



Department of
Human Geography and Regional Development,
University of Ostrava

Doctoral Studies Applicant Guide



INTRODUCTION

Are you considering Doctoral studies at the [Department of Human Geography and Regional Development](#)?

Our Doctoral study programme [Political and Economic Geography](#) is the only programme in the Czech Republic that integrates political, cultural, economic, and urban geography/regional development.

This guide is intended to help you find answers to the following questions:

- What will you need to successfully complete PhD studies?
- What is the admission procedure?
- What the department has to offer you?
- How to choose a dissertation topic?
- How to choose a dissertation supervisor?
- What is the Subject Area Board and its competences?
- What are the courses and who teaches them?
- What is the scholarship amount for Doctoral study?



BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT STUDIES

We will now present some basic information about Doctoral studies. Before you start, it is important to have a clear understanding of your studies.

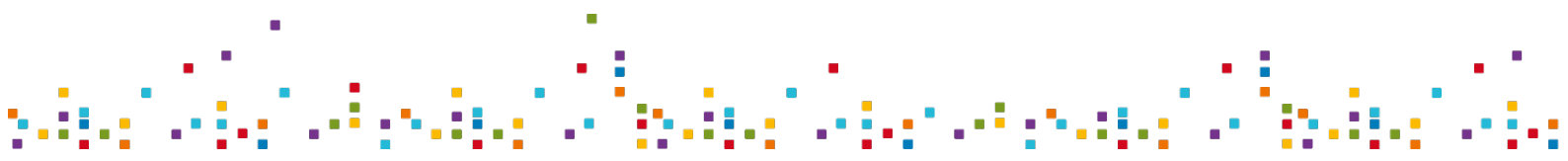
First, be clear about the following questions:

- Do you want to spend four years expanding your knowledge on the given topic?
- Do you want to do research on the topic, but feel that academia is not for you? That's fine! The economy is becoming more and more knowledge-oriented and requires experts from many fields. The years studying are not a waste. Quite the opposite, you can develop skills such as the application of theoretical concepts into practice, project management, information search, language skills, etc. These are all applicable skills that are in demand in a career.

It is important to mention that PhD study **does not revolve around exams**, but rather the **compilation of a dissertation**, which takes a lot of time, energy, and effort. Compared to a Master's thesis, a dissertation requires both more extensive and intensive research, which involves not only data collection (often in the field), but in particular the study of the relevant literature and the subsequent interpretation of the PhD student's own research results. A key part of the PhD study is the **publication of scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals**, which can help form the basis of the dissertation. **Trips to conferences** and **other types of study visits** to meet people in the field are not meant to be just an enjoyable part of your studies, but most importantly an opportunity to present yourself (and your team of authors) and your research. Depending on your specialisation, **you will also get to know a number of foreign countries** and experience what it is like to present your research in a foreign language to an international audience. Worried you won't make it? No need to worry, your supervisor will help you prepare your presentation and practice the actual performance with you. The first time you attend a conference you may feel worried, but after that you will want to go on your own because it's really worth it. You will gain inspiration and make contacts that can positively affect your research and scientific career.

It is important to note that this does not happen right away. As a PhD student, you must have patience, especially during the first year. The results of your work are not visible at first, but often take months, sometimes years, depending on the complexity of the topic being researched. Many PhD students experience a certain crisis during their studies, when they feel that there is no work and results being achieved. However, it is important to persevere and keep going. Many PhD students go through this and eventually it will turn around! The important thing is to not to give up.

Another requirement of your Doctoral study is that **you must achieve** a sufficient number of **credits** and **pass several exams**. The exams are quite different from what you are used to. Yes, you are studying, but you are more so involved in research. Therefore, exams often take the form of a partner discussion on a pre-arranged topic or an individual project or term paper. The lecturer always tries to accommodate you and adjust the exam to correspond with the topic of your dissertation. At the beginning of each course of study, **an individual study plan** is created together with a dissertation supervisor, in which you choose the courses that best match your focus. Every PhD student must obtain 30 credits in the first year, a total of 60 credits over four consecutive semesters, and then a minimum of 240 credits over the entire study period.



