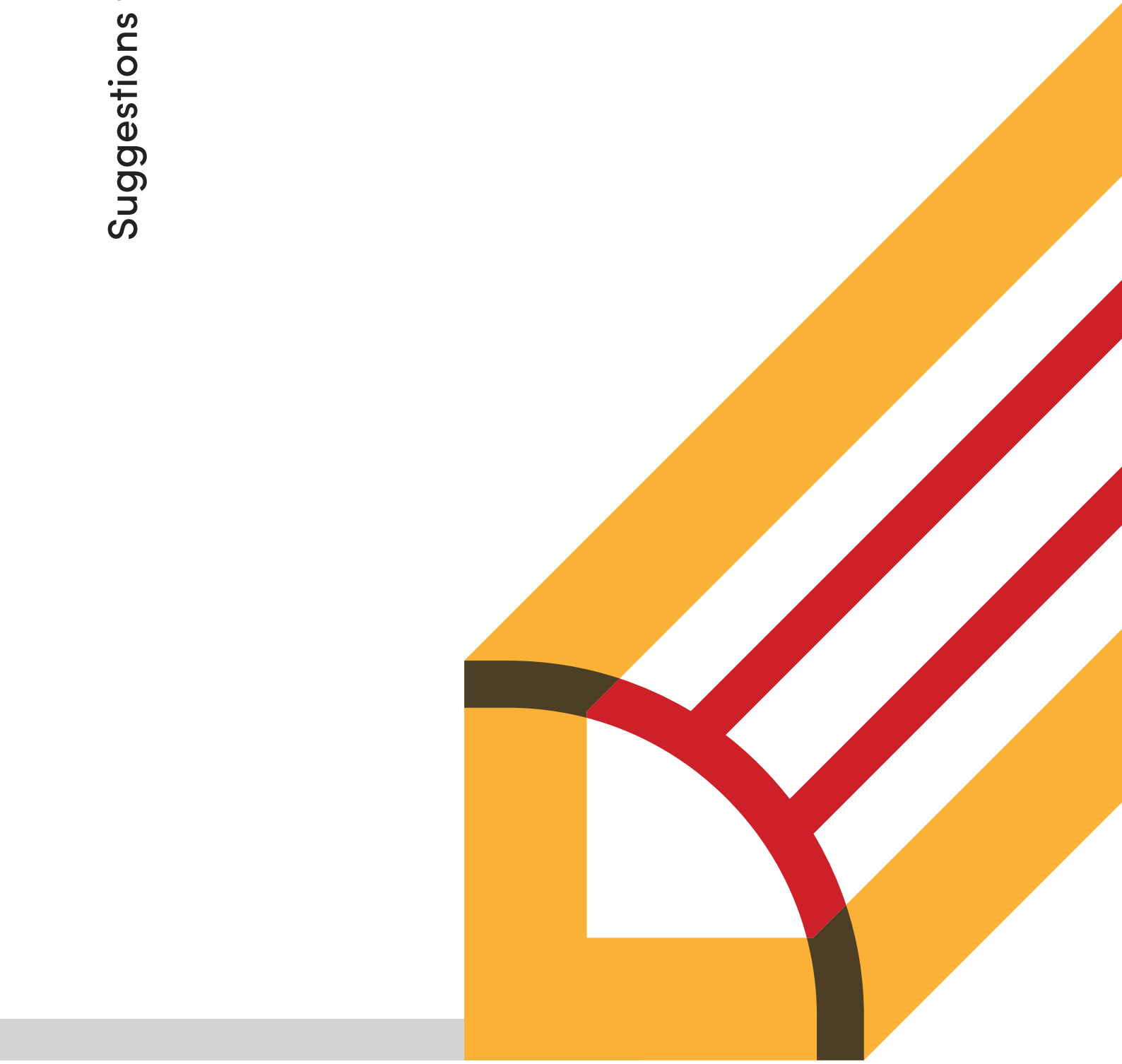


Suggestions for Conversation

Adaptation Plan for Onboarding



**Consider the adaptation plan as a recommendation,
and feel welcome to modify it according
to the needs and rules of your institution.**

