

INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAMME
CHARLES UNIVERSITY SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

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CHARLES UNIVERSITY SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report

One of the major factors leading Charles University ("CU" or "the University") to participate in this international evaluation was the adoption of an amendment to the Czech Higher Education Act. The amendment, effective from September 2016, brings fundamental changes to the system of accreditation and quality assurance in higher education. Only those universities that demonstrate that they can guarantee the quality of their activities can receive institutional accreditation, i.e. authorisation to manage and develop their degree programmes independently. The University has now completed the first stage of work on the implementation of the amendment (approval of internal regulations and establishment of support environment). The application for institutional accreditation will then also include a number of areas described in this report.

The preparation of the self-evaluation report was coordinated by a ten-member management team consisting of six members of the Rector's Collegium (four vice-rectors, the chancellor and bursar), two academics, who are also members of the University's Board for Internal Evaluation, and two students who are currently also members of the Academic Senate of the University. Preparations also involved a consultative group composed of one member of the academic staff and one student from each faculty and the relevant departments of the Rectorate. Before completing the conclusions the material was distributed to the management of faculties and university institutes for comments. As CU consistently applies the principle that all important discussions involved members of the academic community, the working draft report was discussed at a joint meeting of representatives of faculties, university institutes, consulting groups, the management team and the Board for Internal Evaluation on 23 January 2017. At this meeting the major conclusions that emerged from the evaluation were also discussed. Following the incorporation of all suggestions the material was discussed by the Rector's Collegium and the Board for Internal Evaluation. The report is submitted in this form to the international team and also the academic community of the University.

Despite initial caution, most faculties were actively involved in the drafting of the report through both their representatives in the consulting group and on the management level (many faculties discussed the interim report within the dean's collegium). At the joint meeting a requirement was stipulated that the report be made available to the faculties for further internal discussion. Suggestions submitted during the preparation of the report, together with the conclusions of the international evaluation, will be invaluable when preparing the application for institutional accreditation, which will be submitted by CU this autumn.

1.2 Institutional Context

Charles University was founded in the year 1348. During the almost 670 years of its existence it has undergone a number of changes, periods of glory and stagnation. It is currently a publicly-funded university which comprises a total of seventeen faculties, of which three are theological, six are faculties of the humanities and social sciences, five are medical and three are dedicated to the sciences. The university further includes four university institutes, five other centres, five special-purpose facilities and the Rectorate (see also Appendix C). The individual faculties differ from one other in terms of their origin, number of students and academic staff, focus and internal culture (see also Appendix B). Within the University great importance is attached to the traditional scientific disciplines (philosophy, theology, mathematics etc.), as well as disciplines oriented towards a specific profession (the medical and health sciences, law, pharmacy, teaching, social work, translation and interpreting, archiving etc.).

The seat of the University is in Prague, where most of its faculties and other constituent parts are located, with the exceptions being the Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen, Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Kralove and the Faculty of Pharmacy in Hradec Kralove. The Prague-based faculties do not share a common campus, with individual centres often scattered across the capital city as a result of the historical development of the University.

The University is governed by autonomous academic bodies. It is headed by the Rector, the representative body is the Academic Senate, and other self-governing bodies are the Board of Trustees, the Research Board and the Board for Internal Evaluation. Faculties are headed by deans, who are accountable to the Rector for their activities. Deans' advisory bodies are known as the deans' collegia. The self-governing academic bodies of faculties are the academic senate, the research board and the disciplinary committee. Other parts of the University are headed by directors (cf. Appendix C).

Approximately fifty thousand students are currently enrolled at the University. Four fifths of this number are engaged in on-site study, and more than half of those in the social sciences and humanities. This ratio has been constant in recent years. Over the past five years the overall ratio of female and male students has also been similar (60:40, among the graduates 66:33); however, there is variation across individual faculties. Charles University educates students in a total of 300 degree programmes, 140 of which are for bachelor and master degrees and 160 for doctorates. Within the Czech Republic all faculties of the University have a supra-regional character; less than half of the University's students come from Prague and the Central Bohemian Region. Among international students the most well-represented nationality is Slovakian (43% of international students), which is due to the shared history of the two countries, the absence of a language barrier and related accessibility issues

(study in the Czech language is not subject to tuition fees) and the quality of the courses offered, followed by Russia (9 %), Ukraine (5%), Germany (4%), the United Kingdom (4%), Portugal (3%) and Norway (3%).

The employability of graduates of Charles University is generally very good, and the unemployment rate of students one year after graduation oscillates around 1%, irrespective of degree programme. However, differences do exist between individual faculties in the proportion of graduates working in positions that correspond to the level and type of degree taken, which is related to a focus on more professional or broader curricula. An analysis commissioned recently by the University showed that graduates of the University are, in general, mostly satisfied with their jobs, the transition from graduation to active employment did not take long, and if they could choose again, the majority would opt to study at Charles University.

2. MISSION AND VISION OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY

2.1 Mission and Vision

The mission of the Charles University is to enable its students to obtain a quality education for application in a wide variety of fields, as well as to play an active role in the public discourse on social and ethical issues and the shaping of civic society. Charles University positions itself as a research university which emphasises the Humboldtian principles of unity and freedom of research and education and autonomy and applies them to a broad spectrum of fields in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and medicine. The University therefore considers it essential that education in all types of degree programs is founded on scientific knowledge based on research carried out by academic and research staff, either independently or in cooperation with their domestic and international peers. This applies not only in relation to students of degree programmes, but also to those attending lifelong learning programmes.

The vision of CU is to fulfil the ideal of a university that is free, confident and values its traditions, while at the same time anticipating and co-determining the development of the fields that it cultivates, to be a university that is modern, inspiring and open, and that can absorb a wide variety of stimuli and is a respected institution on a domestic, European and global scale.

