

TOWARDS A SYSTEMATIC SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC WRITING AND PUBLICATION PRACTICE: PhD STUDENTS IN ENGINEERING AND THEIR SUPERVISORS

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VSB-TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF OSTRAVA



- 6 engineering faculties and 1 faculty of economics
- 600 doctoral students

DOCTORAL STUDIES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Higher Education Act (Section 47)

“...studies within the framework of Doctoral degree programmes are subject to individual curricula under the guidance of a supervisor...”

“...the thesis must contain original as well as published results or results accepted for publication...”

SUPPORT FOR PUBLICATION PRACTICE: PRELIMINARY STUDY (2017-18)

Problem:

No publication → No defence → High drop-out rates

Goal: learn about the institutional policies and support for academic writing for doctoral students

Semi-structured interviews with 12 doctoral students & 10 university administrators/dissertation supervisors from different universities

Conclusions of the preliminary study:

- Generally, no systemic support and little perceived need of such support
- Support lies and falls with the quality and experience of the doctoral student's supervisor
- Doctoral studies are about “self-education” under the guidance of the dissertation supervisor (generally no required core curriculum for doctoral students)

VSB-TUO's RESPONSE

“Publish and Flourish“

- Grant awarded in 2018 by the Technological Agency of the Czech Republic
- Joint, multi-disciplinary project with the Center for Academic Writing, Czech Academy of Sciences

Needs analysis/research project: doctoral student survey + interviews with dissertation supervisors at VSB-TUO

Modular, **blended-learning (Moodle-based) courses** for PhD students on academic writing and publication practice; engagement of the library (modules on RQs, citations managers, LATEX etc.)

Teachers' guide explaining the philosophy of the courses, types of desired feedback, course activities and answer keys.

Project introduction/workshops for dissertation supervisors

Other ongoing activities

- “Publication Practice” - a cycle of workshops provided by the library
- Writing workshops for PhD students and faculty

Reference:

Czech Republic. (1998). Higher Education Act No. 111/1998 Coll. Retrieved from: http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/odbor_30/DH/Zakon/The_Higher_Educational_Act_31.8.2018.pdf