Notes and instructions

- This document is the first version of the Adaptation Plan (AP) for new PhD candidates. 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.
- 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 PhD candidate have their own copy of the document 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 34 pages in total, in practice it has only 3 individual sections:
 - » On-boarding interview (Section A ≈ 8 pp.),
 - » Ongoing interviews (sections B, C and D are de facto identical and each ≈ 3 pages) and
 - » Annual interview (section E ≈ 2 pages).
- **Document legend:**
 - » A.1 ORDER OF CONVERSATION (A/B/C/D/E).POINT NUMBER WITH DESCRIPTION (or sub-points)
 - » (INFORMATION FOR SUPERVISORS ON THE POINT, EXAMPLES AND SUGGESTIONS)
 - » SPACE FOR MEETING NOTES: ↓
- For the purpose of debugging the document and the onboarding process, please:
 - » Try to find out approximately how long the interviews last.
 - » If you decide to omit a point, please indicate this in the document (e.g. by a cross next to the point number)
 - » If you encounter an error, ambiguity, or anything else in the document, please do not hesitate to contact us and, if possible, record your problem in the document. Suggestions for additional points are also welcome.
 - » Please forward the document with the omitted points and comments (not necessarily the notes from your meeting with the PhD candidate) to us for evaluation.

**What led to the development
of this adaptation plan?**

**Good practice
in the private sector**

In the process of establishing our adaptation plan, a strategic consideration emerged regarding the origins of onboarding practices, predominantly rooted in the private sector. This prompted the idea to conduct interviews with private companies, seeking insights into their best practices and strategies that contribute to successful onboarding processes.

Interviews with HR people from Czech companies were conducted, and among them, IT companies stood out for its well-structured onboarding procedure. The companies emphasize four critical points during their onboarding process:

- 1. Clear Job Description:** Prior to the commencement of onboarding, the company ensures a clear job description is provided to set expectations for the incoming employee. This step aims to clarify what is expected and what the employee should already know.
- 2. Adaptation Plan:** A comprehensive adaptation plan is implemented, consisting of four meetings – on the first day of employment and subsequently at the end of the first, second, and third months. This plan facilitates a systematic approach to the onboarding process, ensuring continuous evaluation and adjustment.
- 3. Training Opportunities:** From the outset, employees are offered training opportunities for various courses and system training, promoting continuous skill development and knowledge enhancement.
- 4. Probation Period Evaluation:** At the conclusion of the probation period, an interview is conducted to assess the employee's adaptation progress. The employee is given the opportunity to express their agreement or disagreement with continuing their employment.

Many IT companies have an elaborate Adaptation Plan i.e. a document spanning approximately 5-6 pages. The document encompasses:

- 1. Company Values:** The first page highlights the core values of the company, such as responsibility, flexibility, and teamwork, providing a foundational understanding for the new employee.
- 2. Detailed First Day Plan:** This covers activities such as paperwork signing, allocation of keys and codes, and providing manuals for systems operation.
- 3. Three-Month Plan:** Aligned with the probation period, the Adaptation Plan outlines a plan for the first three months, with periodic assessments at the end of each month. Regular meetings with supervisors are conducted to discuss the employee's adaptation progress.
- 4. Probation Period Interview:** On the last day of the probation period, an interview is conducted to evaluate the success of the adaptation process, providing a structured platform for feedback and discussion.
- 5. Final Agreement:** The Adaptation Plan concludes with a final agreement or potential disagreement to continue the employment relationship, ensuring transparency and mutual understanding between the employer and the employee.

**Evaluating onboarding
procedure**

Examples from UCT, Prague

Interviews with PhD candidates

In considering the comprehensive perspective necessary for the success of our project, we turned our attention to a crucial stakeholder group: PhD candidates. Recognizing their significance, particularly those with experience in or currently working in the private sector, interviews were conducted with a cohort of PhD candidates. This initiative not only shed light on their unique insights but also inspired the conception of a survey to be conducted subsequently at UCT Prague. The survey aims to display the sentiments of the university's community on onboarding, gather their experiences, and assess their openness to the implementation of onboarding practices.

A pilot phase was initiated in in 2023,. This phase is instrumental in testing and refining the onboarding process before full-scale implementation. Before delving into the detailed analysis of each step, it is noteworthy to highlight insights gained conversations with the PhD candidates at UCT, Prague. Predominantly, three recurring themes emerged:

- 1. Information Overload on the First Day:** Respondents expressed concern about the excessive amount of information presented on the first day of onboarding, indicating a need for a more structured and manageable introduction.
- 2. Desire for Manuals or 'Survival Guides':** PhD candidates expressed a desire for concise manuals, akin to what has been termed a 'survival guide' at UCT Prague. A basic set of 15 points outlining essential tasks and resources would be welcomed.
- 3. Language Courses for Foreigners:** Particularly concerning foreign candidates, there was a consensus that language courses, ideally conducted before the commencement of the position, would greatly benefit their integration into the academic environment.

