhD candidates,
  - b. Survival Guide fliers.

A.2. b) **PhD Orientation Day**
(full-day event for new candidates every September)

A.2. c) **Ongoing conversations with the supervisor:**
- i. After 1 month of enrolment;
- ii. After 3 months of enrolment;
- iii. After 6 months of enrolment.

A.2. d) **Overall evaluation after 12 months:**
- i. Interview with the supervisor;
- ii. Preparation of the annual evaluation report for SIS submission;
- iii. Outlook for the Future.

A.3.
Overview of AP parts

(This is not a complete list – add/exclude (i)relevant parts of the AP as needed.)

Part of AP	Who will ensure	By which time	Notes
Administration: study	Dean's Office, Department	On arrival	
Administration: employment/DPP/DPČ	Department, Rectorate Supervisor	On arrival/as required	
Information about the studies	Deaneries, Doctoral Degree Boards, Supervisor, phd.vscht.cz	On arrival/as required	
Introduction to the group and the department	Department, Supervisor	1 week from enrolment	
Handover of documentation, manuals/SOPs	Department, Supervisor	1 week from enrolment	
Handover of keys, office/workstation, PPE, PC and/or monitor, equipment, etc.	Institute, Supervisor	1 week from enrolment/ as required	
Basic training (e.g. OSH/fire safety, pressure vessels)	Department, OSHA Referee	On arrival/as required	

A.4.
Values and standards

A.4. a) UCT Prague

(Consider inviting the PhD candidate to go through the Study and Examination Regulations (SZŘ), at least the section on the DSP, the internal norm Rules of doctoral studies at UCT Prague and the Code of Ethics (EK) of UCT Prague. Alternatively, consider excerpting the parts of the SZŘ/EK that you consider essential.)

A.4. b) Values and standards of the supervisor/group

(What do you value in your group? What do you appreciate and what do you dislike? E.g. quality/quantity of work, trustworthiness, punctuality, flexibility, communication ... Consider also reflecting the Standard of the Supervisor.)

A.5.
Study obligations

(This section will not necessarily be discussed on the day of arrival, but due to Individual Study Plan (ISP) submission deadlines should not be delayed too much. The requirements for the number of courses in ISP from each category A or B may vary depending on the rules set by the Doctoral Degree Board of the DSP in question.)

A.5. a) Selection of subjects for the ISP:

- **i.** What subjects would be beneficial?

(Consider not only the contribution to research activity or professional application, but also the relationship to the Colloquium 2.)

- **ii.** Subjects from the UCT Prague or outside?
- **iii.** What is the course fulfilment plan?

(In which semester does the candidate plan to take which course? It is a good idea to advise the candidate that, depending on the interest, the courses may not be offered every year/semester as they were at the undergraduate level, and it may therefore be advisable to contact the course instructor before enrolling in the ISP to verify when and under what conditions the course will be taught. It may also be useful to mention that the A–F grading scale is replaced by a binary pass/fail grade in the postgraduate ISP.)

A.5. b) Colloquium 1

(Consider discussing the concept of colloquiums, what to expect, how it will be conducted, and what to prepare in advance – e.g. presentation.)

A.5. c) Colloquium 2

(What questions will be asked by the committee and what to prepare?)

A.5. d) PGS conference at UCT Prague in English

(Some faculties allow for this obligation to be replaced, e.g. by giving a lecture in English at an international conference or Colloquium 2.)

A.5. e) Minimum 1 month stay abroad

- **i.** Preferences on location and length of stay?
- **ii.** What year/semester?
- **iii.** How to finance the stay?

(Consider discussing the fulfilment of this statutory obligation at the beginning of the doctorate or consider in advance the possibility of replacing the obligation, e.g. by publishing in an international research group.)

A.5. f) Further education

(E.g. courses offered by professional societies, other courses offered by the school focusing not only on professional but also on transferable skills or languages, Effective Scientific Writing etc.)

