

# INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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## Chapter 1. Who We Are

### Current Structure of the Institute

The Institute is headed by the Director, whose work is assisted by deputies and advisory bodies (IMG Council, special committees). Financial management of the Institute is supervised by the Supervisory Board. More information about the Organizational Structure of IMG you can find on [http://www.img.cas.cz/files/2014/10/Organizacni\\_rad\\_EN.pdf](http://www.img.cas.cz/files/2014/10/Organizacni_rad_EN.pdf).

The Institute comprises 28 research groups, 1 Research - service group, whose list and description is given in detail at our web page (see <http://www.img.cas.cz/research/>).

### Practical Issues

Once becoming a member of a research team, you will be introduced to the way of life and work at the Institute by the others. Here is a list of the main practicalities:

The Institute is situated in a new four-storey building. The administration is located on the ground floor, as well as a lecture hall and part of service laboratories – the rest of them are located underground. Research laboratories are situated on the floors, divided in two halves by the central staircase. Each floor has a small seminar room and a kitchenette.

Also on the ground floor is a canteen. You can as well eat at the campus canteen located in the main building of the campus. As an employee you will be entitled to meal tickets with employer's financial contribution. These tickets can even be used in some restaurants and supermarkets.

Additionally, the Academy employees are entitled to free language courses provided by the Language Department. Czech is taught at various levels and the main international languages follow the recognized international programmes such as e.g. the Cambridge certificates. Information about these courses can be obtained at the Office of the Director of our Institute.

Among other benefits are free tickets to the swimming pool in a sports centre situated in the same part of Prague as the Institute and to some theatre performances – ask your colleagues about them and the way to get them.

For other facilities such as Sports Facility, Kindergarten please see <http://www.img.cas.cz/other-facilities/>.

## Chapter 2. Immigration Documents

**For information regarding the Immigration Documents please visit the following website:**  
EURAXESS CZECH REPUBLIC - <http://www.euraxess.cz>.

You find there all basic information about Visa regulation in the Czech Republic. Euraxess offers also advice on the following topics: recognition of degrees and qualifications, social security, tax system or health care.

If you intend to come to our Institute, **we recommend you to address our contact person well in advance**. She will help you with arranging the required documents and will inform you about the time needed to obtain them.

### Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities

The legal system of the Czech Republic is being harmonized with the jurisdiction of the European Union. The rights and duties of employees and employers are set by the Labour Code, the relationships in the business sphere are regulated by the Trade Code.

### Income Tax, Social Security

Like in other countries, as an employee of our Institute your wages are subject to income tax and health and social security deductions. The deductions are done by our Economy Department at the end of the fiscal year, the income tax record is done individually according to the particular person's country of residence and sources of income. At the end of your stay in our country you will receive the record of your social security deductions for retirement purposes.

## Chapter 3. International Students

### Understanding the Academic System

Secondary education in the Czech Republic is of three main types and usually lasts four years. The three types are:

1. general high school or grammar school
2. specialized high school
3. apprenticeship finished by school-leaving examination equivalent to high-school certificate

To enter the University, students are required to present their school-leaving certificate and successfully pass the entrance examination.

After completing the University studies by passing the state examinations and defending their diploma, students can apply for entering the PhD programme (doctoral programme).

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The basic requirements for applying for the PhD programme are a Master's degree or an equivalent in a particular research area and an agreement between a prospective PhD student and his/her supervisor. Subsequently, prospective students undergo an interview with a university committee where they are expected to have a basic idea of a project/research area for their thesis. Other extra-curriculum activities such as participation in special courses or student competitions are also taken into account.

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### Student Services

Intramural students are entitled to some benefits. These include:

- reduced-price travel cards for city transport
- accommodation in student colleges
- reduced-price food at student canteens

They also have access to the library and other University facilities.