It is possible that during your study you learned that one of the seminars was taught by a PhD student. As part of your study, you will also have **teaching activities**. As a result, you will learn to work on your own – you will learn how to guide students, prepare for class, objectively correct and evaluate a student paper, and also how to lecture and engage your audience. But there is certainly nothing to worry about. You may eventually discover that there is a hidden lecturer in you.

The Department deals with many **projects** in which PhD students are involved. Project collaboration takes on different forms, from data collection and processing, through interviewing participants, to writing a research paper. You can become part of a large research team and contribute to new scientific findings. Click [here](#) to see an overview of the main research directions at our Department.

In addition, the Department works with the city of Ostrava, for example, so you can actively participate in the development of specific cities or regions. As a rule, cooperation on such projects is always on the basis of a contract – from agreement for work to employment contract, but that is part of a separate chapter of this guide. However, we also work with foreign partners, especially non-profit organisations focusing on development, minorities, human rights, and conflict resolution.

Contact Doctoral students at our workplace. Feel free to contact them with specific questions. Click here to see a current list on the Department's [website](#). You can also contact academic staff and potential supervisors to discuss any concerns, ideas and anything related to your PhD study.

What can our Department offer you?

We are one of the smaller departments within the Faculty of Science, known for a friendly atmosphere. Everyone will consider you part of the team, not just a student. You will surely be



provided with a desk in the PhD students' office. For those who are looking for a more private atmosphere, we have a newly renovated study room with a seminar room available in our building; conversely, those of you who appreciate a little background noise can use the atrium area located between L and M buildings with couches and various seating areas. However, if you like to work from the comfort of your own home, this is also possible by arrangement with the supervisor, but you must always be in contact with him/her. The Department can offer well made and supportive facilities for your research, and you can ask any member of academic staff for a consultation. If you are interested in a paid course, that would enhance your knowledge, funding can be obtained through the Department.

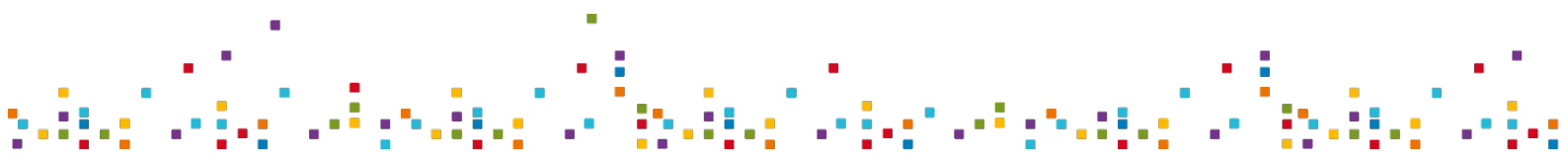


Another indisputable benefit is a wide range of study trips abroad. As a PhD student, you can choose from dozens of universities in Europe and around the globe to go on a study stay. There is a number of programmes designed to help you receive a funding such as [VIA programme of the University of Ostrava](#), [Erasmus+](#) and [CEEPUS](#).

The good news is that a PhD study trip works differently than at lower levels of study. You can choose between a practical training and a study visit. In most cases, you will go on a research trip to an institution that deals with a similar topic to yours, so you will gather valuable information and advice for your research, while there is no need for you to earn any credits to bring "home". With a few exceptions, you can complete your training or study visit at virtually any company, non-profit, or similar institution of your choice. The Department also offers a variety of language courses to help you expand your language skills. Knowledge of a foreign language allows you not only to draw knowledge from foreign research, but also involvement in international research projects.

What are your employment opportunities?

Due to the broader thematic scope of the study programme, the employment opportunities for graduates are quite diverse. Graduates are able to work in scientific institutions such as departments of human geography and related disciplines (e.g., political science, international relations, territorial studies) at universities in the Czech Republic and abroad, the Academy of Sciences (Institute of Geonics), non-profit organisations focused on development cooperation, humanitarian aid, minorities, and/or human rights, think tanks and research organisations focused on urban and regional development, international politics, global studies (e.g., Institute of International Relations, Glopolis, Association for International Affairs). Many graduates have also found employment in managerial and officer positions in central state administrative bodies such as the Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of



Defence, CzechInvest, Czech Statistical Office, and Ministry of Industry and Trade. They can also be employed by regional development and spatial planning departments of regional authorities or municipalities with extended competence, by regional development agencies, and by international institutions such as the UN, EU, OECD, OSCE, etc. In the private sector, the graduate can work as a consultant or analyst in consulting firms focused on urban and regional development projects, in development companies and other institutions related to the development of the real estate market, in real estate agencies, banks, and investment companies.



