

Starting information for new PhD students at IFPAN coming from overseas *(Special COVID edition)*

Dear friends! the epidemic situation has introduced some hurdles and things are not as efficient as they could be. We will strive to do our best and to make everything work for you.

Information and documents regarding the physics specialisation can be found at http://www.ifpan.edu.pl/t_en_szkola.html

For your information, the institute also runs the *International PhD studies (MSD)*, according to an earlier framework that remains active for a few years but is not recruiting new students any more. All teaching activities are integrated between the PhD school and the MSD.

Welcome Centre

The Welcome Centre at IF PAN (welcomecentre@ifpan.edu.pl) is here to help overseas students and visitors in matters related to your arrival and stay in Poland that do not pertain directly to the institute – administrative issues, residence permits, visa applications, finding a school or kindergarden for children, help with finding long-term accommodation. See also the web announcement http://www.ifpan.edu.pl/ACTIVITY/Welcome_Centre_EN.pdf and facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/Welcome-Centre-IF-PAN-101534515585104>

Arrival during the epidemic

The standing order at the institute as of the beginning of October 2021 is that all employees and students coming back from overseas travel outside of the [Schengen zone](#) and [European Economic Area](#) (i.e. EU countries plus Switzerland, Norway, Iceland. Not the UK) should not come in person to the institute or use the common areas of the guest rooms (such as the kitchen) for the first 10 days after travelling – unless they can prove that they have been fully vaccinated using one of the two-dose vaccines accepted in the EU: Comirnaty (BioNTech-Pfizer), Moderna, AstraZeneca, Janssen (Johnson&Johnson). This is as a preventive measure to reduce the possibility of spreading the virus at the workplace and applies also to all new employees and students. *Even if no state quarantine is imposed.* It doesn't mean that you can't contact anybody in person (e.g. supervisor, friends), just that you can't come to the institute. Please do keep to epidemic control procedures when contacting people in person (wearing masks, washing hands, limit duration of person to person contact, avoid large groups).

Despite this inconvenience, it is still important to get the main documents (see below) prepared and signed as soon as possible after you arrive, not after 10 days.

Important: Please let your supervisors and the PhD office (sekretariat.msd@ifpan.edu.pl) know your exact date of arrival at least 2 weeks in advance so that the obligatory workplace medical check-up can be arranged. It is organised through the private health cover taken out by the institute (PZU). Also contact the PhD office and your supervisor by email or phone when you have arrived. You and/or your supervisor will get a package of documents in pdf and/or paper form to process. Some of them you may get before you travel. Where possible, please scan and send the pdf/image files to the PhD office if possible. The hardcopies can be delivered later.

If you are vaccinated, please make sure to email a scan of your vaccination certificate to the Occupational Health & Safety office (bhp@ifpan.edu.pl, or through your supervisor) beforehand, so that they can inform the people at the entrance to allow them to let you in.

Most important documents to send/sign as soon as possible after arrival

- Scan of your MsC **diploma** (or equivalent), if we don't have it yet.
- Scan of your **ID** documents (passport or equivalent). The office will need to keep a copy of your diploma, passport and visa pages (if applicable) in your personnel file.
- After the medical check-up is done you can start and will get your **student oath** to sign.
- Then, after verifying your documents, and signing the needed declarations, you'll be written into the register. This sets your date of commencement. It determines from when your scholarship is to be paid, health insurance issues, and the timetable for many formalities.
→ congratulations, you are now officially a PhD student :)
- The **social security forms**, ZUS ZUA and ZUS ZZA. These have to be entered by the HR office into a public system within a few days of your arrival, so these forms are urgent. Once they are in the system you will have the state health and accident cover. Ask your supervisor and/or the PhD office for explanations if needed.
- The form for joining the **private health cover** (PZU; basic cover paid by the institute).

Further papers to sort out, preferably remotely during the first days:

- Email and phone book data form
- Personal information enquiry
- Personal data form for making a student ID
- Declaration by the supervisor
- Sign information clauses for personal data processing
- Acceptance of institute regulations
- Acceptance of intellectual property regulations
- Other assorted forms in the package

Other matters to do at the institute once you get here in person

- Occupational health & safety induction
 - Contact the OHS officer (bhp@ifpan.edu.pl).
 - You'll get materials to read. There are some online but they are a little out of date, so go by the ones you get personally from the OHS officer or the PhD secretariat.
 - Your supervisor needs to fill out a hazards sheet.
 - Pass the simple OHS test.
- Get your keycard (through the PhD office). It is needed to open corridors and buildings.
- Get a Polish bank account.