Thanks to its history, breadth of focus, uniqueness of many of the fields it cultivates and its size, Charles University occupies a singular position among Czech higher education institutions (twenty-six public, two state and forty private). It is the largest university in the Czech Republic by both the number of degree programmes offered and the number of students that attend these courses, as well as the scope of its scientific, research, development, innovative and other creative activities ("scientific activities") and the number of its academic, scientific and other staff (see Appendices A and B). The tradition and strength of its research base makes it ideal for the role of the leading educational and research institution in the country.

Many of international comparisons rank CU among the world's leading universities, and in some fields (e.g. pharmacy, geography, medicine, mathematics and modern languages) as high as in the top two hundred institutions in terms of results and reputation, it also belongs among the leading universities of Central Europe. The University considers itself to be an integral part of the European educational and research environment, while trying to ensure that it contributes to the shaping of this environment through the quality of its activities. On an international scale an important objective of the University is openness to international students, teachers and researchers, cooperation with international partners, i.e. in particular the mutual exchange of students and teachers with the objective of acquiring educational and scientific experience from prestigious European and international institutions, cooperation in scientific and research projects and the seeking of solutions to problems currently affecting society. The University, both as a whole and its individual constituent parts, must therefore create the conditions and opportunities for a wide variety of types of international scientific and educational activities and engage in the European and global scientific environment.

Charles University considers one of the basic prerequisites of its existence and operation to be strong academic self-government based on close collegial collaboration across the whole of academia, solidarity between constituent parts and departments of the University, mutual communication, respect and systematic care for all those who are connected to the University and who act on its behalf. Its faculties and other constituent parts are very diverse (see Appendix B) and their autonomy is guaranteed by the Higher Education Act, the statutes of the University and its other internal regulations. The University is based on the principle that the procedures and tools for the development of educational and scientific activities and related activities must be applied first within its constituent parts, and therefore endeavours to preserve and develop their internal cultures and traditions. Hence, the principles of strategic management must be applied with an emphasis on the specific nature of the academic environment and the intensive cooperation of all university bodies, faculties and other constituent parts in discussing and making decisions on all fundamental issues. Charles University sees itself as a cohesive community made up of distinctive constituent parts, and one of its distinguishing features is therefore marked decentralisation. It is therefore the task of the University's senior employees to serve the university community and create the best conditions possible for the development of educational and scientific activities, individual departments and constituent parts of the University, and of the institution as a whole.

As a public university Charles University is financed chiefly from the state budget. In the Czech Republic there is currently no multi-year funding programme for educational or scientific activities from public finances, which brings considerable unpredictability. In view of this fact, the University endeavours to reduce its dependence on

direct allocations from the state budget through the concept of multi-source funding. This encompasses intensive participation in domestic and international grant competitions and the raising of its own revenues (e.g. through some lifelong learning programmes). Besides seeking other sources of funding, the University also constantly strives to streamline its own operations. This is achieved through the continuous refinement of rules for the internal distribution of allocated public funds, creation of mechanisms for ensuring the functioning and development of newly built large research infrastructures in the long term or capitalisation on options for the provision of intra-university and university-wide services. The University currently covers about a third of its activities from its own revenues; the remaining two-thirds comes from contributions and grants from public sources.

2.2 Education, Science and Research, Third Role

Charles University considers educational activities, research activities and social responsibility to be integral and interrelated parts of its field of competence. Only high-quality research ensures that teaching is conducted by scholars who are capable of informing students of the latest knowledge and trends in their fields. Active scientific work is therefore an integral and highly important part of education. In addition to specific knowledge, teachers must also communicate to students the scientific way of thinking, moral aspects of scientific work and other specific aspects concerning, for example, the necessity of constant contact with institutions abroad or social engagement and so on. However, the proportion of teaching and research activities, their orientation and the promotion of lifelong learning and applied research are very field-specific and vary across individual constituent parts of the University.

The spectrum of degree programmes taught at Charles University is also very broad. The University's long-term strategy is to deepen its existing range of degree programmes and to ensure the continued existence of those that are unique in the national and Central European sphere (e.g. many subjects in the humanities, such as Arabic Studies, Vietnamese Studies and Nordic Studies, and the thoroughly unique Hussite Theology). This part of the spectrum of degree programmes also includes small strategic fields that are important with respect to current socio-political developments in the world. The University seeks to stabilise support for these fields in cooperation with a number of government ministries (Defence, Interior, Foreign Affairs and Culture).

Given that CU positions itself as a research university, in the context of educational activities emphasis is placed mainly on master's and doctoral degree programmes and their strong bond with research activities. During their master's studies students are guided towards scholarly activities. In preparing its students the University also strives towards stronger cooperation with other scientific and educational institutions and organisations from the public, non-profit and commercial sectors so as to provide students with a broader perspective and greater opportunities for their self-realisation. The foremost of these is the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, which together with CU is the most important scientific institution in the country. The objective is for students to come into contact with the best the country has to offer in science and research. In professional education, it is also important that teaching reflects the situation on the labour market and feedback from employers. In order to help its students gain international experience, CU draws on its strategic partnerships and the faculties conclude cooperation agreements with institutions abroad.

Similarly, University does not underestimate the importance of ongoing vocational education in the most demanding fields that it cultivates. It therefore does not target only "traditional" students; a further priority of the University is the systematic development of lifelong learning, while linking the expanding range of courses to under- and postgraduate study. This type of education should respond to the demands of society and should be available to different groups of candidates, from secondary school students to senior citizens.

Charles University has for many years profiled itself as an institution with a significant proportion of research activities (*research-intensive university*). The University embraces the diversity of disciplines, one of its characteristic features, as the ideal platform for the development of interdisciplinary research. While it considers the key factor in its research activity to be high-quality basic research, it tries not to neglect the transferral of knowledge into practice in the form of applied research. The objective of this is to provide significant support to disciplines that are already achieving outstanding results, as well as helping others where there is potential for future development, to be among the best in the shortest possible time.