APPLICATION AND ADMISSION PROCEDURE

As of the academic year 2021/2022, the [Department of Human Geography and Regional Development](#) has a new degree programme called Political and Economic Geography. The Doctoral programme builds on the Department's Master's degree programmes Political and Cultural Geography and Economic Geography and Regional Development specialising in sustainable spatial development and the real estate market. The Doctoral study programme focuses on key research topics in the respective fields: in the field of economic geography and regional development, it is in particular the regeneration of industrial city centres, the real estate market, the location of services and creative industries in large cities, metropolitan governance, industry and the development of non-metropolitan regions; in the field of political and cultural geography, the topics concern in particular ethnic minorities, ethnic conflicts, separatism and de facto states, geopolitics and geoculture or new cultural geography, with a territorial focus on the post-Soviet space, Indo-Pacific Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the ethno-political development of the Caucasus, and as well the geopolitics of Russia and East Asia, territorial identity, and new cultural geography are possible. However, students may focus on other spaces in their PhD thesis, but the choice must first be consulted with their potential supervisor from the Department. Student's knowledge of methods from the follow-up study (quantitative, qualitative, GIS) will be expanded and deepened by techniques of spatial data analysis or data collection in the field through expert and other interviews. A major emphasis will be placed on methodological education, the ability to independently design a research plan and to write and publish a professional text.

Before submitting your application, feel free to contact [Assoc. Prof. Jan Ženka, Ph.D.](#) (Ph.D. programme guarantor), who can help you to choose a supervisor with whom you will then be able to agree on the topic of your dissertation (explained below), as you are required to fill in this information in the application form. There is a fee of **CZK 600** for this application, and the electronic version must be [in the system by mid-June of the given calendar year](#). For specific deadlines, please visit the Faculty of Science's [PhD study](#) website.

The application form includes the following mandatory attachments:

- structured CV
- list of publications (if any)
- dissertation topic and name of supervisor

These attachments must be delivered either in person or by email to the [Department of Science and Doctoral Studies](#), Faculty of Science, University of Ostrava. [The Department is now located in the L Building.](#) See a map of all UO buildings [here](#).

Payment details

931761/0710	Bank account number
CNBACZPP	SWIFT bank code
CZ65 0710 0000 0000 0093 1761	IBAN
CZK 600	Administration fee

Remember to look up the variable and constant symbol for the payment on the [Faculty](#) website. These details should also be sent to your email after you submit your application form, where a "specific symbol" will also be generated. In the event of an incorrect payment, the applicant is required to pay the fee again, plus there is an additional fee of 100 CZK if an incorrect



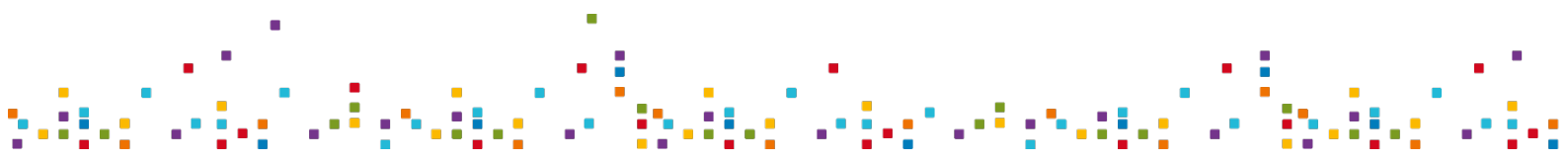
payment is requested. If the applicant fails to appear for the entrance exam, the administrative fee shall not be refunded.