These findings underscore the importance of incorporating the perspectives of PhD candidates, as their experiences will play a pivotal role in shaping the subsequent phases of the onboarding process.

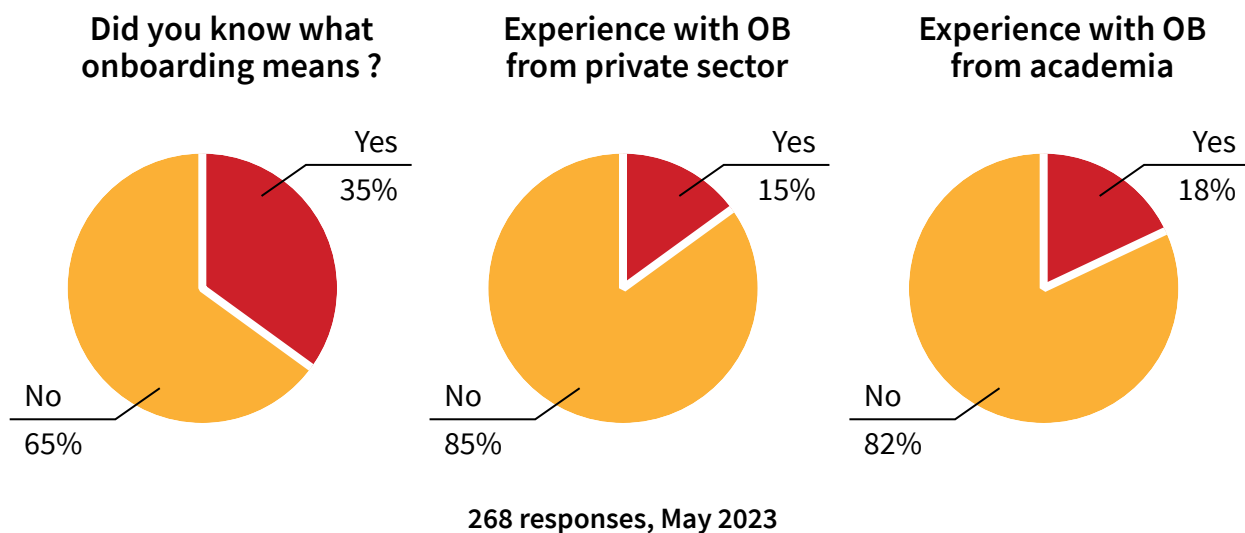
UCT Prague Survey on Onboarding

In May 2023, a comprehensive survey was carried out in UCT Prague, garnering insights from 268 respondents comprising both PhD candidates and employees. Notably, a significant proportion of the participants were individuals who had recently joined UCT within the past few years. This deliberate inclusion ensured that the respondents possessed recent and vivid recollections of their onboarding experiences, enabling them to identify aspects that may have been lacking and offer constructive feedback. The wealth of input from these individuals, with their firsthand perspectives on the onboarding process, is invaluable as we strive to refine and enhance our approach to meet the evolving needs of our university community.

Within the confines of the questionnaire, we endeavored to show the familiarity and experiential background of our participants with the onboarding process. A pivotal question sought to ascertain whether respondents possessed an understanding of the concept of onboarding and if they had prior experience with it, outlining between the academic and private sectors. The results unveiled a notable discrepancy, with merely 35% of respondents professing comprehension of onboarding. Delving deeper into their experiences, the subsequent pie charts revealed that a mere 15% of participants had firsthand exposure to onboarding in the private sector, whereas a slightly higher proportion, accounting for 18%, had encountered onboarding within the academic realm.

These findings underscore the imperative for a more widespread awareness and appreciation of onboarding practices, necessitating focused efforts to bridge the knowledge gap among our university community.