A.5. g) Training that a PhD candidate should complete

(Consider which training is mandatory for the PhD candidate given the expected nature of the work (OSH, fire protection, first aid, pressure cylinders, stabile pressure vessels, electrical, driving vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes...) and which could be beneficial for the PhD candidate (pedagogy, English for PhD candidates, Data Stewardship, etc.). Consider the timeframe in which the training should be completed.)

A.6.
Position description

(Even if the PhD candidate is already accepted, there is still time to consider whether the position/topic is suitable for them, or to take steps at the beginning of the study to e.g. remedy any gaps in qualifications.)

A.6. a) Qualifications

(E.g. master's degree, B2+ level of English, elementary knowledge of MS Office ...)

A.6. b) Main activities

(E.g. Work on an independent project within the framework of a dissertation, at least 2 impacted first-authored publications, at least 4 publications in total (i.e. including co-authorship), fulfill ISP or any other activity not directly related to the thesis.)

A.6. c) Teaching and other activities

(E.g. whether/to what extent is the candidate expected to teach laboratories (which tasks?), or exercises, or to consult bachelor or diploma theses. It is also possible to discuss the possibility of applying for grant competitions such as IGA, or participation in popularization events such as open house days.)

A.6. d) Financial security during the studies

(Can the candidate count on any income beyond the law mandated guaranteed income (1.2times minimal wage)? E.g. employment on a grant, DPP, DPČ? If not, are there alternative sources of income? Will the candidate be able to work on something non-related to their thesis to augment their income?)

A.7.
Scheduling time

A.7. a) "Working hours"
(SZŘ stipulates 40 hrs/week but this can be adjusted after agreement with the supervisor. What are the usual "business" hours?)

A.7. b) "Vacation"
(The SZŘ provides for 30 days but does not specify when and how the leave is to be taken.)

A.7. c) Home-office
(Under what circumstances? To whom is it reported?)

A.7. d) Reporting absences
(To whom/where do they report? InfSys/OKbase, by email, by phone ...)

A.7. e) Work outside normal hours
(Inform the candidate that the approval of the Head of the Institute is required. Under what conditions? Information about locking school doors in the evening/weekend.)

A.8. Communication

A.8. a) Time to reach

(When should the supervisor and the PhD candidate be usually available?)

A.8. b) Usual time limit for reply

(What is the usual/acceptable timeframe for the supervisor and the candidate to respond on non-urgent matters?)

A.8. c) Urgent reply period

(What is the timeframe for the supervisor and the candidate to expect a response in urgent cases?)

A.8. d) Preferred channels

(What are the preferred channels for routine communication and what are the preferred channels for emergencies? E.g. in person, by phone, SMS, email ...)

A.8. e) Meetings

(Regularly or *ad hoc*? Is there a minimum advance with which to schedule meetings? Does anyone take notes and if so, who?)

A.9.
Orientation around the campus

(Candidates don't need to know certain places at the campus during their undergraduate studies, so they may have no idea where they are even if they are alumni of UCT Prague. However, the biggest benefit can be expected for newcomers from other university/ foreign countries.)

A.9. a) Department/group

(E.g. Departmental Secretariat, lab. technicians, chemical store, laboratories ...)

A.9. b) School-wide

(E.g. Dean's Office, PhD Office, International Relations, Mailroom, Central Warehouse, NTK…)

A.10.
Orientation in the information systems

(Training on how to work with specific systems is probably better handled on an *ad hoc* basis, but it is possible to at least outline what systems are used for what for and where the candidate can find them. Consider mentioning the need of being at campus/ use VPN for most systems other than SIS and phonebook.)