The current system of funding for science in the Czech Republic is linked to the allocation of resources based on results achieved, which is reflected in the linking of the career paths of academics at individual faculties primarily with the results they have achieved in scientific work. However, a strong emphasis on scientific output and the means of its assessment can conceal within itself a potential risk of the marginalisation of teaching. The creation of an environment for the coordination of teaching and research activities and the maintenance and increase of the prestige of educational activities therefore represents an important challenge for the University and all of its faculties.

The University understands its social responsibility in a broad sense, and therefore considers it important to comment on the essential issues affecting the development of human society, including those that are of fundamental concern to the Czech Republic. The objective of this is to deepen cooperation with the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, other universities, university hospitals, public institutions, self-governing authorities and professional and vocational societies, as well as fruitful cooperation with the private sector. The University also develops cooperation with major international organisations, such as those which bring together universities, and seeks to further consolidate its activities in areas outside Europe.

3. FULFILLING THE VISION

3.1 Governance and Decision-Making

The self-governing academic bodies of the University are the Rector, the Academic Senate, the Research Board and the Board for Internal Evaluation. Other bodies are the Board of Trustees and the Bursar (for a complete overview see Appendix C). Compared to the majority of its partner universities in the West, CU's organisational structure is more decentralised, with marked staffing, organisational and fiscal independence of faculties.

The head of the University is the **Rector**, who acts and makes decisions in its name. The vice-rectors are accountable for a variety of areas. The Rector's advisory body is the collegium which, in addition to the vice-rectors, includes the Bursar, the Chancellor, the President of the Academic Senate of the University, a student representative and other members of the academic community who are responsible for specific areas. The Expanded Collegium, in which the deans of faculties and directors of other constituent parts of the University are represented, acts as a further advisory body in order to strengthen mutual dialogue within the University. Two years ago the International Advisory Board, which is composed of twelve major scientific and academic figures from leading European and American universities and scientific institutions, was established as an advisory body to the Rector. Its chief task is to advise the leadership of the University during the introduction of new programmes for the promotion of research, assessment of quality and focus of individual constituent parts and other issues relevant to the development of scientific and pedagogical work at the University (for a complete overview of the Rector's advisory bodies see Appendix C).

The **Academic Senate** is the supreme representative body of academic self-governance and is elected by members of the academic community. It elects and dismisses the Rector of the University, gives the Rector prior consent to the appointment and dismissal of members of the Research Board and the Board for Internal Evaluation, approves internal regulations of the University and its faculties, the budget and distribution of block-grants and subsidies granted from public resources among faculties and other constituent parts, the strategic plan and annual reports, and performs a supervisory role. The Academic Senate consists of a total of 70 members and includes representatives of the academic staff of the faculties and other parts of CU (thirty-six representatives, two from each faculty and a total two from other parts) and students (thirty-four representatives, two from each faculty).

The **Research Board** is appointed by the Rector (who is also its chairman) for the period of his tenure and is composed of prominent representatives of the scientific disciplines, at least a third of whom are not part of the academic community of the University. The Research Board addresses in particular issues affecting the conceptual development of science at the University and the University's strategic plan. Another important area of its competence are scientific and educational qualifications (submission of proposals for appointments by the Czech president to the position of professor and appointments by the Rector of the University to the position of associate professor). The amendment to the Higher Education Act gave the Research Board responsibility for the approval of the intent to submit an application for institutional accreditation in the fields of education and, if applicable, the intention to relinquish such accreditation, the intention to submit a proposal for the accreditation procedure for the appointment of associate professors and professors, the intention to terminate a study programme and other tasks related to internal quality assurance.

The **Board for Internal Evaluation** is a newly-established self-governing body of the University, which guarantees, promotes and develops the quality assurance and self-evaluation of educational and scientific activities of the University, as well as related activities. It is appointed by the Rector for four years on the basis of proposals by the Rector, the Academic Senate and the Research Board and consists of members of University management, academic staff and students. The board's competencies focus chiefly on the preparation of applications for the institutional accreditation, applications for the accreditation of study programmes and the subsequent granting of permission to carry out study programmes as part of institutional accreditation, as well as the management of internal quality assurance and the assessment and documentation of its outcomes.

The **Board of Trustees** is the body which gives its consent to legal transactions relating in particular to assets and, together with the Academic Senate, makes decisions on strategic development and budgetary issues. The council consists of distinguished figures from public and professional life, other universities and scientific institutions. The **Bursar** is responsible in particular for the financial management of the University and the Rectorate and further assigns tasks to faculty secretaries in matters concerning management and internal administration (assigned to secretaries by the dean of the relevant faculty), monitors the implementation of these tasks and is the head of departments of the Rectorate. A further body of the University is the **Ethics Commission**, which assesses complaints regarding compliance with the University's Code of Conduct.

The relationship between the University and its faculties is chiefly defined by the Higher Education Act and the statutes of the University. The rights of faculties include the establishment of self-governing academic bodies, the right to determine their own internal organisation, the management of resources provided, labour relations, holding of habilitation procedures and procedures for the appointment of professors, the creation and implementation of degree programmes, determination of the strategic orientation of research activities, the development of international cooperation and the implementation of auxiliary activities and subsequent management of the resources obtained from such activities. In some areas (focus of research, international activities, personnel

policy, management), however, actions of crucial importance in terms of the focus or development of these faculty areas must be discussed in advance with the Rector.

Faculties are headed by **deans**, who act and make decisions in their name. A dean is appointed by the Rector based on a nomination by the faculty's academic senate, and is also accountable to the Rector for the running of the faculty. As with the Rector, the dean is advised by his/her collegium, which consists of the vice-deans and other persons authorised by the dean. The **faculty academic senate** elects and dismisses the dean and approves the allocation of the faculty's resources, its strategic plans, annual reports and student admission requirements. The senate consists of student and staff representatives in varying ratios depending on the individual faculty. The **faculty research board** performs a similar role to the University's Research Board at faculty level, and in particular approves proposed degree programmes, which are then submitted for accreditation, approves nominations of associate professors or professors, discusses its faculty's strategic plan and updates to that plan and comments on all initiatives submitted to it by the dean. The **faculty secretary** is responsible for the financial management and internal administration of the faculty, and is the head of departments of the dean's office.