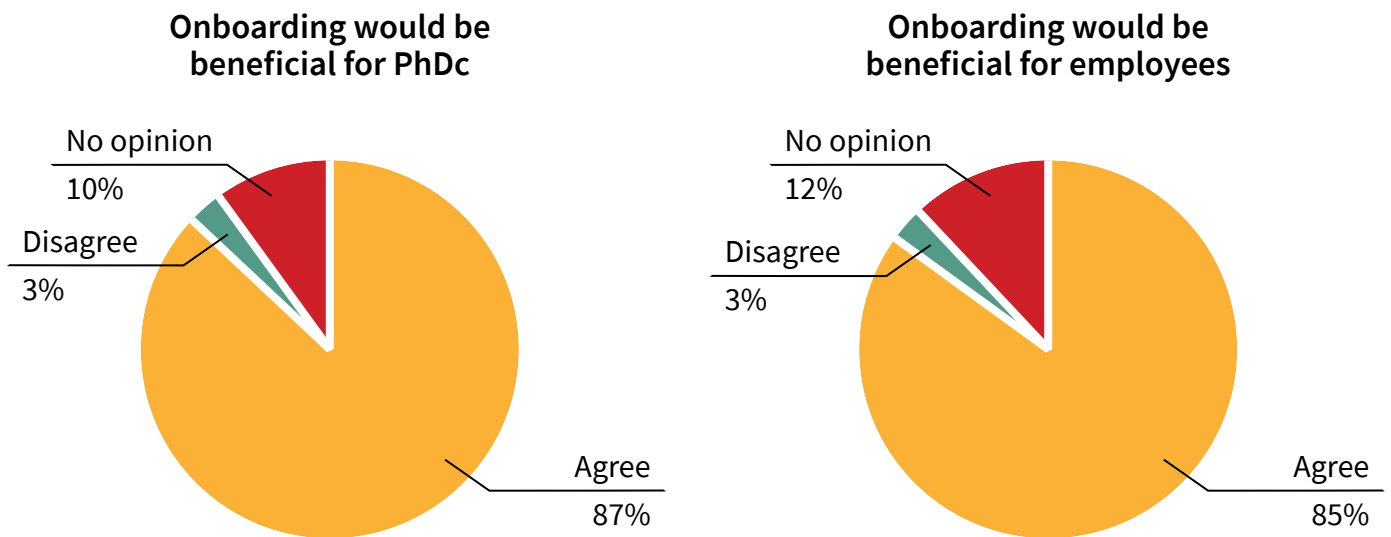
Results from the survey at UCT Prague



A critical aspect of our investigation revolved around the insights and recommendations derived from the survey. Within the questionnaire, we incorporated an open-ended inquiry: "Which information would you have welcomed when starting at UCT, Prague?" The wealth of responses received was systematically analyzed, with an effort made to categorize them based on their thematic content. Several recurring answers surfaced, encompassing diverse facets such as administration, financing, departmental information, study duties, evaluation processes, publishing guidelines, and opportunities for securing grants. Noteworthy sentiments were expressed regarding the perceived absence of manuals, a desire for additional educational resources, and aspirations for career growth, aligning seamlessly with the ongoing discourse on doctoral education. Furthermore, the survey participants articulated a demand for courses addressing transferable skills, signaling a contemporary interest in the academic community. These recommendations from the respondents illuminate valuable areas for refinement and development in the onboarding process at UCT, Prague.

A particularly intriguing set of visuals in our analysis is represented by the two pie charts, revealing a consensus among the majority that onboarding would be advantageous for both doctoral candidates and employees in academia. The overwhelming sentiment expressed in these charts underscores the perceived benefits of effective onboarding practices within the academic context, emphasizing its potential positive impact on the experiences of both doctoral candidates and university employees.

Results from the survey at UCT Prague



Drawing insights from the questionnaire, along with perspectives gathered from the private sector and interviews with PhD candidates, we have come to the conclusion that we should launch the pilot of the adaptation plan as soon as possible. At UCT, Prague we have collaboratively devised a comprehensive onboarding plan for a year-long pilot program. Our proactive engagement with PhD candidates has resulted in the creation of a "UCT survival guide" tailored for incoming doctoral candidates. This guide serves as a concise resource, offering guidance on where to seek assistance, whom to contact in times of need, navigating specific information, and locating resources on the doctoral study website. As part of the initiative, we are set to conduct an online webinar titled "Freshmen at PhD" each September. This webinar will facilitate a dialogue between newly enrolled and current doctoral candidates, with the latter imparting insights into the expectations, potential challenges, and fundamental aspects of funding within the doctoral program. The entire seminar will be recorded and subsequently made accessible on the doctoral study website.