System	What is it for	Note
SIS – student role	ISP performance, scholarships paid, annual evaluation	
SIS – teacher role	grading students, search for students	
InfSys (candidates only)	recording and planning attendance, detection of the presence of colleagues	
OKbase (employees only)	recording and planning attendance, financial matters, registration for trainings	
EPZ	IGA grants submission and management	
MIS	Management information system, accessing the OBD	
OBD	reporting of publication activity	
IOS	internal orders	
iFIS – WebMailer	control of grant funding	
phone book	contact for yourself and others	add your own office number and phone line, consider allowing photo from SIS
Intranet	other internal information	

A.11.
Email and VPN

(Consider highlighting the importance of the UCT email not only for communication but also for logging into systems, e-Infrastructure like NTK, publishers etc. Also consider pointing out the importance of the VPN for work outside of the campus/dormitories.)

1 month after enrolment

B

Date of the meeting: Name of the candidate:

B.1.
Performance assessment
(Short statements are sufficient.)

B.1. a) Knowledge of own job and responsibilities
(Does the candidate understand what they are supposed to do and what is expected of them?)

B.1. b) Coping with the specific demands of your own work
(E.g. working with apparatus/instrument/software, data evaluation ...)

B.1. c) Knowledge of common practices within the research group
(E.g. filling in the operating log, ordering chemicals...)

B.1. d) Identification of specific tasks to be assessed in Month 3
(E.g. performing specific experiments, preparing a publication ...)

B.2.
Personal access assessment

(We recommend that the candidate and the supervisor pre-fill their respective columns and later discuss their views during the meeting.)

Property	Self-assessment by the candidate	Assessment by the supervisor
Independence		
Adaptability		
Responsibility/ conscientiousness/consistency		
Activity and initiative		
Assertiveness		
Cooperation within the group		
Collaboration within the institute/UCT Prague/ Academy of Sciences ...		
Personal development (interest in electives/courses ...)		

B.3.
Evaluation by a PhD candidate

B.3. a) The course of AP

(Is the set AP being met? Have there been any problems? Should the plan be adjusted? ...)

B.3. b) Using your own professional knowledge and skills

(Does the candidate feel that they can use their knowledge and skills in their work?)

B.3. c) Communication and feedback from the supervisor/group

(How does the candidate perceive communication and feedback?
Is it sufficient/beneficial...?)

B.3. d) Atmosphere

(How does the candidate perceive the atmosphere at the workplace? Is the candidate integrated within the group/institute? Is the environment pleasant/stimulating...?)

B.3. e) Well-being

(E.g. does the candidate manage everything? Does the candidate need advice/help with anything?)

B.4.
Is there anything the PhD candidate or supervisor would like to add/ask?

3 months after enrolment

C

Date of the meeting: Name of the candidate:

C.1.
Performance assessment
(Short statements are sufficient.)

C.1. a) Knowledge of own job and responsibilities
(Does the candidate understand what they are supposed to do and what is expected of them?)

C.1. b) Coping with the specific demands of your own work
(E.g. working with apparatus/instrument/software, data evaluation …)

C.1. c) Knowledge of common practices within the research group
(E.g. filling in the operating log, ordering chemicals…)

C.1. d) Knowledge of common practices within the department/faculty
(E.g. grading students in the SIS, administration of going abroad…)

C.1. e) The success of specific tasks identified at the last meeting and the identification of new specific tasks to be considered at the next meeting.
(E.g. performing specific experiments, preparing a publication …)

C.2.
Personal access assessment

(The candidate and the supervisor pre-fill their respective columns and later discuss their views)

Property	Self-assessment by the candidate	Assessment by the supervisor
Independence		
Adaptability		
Responsibility/ conscientiousness/consistency		
Activity and initiative		
Assertiveness		
Cooperation within the group		
Collaboration within the institute/UCT Prague/ Academy of Sciences ...		
Personal development (interest in electives/courses ...)		

C.3.
Evaluation by a PhD candidate

C.3. a) The course of AP

(Is the set AP being met? Have there been any problems? Should the plan be adjusted? ...)

C.3. b) Using your own professional knowledge and skills

(Does the candidate feel that they can use their knowledge and skills in their work?)

C.3. c) Communication and feedback from the supervisor/group

(How does the candidate perceive communication and feedback?
Is it sufficient/beneficial...?)