## PhD International Program

As the PhD degree is officially provided only by universities, our Institute does not have its own official PhD programme. Instead, the PhD studies at IMG are performed in collaboration with four faculties of the Charles University in Prague (Faculty of Science, 1<sup>st</sup> Faculty of Medicine, 2<sup>nd</sup> Faculty of Medicine, 3<sup>rd</sup> Faculty of Medicine – specializations molecular and cellular biology, genetics and virology; developmental biology; immunology; microbiology) and with the Institute of Chemical Technology in Prague (biochemistry).

### PhD studies are of two basic types:

1. intramural (internal) – the student fully prepares for his thesis at the supervising laboratory and is entitled to all student benefits (maximum duration 4 years)
2. combined (external) – the student is fully employed by the supervising laboratory and not entitled to student benefits (usually after the first three years of internal studies. maximum duration internal + external 9 years)

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There is no single office at Charles University that handles admissions for all students to all programmes. Instead, each faculty maintains its own admissions office and specialized staff to meet the needs of their prospective students. The information on them can be found at the particular faculty websites. Comprehensive survey of PhD programmes is at <http://www.cuni.cz/UKEN-1.html> and <http://dspb.avcr.cz/index.html>. In any case, the entire process of entering the PhD program should start with finding labs of interests, contacting group leaders, and arranging interviews with them. One cannot submit an application without having a granted position in a lab. At the same time, there is no simple system for finding a lab. There are over a hundred labs scattered throughout the university and in many institutes where PhD students can go. Many of the open PhD positions are advertised in a system maintained by the university. Students also contact group leaders directly, trying to find whether there would be an open position. In 2008, IMG is starting its own PhD selection system, where prospective PhD students can apply at the IMG website (<http://www.img.cas.cz/education/phd-programme/application/>). The best candidates are invited for interviews with group leaders, which take place usually in March.

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As an example, below is the information for PhD students at the Faculty of Science.

### According to their knowledge of the Czech language, foreign students have three options:

1. study in Czech in programmes accredited for Czech students – the conditions are the same as for Czech students

2. governmental scholarship holders – these students undergo a 1-year course in the Czech language prior to PhD studies and their studies are covered by a governmental programme based on international agreements – information on this option may be obtained at the Czech consulate of a particular country
3. study in English in programmes accredited in English – these students pay a fee. The fee at the Faculty of Science is in the range of EUR 820 – 6500 according to the specialization.

**Application:**

- There is no deadline for applications; students may apply during the entire academic year (note that other faculties may set deadlines!).
- The recommended procedure is following:
  - The student selects a study programme and a topic of interest.
  - He/she contacts a specialist dealing with the topic and consults the possibility of prospective studies in his/her laboratory.
  - He/she fills in the application form that can be found at [https://is.cuni.cz/studium/eng/prijimacky/index.php?id=1e21efec72d0cd5d75846a20e0373b62&tid=1&do=uchazec\\_email](https://is.cuni.cz/studium/eng/prijimacky/index.php?id=1e21efec72d0cd5d75846a20e0373b62&tid=1&do=uchazec_email) and adds the following documents:
    - attested diploma (attestation is done according to international legal agreements. for more details see <http://www.cuni.cz/UKEN-16.html>, [https://www.natur.cuni.cz/eng/study/prospective\\_students/ph.d.-study/conditions-of-admission-procedure](https://www.natur.cuni.cz/eng/study/prospective_students/ph.d.-study/conditions-of-admission-procedure) )
    - attested survey of Master study examinations
    - annotation of the scientific project and written consent of the prospective supervisor
    - curriculum vitae
    - other recommendations, list of publications, other documents on the applicant's qualifications
  - He/she pays a fee, which is about EUR 20, attaches the payment record to the application, and sends all to the Faculty (for more details see [https://www.natur.cuni.cz/eng/study/prospective\\_students/ph.d.-study/conditions-of-admission-procedure](https://www.natur.cuni.cz/eng/study/prospective_students/ph.d.-study/conditions-of-admission-procedure))
  - He/she is then invited to the entrance examination.
  - He/she comes to the examination on a tourist visa.
  - After obtaining the exam result, he/she applies for immigration documents (see chapter 2)

The course of PhD studies (courses, lectures, seminars, etc.) is individual for each student and is determined with the supervisor. The programme must be approved by the study board for the particular specialization. Studies are completed by passing the state doctoral examination and defending the thesis.

