

Foreign Mobilities for Doctoral Students of the Faculty of Science

Basic principles - PhD studies and their financing

Doctoral study is an important decision that the student, supervisor, and the department take on a long-term commitment (for several years) to support each other in pursuit of goals of the doctoral project.

The standard and preferred form of doctoral study is full-time. The student is expected to meet all the obligations arising from the doctoral studies for a minimum of 40 hours per week. The student and the faculty view doctoral study as an investment which they fully and cooperatively support.

The supervisor and the department (faculty) support the involvement of doctoral students and the conduct of doctoral research both by covering direct research costs (e.g., provision of infrastructure and equipment, research materials, etc.), but also through scholarships and employment contracts to specific students. Doctoral students are given funds, especially in the form of part-time contracts, 'as part of' the work on the dissertation and it is expected that PhD students devote themselves fully to their dissertation research. The contract is therefore not 'extra work'.

** Exceptions do exist - e.g., a student may participate in teaching "beyond" his/her duties, for which he/she is entitled to appropriate additional pay or evaluation.*

As part of his/her professional development (experience in grant preparation, etc.), the doctoral student proactively pursues and seeks opportunities to obtain external funding sources for his/her own research (student grants, awards) as well as other related activities - e.g., grants to support participation in congresses, as well as grants or grants to support mobility.

In doctoral studies, it is essential that students gain independent international experience to become independent and autonomous researchers after graduation. International mobility is an important activity in doctoral studies that develops both the student and the university and faculty. The doctoral student and the faculty also see this as a joint and universally beneficial investment and are prepared to participate in the provision of the international mobility, including financial participation.

Length and types of stay

As part of the dissertation, students need to gain international experience (also according to *Government Regulation No. 274/2016 Coll., on Standards for Accreditation in Higher Education*) and this is primarily achieved through longer stays abroad of at least 1 month. For experimental disciplines, a longer period may be more appropriate (several months, a semester, etc.). Longer stays are primarily supported by the faculty, which is responsible for the quality of doctoral studies. The fulfilment of longer stays abroad also has additional importance - it is an important indicator that is reported to the Ministry of Education and is used in MU budgeting.

** The requirements for recording and reporting foreign stays abroad within MU are considered while planning the mobility (e.g., duration is important for deciding 'eligibility' - foreign stays longer than 14 days are reported to MU, stays of 30 days or longer are positively counted in the budgeting of faculty and departments.)*

As PhD students work on their individual research projects and dissertations, their mobilities are generally "TRAINEESHIPS". In the framework of doctoral studies, "STUDY STAYS" as defined by

ERASMUS+ tend not to occur (semester-long study stays during which students enrol courses at the host university, are mainly relevant for BSc and MSc students).

Other forms of fulfilment of the mobility obligation are not excluded (e.g., a combination of several short stays or involvement in a grant abroad) but are rather an exception that may be relevant for selected programmes, dissertation topics or specific life situations of doctoral students. Primarily, PhD students, studying in standard form of studies, should gain international experience by undertaking a longer-term internship. Faculty governance will approve requests to fulfil the foreign experience requirement in another form only on an exceptional basis. Shorter-term foreign placements normally fulfil other objectives (e.g., student presentations at conferences, international networking, training activities, etc.). These activities are primarily in the interest of the student, the supervisor and the student and the department are also involved in supporting these mobilities.

In view of the above, this document summarises the principles for longer-term placements, which are primarily supported by the faculty. The implementation and funding of shorter placements is more of the responsibility of the student in cooperation with his/her supervisor (at their specific workplace).

Objectives of foreign internships

In the context of the preferred longer PhD mobilities, it is expected that the focus should be on activities related to dissertation research or the doctoral student's broader scientific development. Ideally, during the internship, research activities directly related to the research topic are performed and the PhD student will use the results from the internship in his/her dissertation.

Foreign stays abroad (including those longer than one month) may exceptionally have other objectives (e.g., gaining a broader experience - methodological development and research of the doctoral student in directions other than those directly related to the dissertation topic), but these are exceptions that should always be carefully considered by the supervisor and the student.

Important for the support of PhD students' international placements is the strategic coherence of the host universities with faculty departments.

Primarily, faculty supports internships at foreign institutions with which they build long-term partnerships (e.g., implementation of joint international research grants, etc.) and at high quality foreign universities; also, in accordance with MU priorities (i.e., mobility to TOP 300 universities according to international rankings). The specific priorities are decided by the individual departments, and it is in their interest that such "priority" mobilities are supported by the funds at the departments. Conversely, ad hoc mobility to other (for students "attractive") locations are judged more as a student's interest to develop. From a faculty perspective, this is therefore a lower priority, which is also reflected in less support from the faculty.

Principles of internship implementation

The PhD student and his/her supervisor will develop a plan for mobility abroad. It is most appropriate to draw up this plan (at least in outline) at the beginning of the studies, preferably in the first year. The plan should consider the above-mentioned principles and it is therefore desirable that the student and supervisor consult with the management of the department and plan the internship accordingly, if possible and relevant, to be in line with the strategy of the department.

The plan means the following:

- Location: the target workplace (in line with the priorities of the workplace - strategic partnerships, MU priorities – TOP 300 international universities)

- Objectives of the internship and related duration - relation to the research topic, relevance and needs development of the PhD student.
- Expected term (semester, specific timeline, etc.)
- Financial plan - estimated travel costs in detailed structure - travel, accommodation, possible cost of living support (food allowance), other costs
- Proposal for financial support - this point is elaborated in the following paragraph.