Furthermore, in contrast to traditional academic onboarding practices, piloting of an adaptation plan inspired by successful strategies in the private sector started. Our focus primarily revolves around the initial meeting between the doctoral candidate and their supervisor, wherein mutual expectations will be discussed, and the new PhD candidate will have the opportunity to pose any queries. Subsequent assessment meetings at the first, third, and sixth months will be integral to display the progress and adapting the onboarding process as needed. After a year-long implementation, a conclusive final meeting will be convened to comprehensively conclude the pilot onboarding process, paving the way for refined practices in the future.

A. First day

the date of the meeting: _____ Name of PhD 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.c may vary)

A.2. a) at the start:

- i. registration at the dean's office;
- ii. PhD Website of your University;
- iii. webinar for newcomers;
- iv. Interview with the supervisor;
- v. other materials.

A.2. b) 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. c) overall evaluation after 12 months:

- i. Interview with the supervisor;
- ii. preparation of the annual evaluation report.

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	Checklist
Administration: study	Dean's Office Institute	On arrival	
Administration: full-time/part-time/full-time	Institute Rectorate workplace	On arrival/ as required	
Information about the studies	Deaneries phd.vscht.cz	On arrival	
Introduction to the group and the department	Institute supervisor	1 week from enrolment	
Handover of documentation, manuals/ SOPs	Institute 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)	Institute/OSHA referee	On arrival/ as required	

A.4. Values and standards

A.4. a) UCT

(Consider inviting the PhD candidate to go through the Study and Examination Regulations ("Studijní a zkušební řád" in Czech, SZŘ), or at least the section on the DSP and the Code of Ethics (EK) of the University of Chemistry and Technology, 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...)

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 study 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 core part of the State Doctoral Exam (SDE, “Státní závěrečná zkouška” in Czech, SDZ) – It is worth considering a preliminary selection of topics for the core part of the SDE on this occasion.)

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? When does the candidate plan to take the core part of the state doctoral exam (SDZ)? 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) PGS conference at the University of Chemistry and Technology in English

(Some faculties allow for this obligation to be replaced, e.g. by giving a lecture in English at an international conference. Consider planning it with the doctoral candidate to fulfil this prerequisite to the core SDZ.)

A.5. c) 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. d) 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, etc.)

A.5. e) 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, stable 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, for example, 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), fulfil ISP or any other activity not directly related to the thesis.)

A.6. c) Sub-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 other income beyond the basic doctoral scholarship, e.g., teaching scholarship or (partial) employment on a grant? If yes, what is the FTE equivalent? If not, are there alternative sources of livelihood for the candidate?)

A.7. Scheduling time

A.7. a) “Working hours”

(SZŘ stipulates 40 h/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 5 weeks 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

(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. 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, Dept. of Research and Transfer of Technology (VaTT), International Relations Dept. , 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.)

System	What is it for	Note
SIS – student role	ISP performance, scholarships paid, annual evaluation	
SIS – teacher role	grading students, search for students	
InfSys (PGS only)	recording and planning attendance, detection of the presence of colleagues	
OKBase (employees only)	recording and planning attendance, financial matters, registration for trainings	
MIS	management system, administration of IGA, OBD input	
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 and phone line
Intranet	Other internal informatios	

B. 1 month after enrolment

the date of the meeting: _____ Name of PhD candidate: _____

B.1. Performance assessment

(Short statements are sufficient)

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

(Does the PhD 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 advisor pre-fill their respective columns and later discuss their views during the meeting.)

Property	Self-assessment by the candidate	Assessment by the advisor
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?

C. 3 months after enrolment

the date of the meeting: _____ Name of PhD candidate: _____

C.1. Performance assessment

(Short statements are sufficient)

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

(Does the PhD 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 advisor pre-fill their respective columns and later discuss their views)

Property	Self-assessment by the candidate	Assessment by the advisor
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. Is there anything the PhD candidate or supervisor would like to add/ask?

D. 6 months after enrolment

the date of the meeting: _____ Name of PhD candidate: _____

D.1. Performance assessment

(Short statements are sufficient)

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

(Does the PhD 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 advisor pre-fill their respective columns and later discuss their views)

Property	Self-assessment by the candidate	Assessment by the advisor
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?

E. 12 months after enrolment

(Although the content of this interview is directed towards the annual deadline, it might be useful to schedule it before the submission of the annual evaluation of doctoral candidates, usually by 31 July of the year.)

the date of the meeting: _____ **Name of PhD candidate:** _____

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?

Adaptation Plan for Onboarding Suggestions for Conversation

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DOCTORAL EDUCATION

 **UNIVERSITY OF
CHEMISTRY AND TECHNOLOGY
PRAGUE**