Admission procedure

An applicant will be interviewed by members of the admissions committee, the members of which include the study programme guarantor and potential supervisors. The applicant will be questioned on his/her knowledge of selected theories/concepts in political and economic geography, key authors and publications in the fields. In particular, the applicant must demonstrate his/her motivation to study. They must also present a specific vision of their research project and objective, as well as an idea of their planned study visit abroad.

The applicant must demonstrate B2-level English skills (demonstrable by certificates, state examination, university language exams, or on-site interview). Preference will be given to students who have been demonstrably involved in the course of their studies in scientific activities and/or have already published, thus demonstrating their interest in the field.

The expected date of the admission examination is usually during July (regular date) and then during August (alternative date for those who cannot attend on the regular date). Applicants will be informed of the exact date well in advance.



SELECTION OF TOPIC AND DISSERTATION SUPERVISOR

One of the basic prerequisites for choosing a dissertation topic is that you should enjoy the topic. A full-time PhD degree should be your full-time job. Standard **length of study** is **4 years**, so it is advisable to think carefully about your choice of topic. Try to check the **relevance and topicality** of the topic, including representation in scientific journals. If you have at least a rough idea of the topic, the next step is to approach a potential supervisor, who you will choose according to their **professional expertise**. Doctoral research need not, but can, be based on your Master thesis. Starting from your thesis is an ideal, as you already have a basic idea of the research topic, thus completing the first step.

Basic steps when selecting a dissertation topic:

1. Think about the topic well in advance.
2. Search and read relevant literature and think about possible research directions.
3. Give it a second thought whether the topic is of sufficient interest to you and whether it is relevant in the context of your field.
4. Think about how the topic can be researched, try to define a research question, and consider how to collect data.
5. Contact a potential supervisor and consult with them.

What is a supervisor?

A supervisor is the most important person for you to successfully complete your PhD study. A supervisor is a person who is a leader and guide throughout your studies, providing valuable advice, consultation for your research and study duties. A supervisor is a mediator between you, the department management and the subject area board. It is important to choose a supervisor who is close to you not only professionally, but also on a personal level. The supervisor can help you become involved in the department's research projects. When it comes to selecting a supervisor, you should also contact current PhD students who can also be of assistance to you, as they are the ones you work closely with.

What is a subject area board?

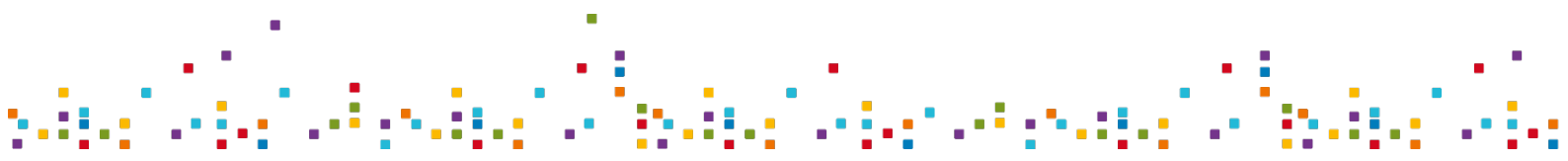
It is a board composed of both members of the department and external staff. This body approves the individual study plans of each student. The members are also present, for example, during the admission and state final examinations. The subject area board is comprised of the following members:

Department of Human Geography and Regional Development:

- prof. RNDr. Vladimír Baar, CSc.
- Mgr. Petr Dvořák, Ph.D.
- doc. RNDr. Tomáš Hoch, Ph.D.
- doc. RNDr. Jan Hradecký, Ph.D.
- doc. RNDr. Vincenc Kopeček, Ph.D.
- Mgr. Lukáš Laš, Ph.D.
- doc. RNDr. Petr Rumpel, Ph.D.
- Mgr. Ondřej Slach, Ph.D.
- prof. RNDr. Tadeusz Siwek, CSc.
- doc. RNDr. Jan Ženka, Ph.D.
- Mgr. Kateřina Ženková Rudincová, Ph.D.

External members:

- prof. PhDr. Emil Aslan, Ph.D.
- prof. Mgr. Oldřich Bureš, M.A., Ph.D.
- prof. RNDr. Marián Halás, Ph.D.
- doc. PhDr. Slavomír Horák, Ph.D.
- doc. RNDr. Jaroslav Koutský, Ph.D.
- doc. RNDr. Josef Novotný, Ph.D.