## Grants & Scholarships

Charles University itself and Czech grant agencies do not offer special scholarships to international students. However, many students have succeeded in obtaining some form of scholarship or student loan to help them with their studies (from their government or grant agencies). In some countries, it is also possible for international students to apply for a Czech government scholarship (for studies in Czech only). Further information and assistance can be obtained in representative offices of the Czech Republic in foreign countries or in foreign Ministries of Education.



## Chapter 4. Getting Settled in Prague

### Housing and Housing Market

Before finding your own accommodation, we suggest booking for you an apartment for a short-term stay.

#### **IMG guest house**

some rooms may be available directly in the Institute campus for a starting period, especially for students, but the reservation should also be done enough beforehand

#### **Mazanka**

lodging house of the Academy – should be reserved long enough in advance because of a limited capacity

#### **Rent an apartment**

if you prefer to rent a private apartment, we can help you communicate with a real estate agency. Many real estate agencies operate in Prague and it should not be difficult to find a comfortable apartment with all equipment. However, the prices of living are rather elevated and you should be prepared to pay about CZK 15,000 for a flat with a kitchen, living room and a bedroom (rent + services).

### Management of Money, Banking Services

The network of banks is rather dense in Prague, including banking machines, which can be found in most shopping centres and metro stations. Internationally recognized credit cards are accepted in most banks and shops. You should not have problems when dealing with banks and financial institutions because they are used to communicating with foreign tourists. Some international banks have their affiliations in the Czech Republic. However, if you wish we can inform you about financial institutions and accompany you there to avoid communication problems.

For more information look at:

- <https://www.moneta.cz/mmb/en/personal>
- <https://www.csob.cz/portal/en>
- <https://www.rb.cz/en/personal>

## Identification Documents

Czech citizens have to carry an identification card. As a foreigner you should carry your passport, but it is advisable to carry only its photocopy or a photocopy of the identification and visa pages, except for official negotiations. At the Institute, you will be provided with an entry card enclosing an identification card carrying your photo. This may be used to complement your passport photocopy.

## Chapter 5. Living in Prague

The capital of Prague is enclosed in the Vltava river valley surrounded by small hills. The historic core contains many old buildings, dominated by the Prague Castle towering over the oldest part of the city and the well-known Charles Bridge. The “real centre”, Wenceslaus square, is a meeting point for people visiting shops, cinemas, theatres, and restaurants. The plateau around Prague is now being populated by rapidly growing satellite sites based on former villages.

The population of central Prague is about one million people; about another million live in the surrounding area.

Our Institute is situated in the south-eastern part of the city in the district called Prague 4 – Krč. Although there is no direct connection from the airport, located on the opposite side of the city, it can be reached by combination of public transport – buses and metro (see below). Train and bus stations are located closer to the centre, so the way to our Institute is easier.

### Safety and Security

Moving in Prague is relatively safe; just beware of pickpockets especially in public transport or shopping centres. It is not recommended to leave your possessions without guard and to walk through isolated places in the night – although there is no danger in most cases, extremist attacks (especially by groups of skinheads) may sometimes be encountered. Some places in the centre are patrolled by the City Police; the State Police is usually guarding in white cars with a green belt. In case of emergency, you can call the numbers below:

- **City Police** 156
- **State Police** 158
- **Ambulance** 155
- **Fire Brigade** 150

Some police stations are also joined to the stations of metro and trains.

### Transport in Prague, Cars, Bicycles

Due to a rather compact historic centre, Prague is a city with dense transport and tendency to rush-hour congestions. Parking in the centre is especially difficult if not impossible in some places. Cars are

therefore advised to be used outside the centre and rush hours; for the rest, we recommend public transport, which is quite cheap and relatively comfortable. Compared with public transport, taxis are quite expensive and sometimes have a tendency to be overpriced – when using them. It is advisable to ask the fare before starting the route.