A bank that we have found to be friendly and to impose few administrative barriers is a local branch of the biggest Polish bank. (It is open 9:00 – 19:00)

PKO BP, Branch 35 in Warsaw
ul. Rzymowskiego 31
02-697 Warszawa
- When you have the account, provide the PhD office with your bank details (there is a form) so we can pay you.
- Get your student ID from the PhD office.

It is broadly useful. For example it doubles as a public transport card. You can record long-term tickets onto it, e.g. a 3 month ticket which should cost around 150 PLN.

Getting the card usually took a few days after you submit your details, but recently there have been longer delays on the side the company that produces the card.

- Check/ensure that your email account at the domain @ifpan.edu.pl is working.
→ please check this account regularly because official emails will tend to go there.
- Sign scholarship agreement(s), if being paid from a grant.
- It is useful to have the hardcopy of the official shaped form that says you are a PhD student: “*Zaświadczenie o przyjęciu cudzoziemca na kształcenie w szkole doktorskiej*”. This is useful in lieu of the student ID before it is produced and for other things like setting up a bank account, getting the residence permit, etc. You probably have the pdf version sent to you for visa applications, but get the hardcopy. Also, the details change a bit once you commence, so ask for the updated version.

Other more long term administrative moves

- You should also register your place of residence with the municipal government (*zameldowanie*) and get a PESEL number – a personal ID. For example it is needed to complete a tax return, and helpful for the residence permit and lots of other stuff. To register, you should go to the local government office – preferably with a Polish speaking colleague. The office (if you live in our Mokotów district) is located at:

Urząd Dzielnicy Mokotów
ul. Rakowiecka 25/27
02-517 Warszawa

You need an appropriate proof of residence from the place you are staying long-term. If it is a student college like *Sokrates* on ul. Smyczkowa, or the institute guest rooms, they readily provide this “*druk do zameldowania*”. Otherwise you may need your rent agreement, and (perhaps) some papers from your landlord.

- It is important to start to apply for a temporary residence permit as soon as practical after arriving. This is because the procedures can take many months. The permit/card (rather than just the visa) is needed for various things. My recommendation is to talk with Ms Senchenko at the Welcome Centre who knows a great deal about these procedures -- far more than can be laid out here. The place to go with documents is

Mazowiecki Urząd Wojewódzki
Department of Foreigners
ul. Marszałkowska 3/5, 00-624 Warszawa

You have to first register online to get an appointment. Available appointments can be several weeks ahead or tomorrow. So it is best to gather your documents before trying to book an appointment because we may not be able to get everything prepared for you in time if the appointment is soon.

It is helpful to go to the appointment with a Polish speaking colleague, or Ms Senchenko from the Welcome Centre. Collecting the needed documents can take some time. One of the needed things are ZUS RCA, ZUS RZA forms, which are feedback from the social security agency that your dues are being paid there. They appear only after a few weeks, at which point you can go get them from the Human Resources office.

Startup actions in your PhD studies

- Plan which lectures and courses you intend to attend (*remotely..*) in the 1st semester. The up-to date list is at http://info.ifpan.edu.pl/t_pl_szkola_lectures.html.
You can also attend courses at the other institutes of the School. Also, at the local universities (if the relevant lecturers agree to examine you – ask them by email).
- Consider whether you want to attend the Polish and/or English language lessons.
- 1st year curriculum implementation schedule:
According to written regulations, you're supposed to bring your your draft of this to the PhD office, after consulting with your Supervisor, within 7 days of starting. However, that's obviously unrealistic in the current situation. My stance on this is that the first week or two after you can show up *in person at the institute* is fine. So, once you're here in person, please prepare this draft and bring it to the PhD office. Then arrange a meeting with the Specialisation Head (me) – to discuss and approve or rectify.
- Within **3 months** of your date of commencement:
 - Get your supervisor(s) officially nominated by the Scientific Council
(Organising this is more a job for the supervisors, but keep an eye on them)
- Start to learn some Polish (should be easy, right? ;-))

Best of luck!

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