Proposed dissertation topics and topics of defended theses:

- **Topics centred on Political and Cultural Geography**
 - Development strategies of the Far East region in the geopolitics of Russia
 - Russian penetration into Africa. Spheres of influence and methods of Russian foreign policy on the African continent
 - Russian complex “smart power”. Use of variable power instruments in Russian foreign policy in specific regions (states) of the world
 - Geopolitics of Kazakhstan
 - Integration of refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia into Georgian society
 - The English-speaking crisis in Cameroon and people from Cameroon: between unification, inclusion, and coercion
 - Specificities of tertiary education in de facto states: a case study of Northern Cyprus
 - Migrants in de facto states: a case study of the labour market position of Pakistani migrants in Northern Cyprus
 - Ethnic conflicts and separatist tendencies in the contemporary Horn of Africa
 - The Global South and China in a changing multipolar world
 - Political transitions in the developing states of South and Southeast Asia
 - Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific region
 - Ethnic minority or sub-ethnicity? A comparative study of the status of the Ruthenians in Slovakia and Ukraine
 - The development of territorial identity of the inhabitants of a selected settlement in the former Sudetenland
 - The development of Silesian identity of the inhabitants of Český Těšín region in a historical perspective
 - Electoral results of exiled politicians in selected Central and Eastern European countries after the collapse of the Communist system
 - Ethnic minorities in selected countries of the post-Soviet space
 - Formation of a new security structure in the Indo-Pacific area
 - Geopolitics of India
 - Geopolitics of Indonesia
 - Changes in the national identity of the Taiwanese population and its impact on the future of the island
 - Theopolitics as an instrument of Russian power influence in countries with Orthodox populations
 - USA v Russia geopolitical rivalry in the Arctic
 - Czechia as a nationalizing state using an example of selected regions

- **Topics centred on Economic Geography and Regional Development**
 - Assessment of factors of industrial real estate market development in the Czech Republic in the period 1990–2020
 - Economic resilience of (old industrial) metropolitan regions
 - Economic resilience of Czech/European regions in the pandemic period
 - Localisation of knowledge-intensive business services in Czech metropolitan regions
 - The concept of “walkability” and its application in the regeneration of urban centres and Czech municipalities
 - Quality of life and residential preferences of residents of industrial cities
 - Development trajectories of traditional industries in old industrial regions

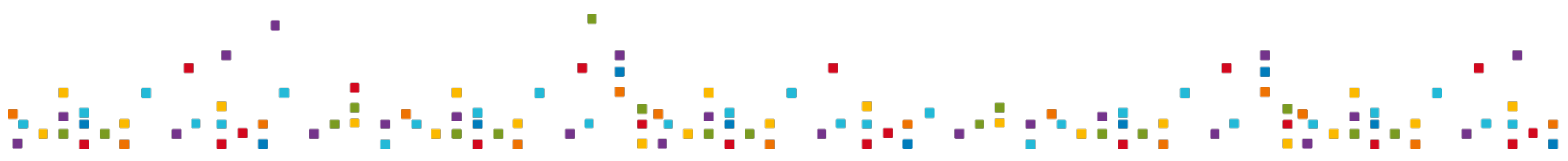
- Empty spaces in large cities and the potential for their use
- Comparison of regional innovation systems in Czechia and implications for regional competitiveness

STUDY SUBJECTS

This section will introduce the formal matters of the study. Doctoral subjects are divided into **compulsory** and **compulsory elective** or **compensatory subjects**. The compulsory subjects are the same for all students, whereas the compulsory electives are chosen on the basis of an individual study plan. These courses are selected based on an intended focus of the individual student. Compensatory courses are intended for PhD students who have not completed their Master's degree at the Department of Human Geography and Regional Studies. Upon agreement with their supervisor, they will enrol in courses from the Master's level to supplement the basic knowledge and prerequisites for a Doctoral study. The courses listed below are those you must complete as part of your studies. Their detailed description will be available to you in advance if you are successfully admitted to the PhD programme.