Proposal for financial support for the internship

The main principle that such mobility is in the interests of both the student and the university must be considered when planning the financial support. It is needed that both sides, the student, and the university/faculty/department, contribute to the funding.

On the other hand, it is necessary to avoid possible double funding, i.e., avoiding the coverage of one cost by duplicate funding.

When considering funding and financial plan for the mobility, the following issues should be contemplated, and individualized solutions should be found. These questions are particularly relevant for situations where the doctoral student has an employment contract with MU (or another employer - e.g., CAS ...).

- **What will be the shares of the internship funding?** How will contribute the student vs. the institution (supervisor and his/her grants, department, faculty)?
- **Has the PhD student explored and taken advantage of opportunities to obtain external funding?**
 - E.g., ERASMUS+, government scholarships, foundations, other "grant" funding, etc.
- **Is it possible to carry out a stay abroad as part of a full-time job or is a partial exemption from the employment for the duration of the traineeship necessary?** (The main point to consider above is that work activity and doctoral studies are in principle inseparable and complementary).
 - What is the form and type of employment contract, what is the workload?
 - What is the description of the work activity (assessment of formal compliance with the aim of the mobility abroad)?
 - What are the conditions of the specific contract (grant) from which the doctoral student's full-time work is funded? What are the formal conditions of disbursement? Is it possible to carry out the internship as part of the implementation of the relevant grant (i.e., cover part of the costs in the form of a business trip)?
- **What are the funding options? What are the possibilities to combine different funding sources?**
 - What proportion is made up of external resources obtained by the PhD student? (Including e.g., ERASMUS+)
 - What proportion is made up of the PhD student's own resources?
 - Will the student go abroad as an EMPLOYEE in a full-time role = foreign business trip?
 - Or will the student go abroad on a foreign placement as a STUDENT = applying for a scholarship? In terms of funding, it is always necessary to separate in time whether the student is in the role of an employee or student, i.e., there must not be a

coincidence in time between the business trip (full-time funding) and the trip as a student (funding by a scholarship).

- What are the conditions for combining different sources of funding?
- What are the scholarship opportunities from the department, faculty, or MU?

Practical procedure and recommendations

- The PhD student and the supervisor prepare a first draft - a financial plan according to the principles above.
- Subsequently, the PhD student consults with the departmental coordinator at the department, the researcher, and the administrator of the project(s) from which his/her time is eventually paid, his/her immediate superior, the Personnel Office.

Records in the IS

The student shall ensure in advance that records of the foreign mobility is formally correct registered in the university systems - IS MUNI and ISOIS and can be correctly reported and recognised (e.g., Requirement of a foreign internship within the framework of PhD studies - fulfilment of XD110). Any foreign stay longer than 14 days MUST be recorded in the IS regardless of whether the student wishes to have the stay recognised! We highly recommend recording all stays, including conferences.

Before leaving for a foreign stay:

1/ the student creates a record of the stay in IS MUNI - Student section > Internships and stays application. Instructions [here](#). The student uploads the contract/document related to the stay. For example, for Erasmus+ it is Learning Agreement or Training agreement, in other cases Training Agreement or Invitation/Acceptance letter.

2/ the student will create an application form in ISOIS* - <https://isois.ois.muni.cz/cs/outgoing-application/application/>

*MUNI IS is primarily used for record keeping. In case the student's mobility is not within the mobility programmes administered by MU, and therefore cannot be recorded in the ISOIS system, the student will only create a record in the MUNI IS.

After returning from the foreign stay:

1/ the student uploads the document confirming the successful completion of the placement (Confirmation of Placement Period) to the record of the placement in IS MUNI.

2/ if the student wants to acknowledge the foreign placement as a course XD110 Foreign Placement, after entering the documents in the IS MUNI record, he/she submits a request for recognition of the course through this record XD110. Instructions [here](#).

Information on recognition of foreign placements on the faculty website: <https://www.sci.muni.cz/o-nas/organizacni-struktura/oddeleni-pro-doktorske-studium-kvalitu-akademicke-zalezitosti-a-internacionalizaci/internacionalizace/zahranicni-pobyty/evidence-a-uznavani-pobytu>

General information on placements abroad on the faculty web or the CZS website:
<https://czs.muni.cz/en/mu-student>

Note: In addition to this general "Evidence" procedure, the student is also required to fulfil other requirements related, for example, to the award of a specific type of scholarship (evidence of travel documents, etc.).

Further documents and materials - useful links:

SCI MUNI website for PhD students:

<https://www.sci.muni.cz/student/phd/rozvoj-dovednosti/stay-abroad>

Stays abroad during concurrent study and full-time employment:

https://is.muni.cz/do/sci/web/vzd/zahr/mobilities_employment.xlsx

General information on the CZS website:

<https://czs.muni.cz/cs/student-mu>

List of valid contracts (for Erasmus+ study placement/ staff mobility etc.)

<https://czs.muni.cz/cs/partneri/mezinarodni-spoluprace/prehled-smluv>

TOP 300 world universities (QS ranking):

<https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2021>

Faculty Scholarships

<https://www.sci.muni.cz/student/bc-a-mgr/stipendia>

Guidelines for Scholarship Programme in Support of the Doctoral Students Mobilities, programme

A.6: https://www.sci.muni.cz/do/sci/web/vzd/manualy/Guidelines_scholarships_A6_IRP.pdf