The active role of students in the self-governing bodies is generally viewed as positive, and is therefore expected to be further developed and supported in the future, especially in the case of those faculties that are currently not so open to their involvement. At the University there are both faculty senates with equal representation of students and employees (the statutory maximum) and senates in which students constitute a third of senators (the statutory minimum). At the majority of faculties working committees are also open to students, with their representation in these committees often being based on the nature of the committee. While the activity and interest of students in working in the self-governing bodies of the individual faculties vary, there is greater interest among students at faculties oriented towards the humanities. For Charles University as a whole, the involvement of student representatives in the creation of internal regulations, in matters relating to the quality of educational activities (e.g. one student sits in each of the four panels of the Board for Internal Evaluation or there is an elaborate system of student evaluation of teaching, see Chapter 4) and cooperation with student associations and student boards that operate at some faculties have proved their worth. CU provides funding for student clubs and associations.

Communication and cooperation between the various bodies is organised across several levels at the University. The top level is the management of the University and the faculties, provided for by the Rector or deans and their advisory bodies. Communication between the management of the University, faculties and other parts of the University is carried out through the Rector's extended collegium. Communication between university and faculty academic senates is mostly seamless, partly because members of the Academic Senate of the University tend to also be members of the senate of their own faculty. The administrative agenda related to ancillary activities is drawn up by the Bursar through regular meetings with faculty secretaries. The individual vice-rectors and the departments they head cooperate with the corresponding faculty vice-deans and departments of the deans' offices. The faculties rate cooperation with University management as good, chiefly because CU does not impose its own authority on them, but seeks to promote cooperation and joint discussions on all important issues. They see room for the improvement of communication in increased feedback on suggestions submitted by them to University management. Recently (e.g. in the preparation of new internal regulations), common communication environments (for example *sharepoints*) have proved their worth. In some cases the weakness of communication lies in its fragmentation, where the same information is sent from the Rectorate to a variety of groups or people at faculties, without them knowing about each other. This area could be improved through the better use of the University's website for the sharing of information from the University's agenda or the creation of other shared document repositories for specific user groups.

3.2 Financing and Economic Management

Charles University is the largest university in the Czech Republic in terms of both student and staff numbers and the amount of funds that it manages. In 2015 the University's revenues reached 344 million Euros. The University's long-term economic results have been positive, mainly due to supplementary activities. In the most recent fiscal year the profit made by the University reached 3.5 million Euros after tax. In recent years the University has also not been burdened by any loans. The faculties of the University differ from one another in terms of their budgets: for example, the annual revenue of the three smallest faculties fluctuates around 2 million Euros, while those of three largest faculties exceed 40 million Euros, which represents about two-fifths of the entire university budget (see Appendix B).

As Charles University is a public university, the predominant part of the funds that it manages comes from public sources, representing approximately two thirds of its revenues (235 million Euros), with the remainder consisting of its own revenues (109 million Euros) from various sources. Approximately 55% of funds received from public sources is earmarked for the development and implementation of educational activities and the remainder for the implementation and development of research.

The University's budget is composed of three similarly sized parts (funds for educational activities, research activities and the University's own revenues). However, this division does not apply to the majority of faculties, as some are predominantly financed with funds earmarked for teaching (faculties focused on the social sciences, arts and humanities, with the exception of the Protestant Theological Faculty) or research activities (Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics), and in some cases the majority of a faculty's finance comes from

its own revenues (medical faculties).

This composition of revenues is partially determined by developments at national level. Due to the fact that, in recent years, the amount of money provided from public funds for educational activities has stagnated, or even fallen (on an international scale the Czech Republic is one of the countries below the OECD average), and that universities on the territory of the Czech capital have been practically excluded from receiving public money from European Structural and Investment Funds, the University has been forced to seek funds elsewhere. For this reason CU has placed more focus on grant competitions and its research results, as in recent years a system has been introduced in relation to the institutional financing of research that distributes funds among universities based on the conversion of results achieved (see Appendix A). It has further focused on increasing its own revenues so as to strengthen its multi-source funding (between 2014 and 2015 these rose by approximately 5%).

Almost all funds for the University's educational activities (130 million Euros) comes directly from the state budget, and specifically from the budget of the Ministry of Education. Around half of the revenue from the University's research activities (approx. 105 million Euros) comes from institutional funds and half from funds sourced from a variety of grant competitions. A crucial proportion of institutional funds (approximately 49 million Euros) is distributed on the basis of national evaluation of the results achieved by universities and other research institutions. These funds are not bound to a particular use, and Charles University uses them in particular to finance its programmes for the promotion of science (see Chapter 3.5). Special-purpose funds (approx. 57 million Euros) consist mainly of those obtained by the University from domestic and international grant competitions, and a smaller proportion (approx. 11 million Euros) are funds provided by the Ministry for Education for student research activities and distributed through internal grant competitions.

A fundamental part of the University's own revenues, whose total amount has been gradually growing in recent years, consists of income from the sale of services, about a third of which come from students taking foreign language courses, primarily at the medical faculties (in the Czech Republic tuition fees are applied based on the language of instruction: while study in the Czech language is free for the standard length of a degree programme, tuition fees, set according to the cost of the programme in question, apply to study in a foreign language; see also Appendix A). A major component of these are funds generated from some lifelong learning programmes, which are largely organised by the Institute of Language and Preparatory Studies, or income from CU Dormitories and Refectories for accommodation and food services (the amount of faculties' own revenues is listed in Appendix B).