Subject title	No. of credits	Guarantor
Common subjects compulsory for all PhD students (180 credits)		
Selected theoretical approaches in social geography	10	Siwek
Methodology in Political and Economic Geography	10	Ženka
Doctoral Degree State Final Examination	30	Ženka
Article in an impacted journal: category Jimp 1	40	Ženka
Publication output type C, Jsc or Jneimp 1	30	Ženka
Submission and defence of dissertation	30	Ženka
Doctoral colloquium 1	10	Hoch
Doctoral colloquium 2	10	Hoch
Active participation in an international scientific conference 1	10	Macháček

Common compulsory-elective subjects (60 credits)		
Political Geography	15	Kopeček
Cultural Geography	15	Baar
Economic Geography	15	Ženka
Local and Regional Development	15	Rumpel
Development Studies	15	Novotný
Natural hazards and regional development in the context of ecosystem of services	15	Hradecký
Study or research mobility abroad	10	Laš
Active participation in an international scientific conference 2	10	Macháček
Teaching activities 1	5	Ženková Rudincová
Teaching activities 2	5	Ženková Rudincová
Article in an impacted journal: category Jimp 2	40	Dvořák
Publication output type C, Jsc, or Jneimp 2	30	Dvořák



Other output of scientific activity 1	10	Rumpel
Other output of scientific activity 2	10	Rumpel
Monograph	40	Dvořák
Involvement in a research project 1	20	Ženka
Involvement in a research project 2	20	Ženka
PhD student field training 1	5	Slach
PhD student field training 2	5	Slach
Subject taught at another university	5	Laš

Compensatory subjects		
Selected subject 1,2,3,4	5 each	Macháček

In order to properly complete the PhD programme in Political and Economic Geography, students must fulfil the following study requirements (in this order):

1. Obtain **at least 240 credits** in the required structure according to the curriculum.
2. **Successfully complete the state Doctoral exam**
(typically held one year before the dissertation defence).
3. **Defend the dissertation.**

The student's involvement in teaching is also included. The time burden associated with teaching activities must not limit the student's study, research, and publishing activities. The PhD student's involvement in teaching is mandatory, but always based on the current needs of the Department. Some PhD students are directly involved in teaching by conducting seminars, while others, for example, correct students' term papers, etc.

Once a year—at the beginning of each academic year—the student submits a report on the implementation of his/her individual study plan to his/her supervisor, who then prepares an evaluation of this plan and submits it to the Subject Area Board for approval. As a rule, at the end of the academic year a colloquium is held where PhD students present to their colleagues and members of the Department their activities over the past academic year, the progress of their research, and their plans for the future.

These colloquia are often organised in cooperation with other Czech or foreign geographic departments, so that you may have an opportunity to make important contacts with your peer researchers. **One of the conditions for successful completion of a PhD degree at our Department is that published outputs must be assigned to our Department, which also applies to external students already working in other departments who are completing their PhD degree with us.**

Regarding study matters, contact Officer for Science and Doctoral studies **Monika Kočvarová**. Due to the renovation of A building, her office has been temporarily moved to L building (room 441) and is therefore located on the same floor as our Department.



FINANCIAL SECURITY

One of the reasons why you may be hesitant about starting your PhD could be financial, therefore see below the PhD student funding system to help set your mind at ease. The basic remuneration for a PhD student's work is the **PhD scholarship** to which every full-time PhD student is entitled. The scholarship is paid at the beginning of each month from the date of enrolment for studies. The basic amount is **CZK 11,250**.

The important information is that the scholarship is not taxable and is paid directly to the student's bank account. **It is not subject to** social security withdrawals and does not count towards maternity allowance, pension, or unemployment benefits. It is also not considered as income, for example in a bank. As of 2018, **health insurance** is paid for by the state without any age limit. In most cases, however, you must provide a completely new student certificate each academic year (it should be verified with your insurance company). The disadvantage of the absence of social security insurance can be compensated by working (most often in the form of Agreement on Work Performance or Contract for Work) on one of the projects implemented in the Department. It is not desirable and suitable to work outside your field of study during your PhD studies. Although you will earn extra finances, you will lose a lot of time and energy that could be invested into research. A PhD scholarship or contract is not the only source of funds. There are other scholarships available at UO:

