
STARS Scholarship Programme for Talented Doctoral Student Launched at the Faculty of Science

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“Educating doctoral students is one of the main priorities of the Faculty of Science”, says Doc. RNDr. Vojtěch Ettler, Ph.D., Vice-Dean for doctoral programmes at the faculty. This priority gave birth to the STARS programme.

The word STARS is mostly commonly associated with film stars and the entertainment industry. What does STARS mean at the faculty?

It's the acronym of the phrase describing the goal of our programme: to Support Talented PhD Research Students. We have come up with many names, but this is the one that stuck. Also, the programme aims to bring up new “stars” of research in natural science, so the name fits really well.



*Doc. RNDr. Vojtěch Ettler, Ph.D.,
proděkan pro doktorské studium PřF UK*

What were the main reasons for starting the STARS programme?

We realized that the involvement of young people is a great asset for any research conducted at the faculty. It is obvious that doctoral students are among the most hard-working and most effective members of research teams. At the same time, by taking part in top research teams, they gain the experience and knowledge they will need in their future careers. That's why the faculty considers working with doctoral students one of its priorities.

In the past twenty years, we have seen a decline in population and many private institutions of higher education have opened, leading to competition in attracting students. Is it difficult to attract prospective doctoral students?

Recruiting talented applicants is not easy, not even for the top research teams. Prospective doctoral students also tend to decide according to the financial conditions the school can provide. On top of that, our faculty is in most cases not the only institution that offers doctoral programmes in the respective fields – there's a competition with other universities and research institutions. That's why we decided to offer financial support to talented students in the form of faculty scholarships.

How does this system work?

The extra scholarship of 10,000 CZK will be granted monthly. Half of it will be provided by the faculty and the other half by the research project the student will be working on. The faculty will commit to provide 5,000 CZK during the standard duration of the programme. The team will do the same, stating how and from which sources he will provide the funding. Participation of the research team in the funding of the student is essential. With the scholarship granted by the university, it adds up to 16,000 CZK per month for a first year student, which is not bad at all.

What are the next steps, now that the programme has been launched?

Starting in the academic year 2011/2012, the Dean of the faculty will establish 30 positions for STARS scholarships. Any of the faculty's research teams could join the programme until mid-January this year and provide the outlines of doctoral research topics. Based on the quality of the outlines and the teams, 30 projects will be selected by section research committees and the faculty research committee. Then the projects will be published on the faculty's website and students will be able to apply them using a web application.

Who can apply for a STARS scholarship?

Prospective doctoral students from both Czech Republic and abroad can apply. We would be happy to receive applications from abroad to make the doctoral programme an international one. We will see whether we will already get some this year.

How do you select the candidates?

The selection process is organized by the individual research teams or groups. The selected students naturally have to file a regular Ph.D. application at the faculty and pass the standard interview by section committees of the faculty's doctoral programmes. The process of selecting prospective STARS candidates is then something like a first round – a pre-selection.

(Marie Kohoutová)

Translation: Jaroslav Švelch

Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science

STARS

Supporting Talented PhD Research Students

PhD research topics
available:

February 3, 2011



13 PhD positions
**BIOLOGY and
LIFE SCIENCES**

Application
deadline:

March 7, 2011



6 PhD positions
CHEMISTRY

Beginning of the
PhD study:

October, 2011



6 PhD positions
GEOGRAPHY



3 PhD positions
GEOLOGY



2 PhD positions
ENVIRONMENT

www.natur.cuni.cz/stars

Veškeré informace o programu STARS jsou k dispozici na <http://www.natur.cuni.cz/stars>