For those who are used to bicycles, the sad news is that Prague is not very bicyclist-friendly. First, the terrain is not flat and the streets are very crowded with cars. However, some bicycle paths exist in the city and some new ones have been introduced recently. It all very much depends on where you live – as there are many parks in Prague. It may be possible for you to commute on the bike. Transport of bikes is permitted in the metro and in some selected trams and busses.

On the other hand, our country is great for bicycle trips. There is a network of cycling paths and transport of bikes is facilitated in some trains, especially during the season.

### **Public transport**

Public transport in Prague is done by buses, trams and metro. The tickets are rather cheap and are of two basic kinds – transfer, used for connection of travel lines and means, and non-transfer, used only for one means of transport (and one line). The tickets can be purchased in the metro stations and in some shops (namely tobacconist kiosks).

- **Metro**

- Line A** – terminus “Dejvická” – terminus “Depo Hostivař” (West – Southeast connection)

- Line B** – terminus “Zličín” – terminus “Černý most” (West – Northeast connection)

- Line C** – terminus “Háje” – terminus “Ládví” (South – North connection)

- **Fares**

- Fare you can see on <http://www.dpp.cz/en/fares/>.

- More details about public transport in Prague can be found at <http://www.dpp.cz/en/>.

### **How to get to our Institute**

Please see on our website - <http://www.img.cas.cz/contact/how-to-find-us/>.

## **Religion**

Czech Republic is considered as being mostly a secular country. During its long history, beside a positive role in e.g. education, religion often served as an oppressive power. Furthermore, in the recent past, the Communist regime persecuted practising worshippers.

According to the 2001 census, 59% of the country is agnostic, atheist, non-believer or no-organized believer. 26.8% Roman Catholic and 2.5% Protestant. According to the most recent Euro barometer Poll 2005, 19% of Czech citizens responded that "they believe there is a god", whereas 50% answered that "they believe there is some sort of spirit or life force" and 30% that "they do not believe there is any sort of spirit, god, or life force", the lowest rate of EU countries after Estonia with 16%.

However, many kinds of congregations can be found, especially in Prague. The Catholic Church is rather important in Moravia, mainly in the country. Almost every Czech town and village boasts of a historic church building and in some of them there are regular services.

## Weather

The weather in our country is of a mild continental type. The seasons alternate quite regularly, lasting almost the same time and copying the solar calendar – the winter officially starting on 21<sup>st</sup> December, the spring one 21<sup>st</sup> March, the summer on 21<sup>st</sup> June and the fall on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. However, there may be deviations and the real season may start earlier or later.

The usual temperatures range between 35°C in summer and -20°C in winter, but these are extremes. For the individual seasons, the averages are about 20-25°C in summer and 0°C in winter, with 10-15°C for the spring and fall. These temperatures are valid for Prague; for the rest of the country they mostly depend on the altitude – the weather in the mountains may be much colder.

Precipitations are mostly average; spring and fall are considered to be wetter seasons. Heavier snow can be expected mostly in the mountains; in Prague it sometimes falls, but its quantities usually don't exceed 10 cm below surface and it doesn't last. Below is a table with official average (24-hour) temperatures in Prague:

## Shopping

The city is well provided with shops, especially large shopping centres all around Prague. They are easy to be found as they are mostly located close to the metro stations. This also means that you don't need a car to reach them, although they all have their own parking lots. In general, shop assistants speak English poorly or not at all, but all goods are visibly marked by prices.

To have an idea how Czech shopping centres look like, look at two examples at:

- <https://www.palladiumpraha.cz/en/>
- <http://centrumchodov.cz/>

## Culture

The cultural life in the Czech Republic is really very rich in opportunities: concerts, theatres, museums, cinemas, night clubs, etc. Prague also has a large ZOO with some precious species (e.g. gorillas) and two botanical gardens.

### Concerts

If you are interested in classical music, we recommend you to visit <http://www.ceskafilharmonie.cz/en>.

If you prefer a different kind of music, have a look at <http://www.ticketpro.cz/jnp/en/home/index.html>.

On these sites, you can find theatre programmes, sport events, social events, activities for children, and much more.