1. **Creative scholarship** – a scholarship for outstanding research, development and innovation, artistic or other creative results contributing to the deepening of knowledge pursuant to Section 91 (2) (b) of the Act.
 - It is paid for outstanding research results supported primarily by publication outputs.
 - The scholarship is paid twice per academic year on the basis of an application and justification from the supervisor. The deadlines are by 31 March for activities in the winter semester and by 30 September of the following academic year for activities in the previous summer semester.
 - The amount of the scholarship varies according to several criteria, with one scientific article being eligible for **CZK 10,000-30,000**.

2. **Academic scholarship** – is awarded to a PhD student who has been elected to the Academic Senate (AS) of the Faculty of Science, UO. The scholarship is paid on the basis of attendance for one session submitted by the Chair of the AS of the Faculty of Science, UO.
 - The AS member is paid **CZK 800**, the Vice-Chair **CZK 1,000** and the Recorder **CZK 1,200**.

3. **Accommodation scholarship** – is intended for a full-time PhD student with permanent address outside the Ostrava region, who has submitted an application for the granting of an accommodation scholarship.
 - The scholarship is paid three times per academic year and it is approximately **CZK 2,000**.

4. **Exceptional scholarship** – can be granted to a PhD student by the Rector or Dean or on the basis of a proposal by the supervisor in the form of an exceptional award, especially for educational activities, creative activities, or activities for the benefit of civil society.



- The conditions for awarding of an exceptional scholarship and its amount shall be determined by the Rector or the Dean in their provision.

Another option of how to obtain finances not only for research but also for personal financial support, is the **Student Grant Competition (SGC)**. The aim of the support is to strengthen the independent creative activities of PhD students in research and development aimed at intensive involvement of students in the problems solved mainly within the framework of team research and development activities at the UO faculties. This competition is open for one calendar year and is awarded on the basis of grant applications. An overall topic is set by the team and the participating students carry out sub-research under this topic.

The Department of Human Geography and Regional Development prefers team grants where a proposer and co-investigators are appointed. The principal investigator is either an academic worker or a PhD student. Co-investigators are PhD students and Master's degree students. The SGC output is usually an article published in a scientific journal or participation in a selected professional conference. The advantage is that you can use this output in your dissertation. In addition, this grant helps a PhD student to learn project planning and management.

Due to SGC, you can receive funding for:

- your research
- professional books and data
- conference participation
- various training courses
- personal scholarship

Personal scholarships are paid based on the budget and agreement of the research team, usually three times per year. The total amount of the personal scholarship varies from year to year, most often amounting to **approximately CZK 30,000**.

In the academic year 2020/2021, a new **Internal Grant Competition – DGC** was announced. It is aimed at financial support of quality research outputs, increasing the competences of postgraduate students in the process of obtaining and successfully solving grant projects, project management and language competences, improving the preparation of postgraduate students of the University of Ostrava for performance of scientific activities. This financial support is open to PhD students in their 1st through 3rd year. However, research on the same topic as the applicant's dissertation must not be carried out under this grant.

Grant advantages:

- employment contract – 0.5 hours
- duration of 18 months
- drawing up your own budget for the amount allocated and setting your own remuneration

This grant can employ between one and three members, depending on which the total amount has to be planned accordingly. This amount is fixed, and it is not possible to spend more or less. The grant requirements include educational activities abroad. The language of



communication for this grant is English. This grant is currently supported by the Research and Development Operational Programme through the DOC4U Project. An important source of funding for research, remuneration, and equipment (e.g., laptop) is the PhD student's collaboration on research grants in the Department, most often on Agreement on Work Performance or Contract for Work or basis or as a part-time job in the range of 0.1–0.5.

Current projects:

The full list of projects that department members are involved in can be found on the Department's website, in the Science and Research section – [Projects and Grants](#).

The Guide was prepared by PhD students Mgr. Simona Šťastná and Mgr. Adam Kočí.

Approved by doc. RNDr. Jan Ženka, Ph.D.

Guarantor of the Political and Economic Geography study programme