Although the University as a whole has managed in recent years to respond to unfavourable developments in funding at the national level, reduce its dependence on block grants and subsidies from the state budget and raise the amount of funds that it manages, the financial situations of the different faculties vary widely. The conditions and environment that faculties can offer to their employees or students varies considerably and greatly hampers the development of some. The fact, mentioned above, that the major part of public funding for education and research is not currently distributed on a long-term basis, as well as the fact that in recent years universities in Prague have not been able to access money from European Structural and Investment Funds to restore infrastructure in the capital, contribute to this situation. The establishment of a national research assessment system that does not adequately reflect the specific aspects of faculties' research work (e.g. for a number of years monographs were assessed purely in terms of quantity, not quality) has had a further adverse impact on some disciplines. Some smaller faculties, or faculties focusing on the social sciences, arts and humanities, are therefore struggling to secure their finances. A further weakness of the University are the relatively small revenues received for education and research from abroad (approx. 3 million Euros, i.e. approx. 1% of total revenues) or private sources (less than 1 million Euros).

In 2015 the University's total expenditure amounted to around 340 million Euros. More than half of this consists of staffing costs (approx. 191 million Euros), and a further major component are the various forms of scholarship support for students (approx. 30 million Euros). In the same year the average gross monthly wage of employees of Charles University amounted to approximately 1.4 times the average wage in the Czech Republic, specifically the amount of 1,350 Euros. However, there are significant differences between different categories of staff (professors, associate professors, lecturers, teachers, research staff, other staff), and then also between different faculties, again chiefly among the faculties oriented towards the social sciences and humanities and faculties oriented towards science and medicine (see Appendix B). Compared to its reference institutions abroad, the University's competitiveness in terms of conditions that it can offer to doctoral students, junior researchers or outstanding professors is therefore significantly limited. The underfunding of Czech education in comparison to other OECD countries is manifested by the fact that the Czech Republic is among the countries with the highest number of students per member of academic staff (according to the last report, twenty-two), but the lowest average salary of teachers in tertiary education.

The budget of the University is approved by the Academic Senate and the Board of Trustees on the basis of projected revenues and expenses for the following year; by law, this budget cannot be in deficit. Funds of an institutional nature (i.e. block grants) which are provided to the University from the state budget for education and research (which in 2015 amounted to approx. 138 million Euros, representing 40% of revenues managed by the University in the year in question) are distributed among faculties and other parts of the University based on the University's principles for the distribution of block grants and subsidies. Based on the mutual consent between CU leadership and faculties and other constituent parts it is possible to use the agreed part of these resources on

university programmes to promote e.g. teaching, research or internationalisation. Faculties and other constituent parts of the University then independently manage other funds acquired e.g. in domestic and international grant competitions or through supplementary activities.

Principles are the subject of continuous discussion with the faculties and other parts of the University, and both reflect the rules applied to the distribution of funds by the Ministry for Education, and the University's priorities. Funds earmarked for University activities currently constitute approximately one-fifth of funds distributed on the basis of agreed principles (approx. 30 million Euros in 2015); activities funded on a university-wide basis include programmes for the promotion of research, the University's mobility fund, funds for the reconstruction of University infrastructure or funds for the activities of the Rectorate and other constituent parts of the University. The remainder of funds received in the form of block grants for educational activities and subsidies to support the development of research activities are distributed between faculties and other parts of the University partly on the basis of indicators that are used at national level, and partly on the basis of indicators that reflect the priorities of the University. Currently, key criteria include in particular the type and cost of realised degree programmes (which are set at national level), the number of enrolled students and indicators of teaching and research quality. The University also ensures that the budgets of faculties and constituent parts of the University do not fall below 96% of the previous year's budget, and that there is solidarity among faculties, i.e. mitigates the impact of some unfavourable budgetary indicators at national level (e.g. the coefficients of financial demands in the humanities and social sciences are generally low, which chiefly impacts smaller faculties). Principles are approved annually by the Academic Senate based on proposals submitted to it by the Rector. The further division of allocated funds is within the competency of the faculties and other constituent parts of the University.

3.3 Personnel Policy

The University is the largest university in the Czech Republic in terms of number of employees. In 2015, the University had more than 11,000 employees, who worked for a period corresponding to approximately 8,000 FTE jobs (for further details see Appendix B). The number of university employees has been relatively stable over the last five years, increasing only about 2%. Academic staff (48%) participate in both teaching and research, research staff (9%) are involved in research only, and other employees (43%) are involved in the provision of various auxiliary activities. The Higher Education Act further divides academic and research staff into professors, associate professors, extraordinary professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers and scientific workers who participate in educational activities.

Holders of the title of professor and associate professor currently constitute more than a third (35%) of all academic staff, two thirds of whom work at a university with a ratio (FTE) of 0.7 or higher. In accordance with the Higher Education Act these are scientific and pedagogical titles awarded upon completion of proceedings that take into account the candidate's previous scholarly and educational activities in a specific field, rather than a functional position. An extraordinary professor (staff category introduced in the most recent amendment to the Higher Education Act) is an employee who has achieved a rank comparable to that of professor or associate professor abroad or in practice within their field. Professors, extraordinary professors and associate professors are not only highly qualified specialists, but are also important in relation to the accreditation of degree programmes; by law, only persons in those positions can act as guarantors of master's or doctoral degree programmes. The average age of new holders of the title of associate professor is 45 years, and for the title of professor 51 years. In recent years this has been decreasing in both cases. Just under half (45%) of academic staff consist of assistant professors, who typically hold the title of doctor or its equivalent, and the remaining fifth are instructors (for whom the completion of doctoral studies is not mandatory according to university rules; a limited amount of research activity is expected), lecturers (who primarily teach, and publish mainly for educational purposes) and scientific workers taking part in educational activities. Slightly less than two fifths of academic staff are women, whose representation decreases further up the academic hierarchy (women make up half of academic staff among assistants and lecturers, 40% of instructors, 27% of lecturers, and 16% of professors). 6% of the University's academic staff is from abroad; their share has gradually increased in recent years (4% in 2011); the situation is similar with research staff (13% in 2011, currently 20%). Due to the long shared history of the two countries, these are mostly citizens of the Slovak Republic (two fifths of the total number of staff from abroad).