### Museums

Famous museums in the centre of the city:

- <http://www.nm.cz/index.php?xSET=lang&xLANG=2>
- <http://www.ntm.cz/en>
- <http://www.jewishmuseum.cz/en/info/visit/>

A number of art galleries are available as well, depending on your interest.

### Cinemas

They are mostly located in shopping centres, so you just can come, have a look at the programme, buy a ticket and then enjoy the film...☺

Links:

- <http://cinemacity.cz/en/>
- <http://www.premierecinemas.cz/>

## Coping with the Culture Shock

### Social issues

Czech society resembles most other Western Europe societies, although there are some specificities. Priority should be given to older people over the young and to women over men. Women are considered to have the same rights and duties as men and it is not seen as improper for a woman to walk and visit public places alone.

The majority is reached at 18 years of age and partial legal responsibility at 15. Young people are rather independent, although they usually stay with their parents longer than in other Western countries, some even after finishing their studies. Recently, less impact is put on marriage and it has become quite common for young couples to live together without being officially bound.

If you have any questions or problems, don't hesitate to contact our contact person.

## Chapter 6. Relating to Czech People

### Characteristics of Czech People

In general, Czechs are easy-going, friendly people. They are rather conservative and like their comfort; they love good food and drinks, especially beer. They also love humour and you should take care because they use sarcasm rather often – it means that what they say is sometimes ironical or exaggerated. This is also valid for promises – especially where services are concerned – you will find out that things that should have been done sometimes are not. It all depends on how well you know the person.

Our major drawback is envy – this is mostly seen between neighbours and colleagues – that is why Czechs usually do not boast their knowledge or property. On the other hand, in times of crises they stick together very strongly – as was the case of the Velvet Revolution.

Also due to the past, Czechs do not like authorities and tend to disrespect rules. This is exemplified in traffic – Czech drivers are fast, aggressive and inconsiderate, but pedestrians and bicycles may also be reckless. This negative feature is compensated by our capability to improvise and invent unusual solutions. All this shows that Czechs have problems to see themselves as they are – either they overestimate or underestimate themselves.

### Communications

In general, there are two attitudes towards foreigners. Older people, due to history, are sometimes rather reserved towards strangers. They also have a more pronounced language barrier. In many cases they are quite fluent in German. Russian had been a compulsory language at school for many years, so that people should understand it; however, because of the events in 1968, they are not inclined to speak it.

Young people are usually better equipped with languages, especially with English, and more open to contact with foreigners. Once introduced to a community, a foreigner is well accepted and people are very friendly and helpful.

Communication problems may be encountered in the institutions, where forms are mostly in Czech and officials do not speak English. For these cases, our Institute contact person will accompany you and help you.



## Guidelines for Practical Situations

The usual Czech greeting is “Good day” and is used rather generally in public places (small shops, restaurants). When introduced, people usually shake hands. Official acquaintances are addressed by family names and appropriate titles, which in this country are used quite regularly. Informal contacts are usually proposed after some time by the person at a higher social rank.

In some places such as restaurants, hairdressers or other services, tipping of about 10% of the price is expected.

## Time Schedules

Normal business hours in shops and services start at 8 in the morning and end about 17 or 18 in the evening. There may be a lunch break in the period 12 – 13 o'clock. In larger supermarkets and shopping centres, however, the working hours are longer and move around 9 – 20 without interruption, depending on the products. Aliments, for instance, may usually be purchased from 7 o'clock.

In state offices, the working hours are shorter and the “long” official days are Monday and Wednesday for the period 8 – 18. In the remaining days the offices may work only in the morning and some are closed on Fridays.

The Czech Republic observes the daylight saving programme, which means that from the end of October until the end of March (with slight deviations) we have the “summer time”. an hour earlier than the “winter time”. The changes are made during weekends and are usually announced in the news (and marked in calendars).

The official working hours at our Institute are from 7.15 until 15.45. These are, however, valid mostly for the administration. The research laboratories start and end later, according to their need. Your colleagues will inform you about the usual hours in your laboratory.