

DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Identification of the evaluated doctoral degree programme

Name of the programme	Regional Economics
Guarantor	doc. Ing. Vladimír Žitek, Ph.D.
Form	full-time or combined
Language	English
Faculty	Faculty of Economics and Administration

Information on the evaluation meeting

Date of the On-Site Visit: 12-14 October 2022

Members of the Evaluation Panel:	Institution
<i>Jaromír Kovářík (chair)</i>	University of the Basque Country
<i>Renáta Kosová</i>	Imperial College London – Business School
<i>Emma Galli</i>	Sapienza University of Rome
<i>Jana Fidrmuc-Palagova</i>	University of Warwick – Warwick Business School
<i>Tom Broekel</i>	University of Stavanger Business School

Date of the separate meeting with students of the evaluated degree programme: 13 October 2022

Student representatives (DSP REEK):
<i>Tereza Lelková</i>
<i>Filip Emmer</i>

The discussion with students was organized at the faculty level, not at the level of individual programs. Therefore, the conclusions regarding the students have limited explanatory validity in relation to the implementation of the DSP Regional Economy.

Doctoral Degree Programme Development Plan

Based on the outputs of the Evaluation Report and On-Site Visit, the following objectives have been identified and formulated for the further development of the evaluated doctoral degree programme (please indicate the objective of the doctoral degree programme development, the proposed measures, and the expected date of implementation of the measures).

Summarizing comments:

The Doctoral Board of the Regional Economics doctoral degree programme has been informed of the conclusions of the evaluation meetings and evaluation reports of the doctoral degree programme, both for the Regional Economics degree programme and for the Faculty of Economics and Administration as a whole. The evaluation indicates that a significant portion of the comments and recommendations relate to the organization of studies at the faculty level, and the possibility of implementing changes is largely limited by the existence of national and university regulations. The fundamental requirement for the unification of doctoral degree programmes at FEA MU is considered unsubstantiated by the Doctoral Board. In their opinion, there are insufficient arguments that the merging of programmes will lead to an improvement in the quality of study parameters. On the contrary, there may be several problems related to the specifics of individual research fields, where, for example, the Doctoral Board would not be able to assess proposed proposals regarding dissertation topics or the focus of foreign internships. In this regard, negative experiences from similar changes in Slovakia cannot be ignored.

Regarding the structure of subjects, there is some agreement regarding their relevance to the doctoral level of study. This does not apply to subjects guaranteed by the supervising Department of Regional Economics, where this issue is unequivocally reflected and resolved. It is also necessary to consider that given the number of students in individual programmes and the diversity of their focus, the main educational potential lies in the opportunity to attend external courses. This option has been widely used in recent years, especially in the implementation of specific research projects. The offer of foreign courses and their availability fully meets the existing demand. Self-study also plays an important role, where the ability to find the necessary resources is one of the goals of study.

The fact that the study is significantly dependent on the supervisor arises from the nature of its functioning in the Czech Republic. The supervisor is a key partner for the student but not the only one. The Doctoral Board also plays a very significant role, as it approves all the parametric settings of the programme and matters concerning individual students. Another possibility is offered by the supervising department, which has several experts who provide support to students. We agree to increase the flexibility of adjusting topics, for example, through their regular revision. We also agree to reduce the number of students supervised by one supervisor, with a maximum of three considered optimal. The capacity of the admission procedure is already adjusted to this intention.

In the last two years, there has been a significant increase in the degree of internationalization of the study. Students regularly go on mandatory foreign internships, which are carried out at relevant workplaces that are part of prestigious foreign institutions. Here, the Doctoral Board appeals for caution regarding the extension of the mandatory internship duration. Longer stays are hampered by both the willingness of institutions to accept our students (mentioning a month as the limit) and would also become a significant limit to interest in studying (for many, it would be discriminatory). Last but not least, the faculty cannot finance such long stays.

The Doctoral Board agrees to include a mandatory seminar where PhD students present their research and progress made in the previous year. This was already included in 2022 and is now repeated in 2023. At the same time, it considers it more appropriate for independent presentations before the Doctoral Board of the Regional Economics doctoral degree programme rather than at the faculty "conference." Presentations before the Doctoral Board allow for more extensive discussion, and the comments of external members of the Doctoral Board dealing with regionally oriented topics are more beneficial to students, including recommendations for potential sources or contacts.

Many other suggestions and recommendations encounter the financial limits of the faculty and department. It would certainly be interesting to build some form of regionally oriented doctoral school, but we encounter legislative rules, student affiliation, and especially problems with their financial support. Similarly, inviting students from doctoral programmes to foreign universities as a common part of the implementation of our study programmes appears problematic. In connection with the funding of the study programme, it seems essential for supervisors to plan capacities for students in external project applications, where possible.

Structured chart:

<i>The objective of the degree programme development*</i>	<i>Measures leading to the objective implementation</i>	<i>Implementation of measures (year or cycle)</i>
<i>Introduce a system allowing flexible changes to dissertation topics</i>	<i>Opening a regular item on the Doctoral Board agenda: Revision of dissertation topics</i>	<i>Annually</i>
<i>Internationalization of further activities of the Regional Economics doctoral degree programme</i>	<i>Implementation of foreign internships or other forms of direct participation in international cooperation</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Increase support for PhD students from other academic staff of the supervising department</i>	<i>Direct involvement of assistant professors in the support system of the Regional Economics doctoral degree programme</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Reduce the number of students supervised by one supervisor to a maximum of three</i>	<i>Consideration within the admission process</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Request an annual presentation of the research progress of individual PhD students</i>	<i>Implementation of an internal research seminar (prior to the Doctoral Board)</i>	<i>Annually</i>
<i>Involve students in research projects funded by external sources</i>	<i>Capacity planning for PhD students in project proposals</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

Development plan was discussed by the Doctoral Board of Regional Economics Programme at its meeting on 15/09/2023 and subsequently approved by all votes by per rollam voting on 19/09-22/09/2023.