

INFORMAL GUIDE FOR NEW STUDENTS IN DOCTORAL STUDY PROGRAMMES

1. **Ask the more-experienced, but don't fall for everything ☺** - it is useful to ask higher-semester students about their experience in the Doctoral Programme. However, the information you get may not always be applicable to the current situation. Doctoral studies at the faculty undergo a lot of changes and many things that had been in use for years are different now. Check the information on the web, in the Doctoral study Office or with your supervisor. Be ready to do things in a new way!
2. **Work on your dissertation thesis continually** – a frequently seen mismanagement in doctoral studies is starting to work on the dissertation thesis at the very end of studies. A large number of students then don't finish their studies in time and prolong them in various ways. This practice is no longer supported. Exceptions will not be granted, and ungrounded prolongations of studies will not be allowed. Do not leave work on your dissertation for later. Choose a topic that you are interested in and start straight away!
3. **Concentrate on your dissertation, do not waste your energy elsewhere** – it sometimes happens that very active students who invest a lot of energy into their studies do not concentrate on their research topic when picking publication topics, conference presentations, projects and other activities. They do a lot of things, aside from working on their dissertation. This is usually not a good strategy to success in the Doctoral Programme. It surely is great to fully use the opportunities the faculty offers – specific research projects, scholarship programmes, funds for books, study trips, internships. But don't forget the primary purpose of the Doctoral Programme. If you do something, connect it to your dissertation topic.
4. **Clarify your topic as soon as possible** – the sooner you explicitly clarify the topic and the goal of your dissertation thesis ("about what" and "what for" is the dissertation supposed to be), the better. You should put together a list of questions that your dissertation thesis will answer by the end of the first year of your studies. Try to be able to do the following as soon as possible: explain in one sentence, what your dissertation will be about.
5. **It will take a lot of time** – doctoral studies require lots of reading and lots of thinking. It takes time and you must account for what this significant commitment entails. It is necessary to gather a number of sources, organize them and gradually work through them. In comparison with the diploma thesis, the number of sources is usually significantly larger. The sooner you start, the better!
6. **Don't be afraid of using foreign sources** – utilize the plentiful opportunities offered by the library and electronic databases available at the faculty. You can check sources in foreign languages that you do not speak well, too – current translators translate into/from foreign languages surprisingly well. They are perfectly usable for a basic literature search. If you speak English well and can use google translator as well, the number of sources at your disposal for the writing of your dissertation thesis becomes significantly greater.
7. **Don't get overwhelmed** – the danger of getting overwhelmed with information grows with the number of sources you have. Make structured notes. Write down notes on important sources and record even what little progress you make each day (you might have a kind of "research diary" where you will make notes on your decisions which way to go or which way you didn't go and why). Learn to appreciate even little failures, as well as mistakes you make – it is a step forward. It is also important to be able to say enough and stop reading other sources in the final stage, otherwise you will never finish your work. It's not possible to read everything. Make notes, try to source as much as possible, but don't go mad!
8. **Contacts are important** – use opportunities to make useful contacts both in country and abroad. The more people you meet who you can talk to about your dissertation work, the better. Speak with people at the faculty, at conferences, at study stays and internships, at specialist events. While feedback from your supervisor will play a key role in the direction of your dissertation, the more feedback and discussion you have with others, the better. Discussions with specialists in your field are as important as reading. Moreover, there is a chance of future cooperation in other projects

than your dissertation work. Don't make your life difficult by being on your own for the duration of your dissertation. Reach out to others, you never know what new ideas may come from discussions with people about your dissertation.

9. **Set the bar high**– try to reach true excellence in your research topic's field. As you carry out research in the given field for four whole years, you have a chance to become a specialist in the field. When you attend a conference in four years' time, you should be an expert in the given topic, known by the people. When they see you in the conference programme, they should think: "Oh, this is the person who wrote that brilliant article I read!" Your name is shaped by your publications as well as your conference presentations. Make use of the for a to display your knowledge. Don't write articles the quality of which you cannot be proud of. Don't attend conferences that will not contribute to your knowledge. Try to fully use your potential. Aim at quality, not quantity.
10. **Try to keep an open and patient mind** –everything will not be perfect during your doctoral studies. From the content side as well as the administrative side, some things change slowly. We will always welcome your feedback, so don't hesitate to provide it at every opportunity. It is really important for us as it will help to improve and move the Programme forward. Finally, please don't lose your humility. Even though you may feel like the foremost expert in the whole worlds in your field, don't forget that you are on the starting line. Try your best to keep an open mind to new ideas and ways of thinking, it may help you both during your Doctoral journey and in your career afterwards.