In accordance with the Higher Education Act, labour relations which concern the faculties are within their scope of competency. For other parts of the University, this area is entrusted to the Rector, who may delegate staffing issues to the Bursar in relation to employees who do not form part of academic staff. In this area, too, there is a significant degree of decentralisation within the University, where the University through its regulations sets the framework within which the faculties can define their own personnel policy, and supports some parts of this policy through targeted measures (e.g. recruitment of foreign academic and research staff, social policy, employee benefits, employee training etc.).

With regard to internal regulations the University, for example, sets the basic rules of the selection procedure for the intake of academic, research and other staff, but not about specific requirements. Similarly, internal payroll regulations are laid down in a catalogue of works for individual categories of employees, but serve only the basis for the negotiation of job descriptions. The specific scope of the teaching and research duties of academic staff and the research duties of researchers is determined by the dean of a faculty or through measures defined by the

director of other constituent part of the University according to the orientation of that part. The content of these measures is discussed in advance with the Rector; at faculties these are commented on by the faculty's academic senate. Although the title of professor is the highest scientific and pedagogical title, there is no guarantee that the holder must work in a top position according to the catalogue of works. Similarly, internal payroll regulations define only the payroll span between individual categories of workers; the specific amount is left to the individual constituent parts. Other fundamental regulations for personnel development at CU concern habilitation procedures and procedures for the appointment of professors. The implementing provisions issued for these by the Rector define only field-specific criteria for the assessment of participants in these proceedings; these criteria are, however, recommendations only. Likewise, between faculties there are e.g. different criteria for claiming statutory guaranteed research leave (*sabbatical*). The University is currently faced with the task of finding common rules in other areas of personnel policy for various phases of the teaching and research careers of academic and research staff (especially principles for working with junior researchers, including support for their pedagogical skills, and post-doctoral students). Due to the heterogeneity of the University it is not possible to create uniform rules for career advancement (e.g. a career or attestation code).

Career development systems are in place only at some faculties (Faculty of Science, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen) and constituent parts (Center for Economic Research and Postgraduate Study). Some other faculties are aware of the absence of this instrument and are therefore currently working on preparation for one (e.g. Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport). In addition, habilitation and appointment procedures will have to be further enhanced so that all candidates are consistently assessed in a complex manner, i.e. taking into account their research as well as pedagogical activities.

The options for the further development of personnel policies at the individual faculties are to some extent limited by the Czech Labour Code, which stipulates that an employer may conclude a maximum of three consecutive fixed-term contracts with an employee, each of them for a maximum period of three years. This means that after nine years the employee must be given either a permanent contract or leave the faculty. In some faculties the use of this concept as an incentive for habilitation (i.e. when the faculty's personnel policy permits only a very limited number of permanent contracts for the positions of assistant professor and instructor) can lead to a gradual reduction of staff in assistant professor positions. If, conversely, the faculty's personnel policy restricts, e.g. for financial reasons, the number of places for associate professors and professors, then these faculties lack guarantors for degree programmes and key subjects for accreditation. The Labour Code allows the negotiation of an exemption from the provisions in question between employers and unions; however, the University has negotiated no such exemption.

As far as "academic inbreeding", a much-discussed topic in recent years, is concerned, the problem may be its tolerance in cases where it may entail restrictions on the further development of the department. While attracting scholars from abroad is one of the priorities of the University's personnel policy, one problematic aspect given the lack of funds is salary. The long-term acquisition of a top scholar from abroad, particularly at professor or associate professor level, is currently a complicated matter for the University due to the lack of major resources from abroad such as grants or private backers. These resources are, however, available only for limited periods of time. While in recent years the University has been able to stabilise the qualification and age structure of the vast majority of fields, particularly in the natural and medical sciences, the faculties lack the resources to support young researchers or attract teachers and visiting professors from abroad. Although the University has taken some measures to support junior researchers, postdoctoral researchers with experience abroad and visiting professors, they are only fragmentary and have limited impact. For example, the annual budget for the UNCE and PRIMUS science promotion programmes (see chapter 3.5) and the fund to support stays by postdoctoral researchers amounts to approximately five million Euros, which are further distributed through intra-university competitions. The institute of visiting professors has also not been sufficiently utilised, although recently there has been a relatively significant increase in their number. The aforementioned measures are also aimed mainly at research; pedagogical activities at the University have so far taken a back seat. The Arnošt of Pardubice Prize, which is awarded to academic workers for excellence in teaching and groups of academic or other workers for their contribution to improving the quality of educational activities, was introduced only last year, the system of courses to improve the teaching skills of young and other academic workers is still being prepared in connection with the establishment of the Centre for Lifelong Learning.

A further area affecting the University is the frequent overloading of academic workers who have gained the title of associate professor or professor. These holders of the highest academic ranks are often the guarantors of degree programmes, heads of departments, members of the self-governing bodies of CU or the faculties, vice-deans or vice-rectors – all at the same time. This reduces their capacity to teach and work with students or engage in research. The amendment to the Higher Education Act actually gives them a greater number of duties.

Despite the limitations resulting from insufficient funds, the University considers itself a socially responsible institution, and therefore endeavours to create decent conditions for its employees and promote the development of targeted social policies. A collective agreement exists between the University and organisations representing its employees. This agreement regulates e.g. matters affecting labour relations, payroll and remuneration, health and safety at work and employee welfare, including various employee benefits (e.g. meal allowances, preferential conditions for recreation on university premises or discounts at partner universities, of which there has been a significant increase in recent years). From its social fund the University and its constituent parts pro-

vide employees with a pension contribution, accommodation, meals, professional development or non-refundable financial assistance. The University offers starter homes to young academics and researchers under 35 years of age. The University endeavours to continuously improve the accessibility of university premises for employees with special needs (currently approx. 200 people). Employees also have a wide range of information and consulting services and continuing education resources at their disposal within the University.