C.3. d) Atmosphere

(How does the candidate perceive the atmosphere at the workplace? Is the candidate integrated within the group/institute? Is the environment pleasant/stimulating...?)

C.3. e) Well-being

(E.g. does the candidate manage everything? Does the candidate need advice/help with anything?)

C.4.
Preparation for Colloquium 1

(How will the colloquium 1 look like? Will the candidate submit their presentation for feedback/approval to their supervisor? If yes, when is the first draft due?)

C.5.
Is there anything the PhD candidate or supervisor would like to add/ask?

6 months after enrolment

D

Date of the meeting: Name of the candidate:

D.1.
Performance assessment
(Short statements are sufficient.)

D.1. a) Knowledge of own job and responsibilities
(Does the candidate understand what they are supposed to do and what is expected of them?)

D.1. b) Coping with the specific demands of your own work
(E.g. working with apparatus/instrument/software, data evaluation …)

D.1. c) Knowledge of common practices within the research group
(E.g. filling in the operating log, ordering chemicals…)

D.1. d) Knowledge of common practices within the department/faculty
(E.g. grading students in the SIS, administration of going abroad…)

D.1. e) The success of specific tasks identified at the last meeting and the identification of new specific tasks to be considered at the next meeting.
(E.g. performing specific experiments, preparing a publication …)

D.2.
Personal access assessment

(The candidate and the supervisor pre-fill their respective columns and later discuss their views.)

Property	Self-assessment by the candidate	Assessment by the supervisor
Independence		
Adaptability		
Responsibility/ conscientiousness/consistency		
Activity and initiative		
Assertiveness		
Cooperation within the group		
Collaboration within the institute/UCT Prague/ Academy of Sciences ...		
Personal development (interest in electives/courses ...)		

D.3.
Evaluation by a PhD candidate

D.3. a) The course of AP

(Is the set AP being met? Have there been any problems? Should the plan be adjusted? ...)

D.3. b) Using your own professional knowledge and skills

(Does the candidate feel that they can use their knowledge and skills in their work?)

D.3. c) Communication and feedback from the supervisor/group

(How does the candidate perceive communication and feedback?
Is it sufficient/beneficial...?)

D.3. d) Atmosphere

(How does the candidate perceive the atmosphere at the workplace? Is the candidate integrated within the group/institute? Is the environment pleasant/stimulating...?)

D.3. e) Well-being

(E.g. does the candidate manage everything? Does the candidate need advice/help with anything?)

D.4.
Is there anything the PhD candidate or supervisor would like to add/ask?

12 months from the date of enrolment

E

Date of the meeting: Name of the candidate:

(Although the content of this interview is directed towards the annual deadline (August), it might be useful to schedule at least part of it before the submission of the annual evaluation report (in SIS), usually by 31 July of the year.)

E.1.
Overall assessment of AP performance

E.1. a) Knowledge of own job and responsibilities

E.1. b) Success in solving tasks

E.1. c) Overall assessment of personal approach

E.2.
Overall evaluation by the PhD candidate

E.2. a) How does the candidate perceive AP?

(Was the onboarding successful? What was successful and what was not? How could the process be improved in the future for other PhD candidates?)

E.2. b) Was the first year of the PhD beneficial? How?

E.2. c) Using your own professional knowledge and skills

E.2. d) Atmosphere

E.2. e) Communication and feedback from the supervisor/group

E.2. f) Well-being during the first year
(E.g. Has the candidate mastered everything? Is there still something they need to help with?)

E.3.
Is there anything the PhD candidate or supervisor would like to add/ask?

E.4.
Outlook for the Future:

- **Colloquium 2** (at the end of the second year),
- **International** experience,
- Finishing of **publications**,
- Writing the **dissertation**,
- **Submitting** the dissertation (at least 4 months prior the defence),
- **Defending** the dissertation and
- **Graduation.**

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Suggestions for conversation

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