3.4 Educational Activities

Between 2000 and 2010 the number of students at the University grew from less than 38,000 to almost 54,000. Nonetheless, CU was not as affected by the increase in student numbers as were other universities in the Czech Republic (in the same period the number of students in universities nationwide has more than doubled, with a growth of 80% at public universities, and only 42% at CU), and further did not affect all faculties. Student numbers increased chiefly at some faculties with an orientation towards the social sciences and humanities, established only after 1989, and further continued to grow, in line with government policy, at medical faculties and the Faculty of Pharmacy. Conversely, some faculties remained at the same level, or experienced a slight decrease in student numbers (Faculty of Mathematics and Physics). In 2010 the increase in student numbers stopped and numbers began to decline. This is a nationwide trend, albeit with different causes at different universities. One reason for this is demographic decline, which, however, has not yet had a major effect on the University, and chiefly the policy of the Ministry of Education, which has endeavoured to halt the opening-up of university education through changes in the funding system (see Appendix A).

In comparison to previous years the expansion of higher education has brought a more diverse student population at Charles University, although perhaps to a lesser extent than in the case of many other domestic public universities, as CU accepts the highest proportion of graduates of secondary general (grammar school or *gymnasium*) education (almost 90%), as well as applicants whose parents are university-educated, in comparison with the rest of the Czech Republic. Out of the students who enter the University in the first year of bachelor's and master's degrees, around half are recent graduates of secondary schools and the other half have already studied or are studying at university. For many years a high proportion of the students accepted for study in the first years of subsequent master's and postgraduate studies completed their previous degree at a different university. Students of other nationalities comprise approximately 16% of the student population, a third of whom are educated in foreign languages (mostly in English).

The University provides undergraduate (bachelor's, master's) and postgraduate (doctoral) degrees. An important principle of the development of the University's educational activities is support for a wide range of degree programmes, including minor subjects that reflect the University's social role. The system for financing faculties therefore utilises not only an assessment system based on individual criteria, but also the solidarity principle to compensate for the adverse impact of the criteria in some fields (e.g. small, often exclusive fields of study), as adopted by the Ministry of Education for the funding of educational activities and which, to some extent, disadvantages them.

A credits system has been applied in all bachelor's and master's degree programmes. The implementation of this system, together with the possibility of choosing optional subjects from all across the University, supports the permeability of study and the responsibility of students for independently choosing their curriculum, while creating the basic formal conditions for the greater openness of subjects. Diploma supplements, which are issued automatically and free of charge to all graduates of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programmes, also contribute to the better permeability of degree programmes, as well as facilitating the recognition of previous education, especially that acquired abroad.

The University aims to consolidate the international dimension of its activities. Faculties are therefore encouraged to increase the number of foreign-language degree programmes and collaboration with universities abroad. It is also recommended that they introduce subjects taught in foreign languages in Czech-language degree programmes, especially at master's level, so as to make it easier to establish cooperation between Czech and international students and create common groups. Faculties should further develop foreign-language courses, e.g. all postgraduate degree programmes are expected to be accredited in a foreign language, usually English, and support is also given for the realisation of *joint degree* and *double degree* programmes (of which there are currently fourteen) and the joint supervision of doctoral dissertations in the form of *cotutelles*. Student and teacher mobility (see chapter 3.7) also play an important role.

A further pillar of the development of educational activities is the consolidation of the close ties between research and teaching activities. The majority of academics are actively involved in research and many of them are recognised scientists who then transmit their knowledge into the classroom. There are many examples of good practice, as individual faculties involve their students in research activities. The most important and most successful way of achieving this is involvement in bachelor's, master's and postgraduate projects, e.g. theses. Bachelor's students learn how to deal with a research topic, apply scientific techniques and resolve standard problems. Master's students are supposed to conduct research that brings a new knowledge and may eventually lead to their first publications. In some cases it is customary for master's students working on their thesis to join international working groups, work on issues with a clearly defined place in contemporary research programmes or participate in grant activities. This is intensified in doctoral degree programmes, whose students work their way towards professionalism, an international reputation and results presented in renowned conferences or scien-

tific journals in their respective field. The benchmark for quality of work is relatively straightforward – to succeed in not only the domestic, but also the international community.

A further successful method consists of elective study blocks, where students can choose whether they want to attend one of the compulsory elective courses or engage in research, the results of which are then presented at a student conference. Another tool for involving students in research activities are intra-university student research grants – last year the CU Internal Grant Agency supported approximately 900 student projects involving more than 1,700 students and another 100 projects supported student conferences attended by almost 4,000 students. New university programmes have also been established whose primary aim is the advancement of scientific disciplines that, directly or indirectly, support the development of respective educational activities, careers of university teachers and the involvement of talented students and young researchers in research work at the relevant workplace (see also chapter 3.5). However, in this area there are differences between faculties in terms of their focus (greater orientation towards either academic or professional degree programmes), and also partly the intensity of their orientation towards research and the research funds at their disposal (see Appendix B).

In its degree programmes CU is committed to cooperating with other educational and research institutions and providing practical experience for its students. The Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic is a particularly important partner in this regard. Besides common workplaces (e.g. the Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education, Center for Theoretical Studies and Centre for Mediaeval Studies at the Faculty of Arts and the Centre for Biblical Studies at the Protestant Theological Faculty) and sixty postgraduate study programmes jointly operated by one or more CU faculties and the Academy of Sciences, its experts also participate in CU educational activities in the role of supervisors (a total 14% of supervisors in the case of doctoral studies), consultants, members of subject area boards and final examination committees, or as opponents of theses. The University also cooperates with five university hospitals, primary and secondary schools (e.g. a network of faculty schools with teachers/mentors for different areas of education, for degree programmes focused on teacher training), government ministries, other universities (joint degree programme with the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice), tertiary professional schools (five joint study programmes) and other government and public administration institutions.

There are differences between faculties in the degree to which their students are involved in practical work placements. This is also due to the fact that CU is oriented towards both professional degree programmes (e.g. medicine and healthcare, pharmacy, teacher training, law and jurisprudence, social work etc.) and degree programmes with more of an academic orientation. With the former, practical experience is, in almost all cases, an integral part of the curriculum, and with the latter, depends very much on individual faculties or departments. One example of good practice in this respect is the Czech-German Studies degree programme at the Faculty of Social Sciences, in which practical student experience is a compulsory subject with a high number of credits (20 credits). Students often continue working for the same company even after the end of their internships, and gain further valuable contacts. A study commissioned by the University in 2014 on the employability of CU graduates showed that almost half of its graduates continued to work in the same field after graduation as during their studies, and 40% of those are still in the same job five years after graduation.

The University's study regulations permit flexibility in the curricula of degree programmes. All students can choose optional subjects for up to 15% of their total ECTS credits based on their interests and study profile. Students can further choose the topics of their theses, which may also reflect their research interests, the individualisation of their study and, last but not least, the establishment of a deeper and personally enriching relationship between student and supervisor. The new accreditation system will also emphasise the definition of undergraduate degrees as either professional or academic.

The issue of *student-centred learning*, i.e. a more individualised approach to teaching and the playing of a more active role by the student, is one that has emerged only recently at the University. During the investigation to obtain data for the preparation of this report, a total six out of the University's seventeen faculties declared a growth in the number of subjects applying this approach, which they described as strategically important and supported by faculty management. Additionally, a further three faculties stated that all of their teaching was essentially individualised. Among the remaining faculties, a further four described the current status as significantly different in the application of these methods between different degree programmes; in their answers to the questionnaire one student even described teaching at their faculty as *teacher-centred*. In the last year several faculties have taken a conceptual approach to the issue, commissioned analyses and created strategies in this area. At some faculties this activity is financed with specially allocated funds. In summary, the situation is unsatisfactory and CU will have to address the issue.

According to the faculties, one of the key causes of the situation in which it is very difficult to implement more individualised learning are the inadequate financial conditions of public universities in the Czech Republic in general, and in subjects to which fewer resources are allocated per student by the Ministry of Youth, Education and Sports (see Appendix A) in particular and the resulting higher numbers of students per teacher, although Charles University has one of the lowest average numbers of students per teacher among Czech universities. However, the situation differs between individual faculties (see Appendix B), and between different degree programmes. Small teaching groups are a prerequisite for an individual approach to students. Some hope lies in the aforementioned declining enrolment rates, which could give more universities the opportunity to focus on the

quality of education, so long as funds from the state budget are not cut. One option are also projects financed from European Structural and Investment Funds, which facilitate the modernisation of the learning environment, better use of modern teaching methods and the strengthening of the role of students as active participants in educational activities.

In an environment in which approximately 80% of the relevant age cohort gain a school-leaving certificate (*maturita*) and about half enters university, there is also a need to focus more on the development of the teaching skills and competencies of academic staff. University management therefore intends to support the newly available range of didactic seminars, workshops and courses as part of the structured component of postgraduate studies. Graduates of these courses are prospective university teachers. Up until now, the requirement for teaching capability and soft skills of university teachers has not been reflected in employee intake. Assessment of the suitability of candidates is largely dominated by their research potential and publishing activity, since these are the crucial factors in the advancement of their careers (see also chapter 3.3).

The University also does its utmost to ensure the vertical and horizontal permeability of study in degree programmes. In the case of vertical permeability it is important that changes to student profiling are possible during the transition to a higher level of education and that the space given by the Higher Education Act in relation to changing the focus of study is utilised. The entry requirements for admission to higher levels of education should therefore be set so as to be very open. However, it is true that this is often not adequately reflected in requirements for admission to master's degrees, or the student is accepted, but even though the mechanisms that should help him or her to cope with the new field of study are in place he or she is more likely to leave the study programme prematurely than if he or she had studied the immediately related bachelor's programme. Nonetheless, a further contributing factor is the extent to which subsequent studies are linked to requirements for the previous degree programme, because in some cases the completion of a higher type of study is hardly conceivable without sufficiently broad basic knowledge (e.g. for some professional degree programmes or when switching between subjects that are not substantively and methodologically related).

Flexibility within a degree programme is provided for by the system of compulsory and optional subjects. The University sets the minimum and maximum number of elective credits (10-15%) received by the student during study. Students can choose courses across the entire University (horizontal permeability). Individual degree programmes can vary significantly with respect to compulsory elective subjects. They may range from a high degree of course variability, which works with educational specialisations in the form of blocks of compulsory elective subjects (e.g. bachelor studies at the Faculty of Humanities), to more binding study plans in which there isn't a high number of compulsory elective subjects and choices. The degree of professional orientation also plays a role, as is the case in particular for the training of doctors and dentists.

There are at present differences between faculties in the implementation of optional subjects that the student can choose across the entire university; horizontal permeability works chiefly among those who focus on the humanities and social sciences. Some subjects are more attractive to students than others (particularly language training or sports activities; attractiveness is partly due also to varying numbers of credits); the affected faculties may therefore be burdened with high interest in the given subject from students from other faculties, although it may be a compulsory subject for the faculty's own students. The issue of financial compensation between the faculties has therefore been discussed in the past. In some cases this has already passed the implementation stage. One obstacle to greater horizontal permeability is the distribution of faculties and individual centres.

Preparations for the new accreditation system should include a discussion between faculties that implement the same or similar degree programmes, on the list and necessary extent of compulsory subjects that will be associated with the standard according to the relevant government regulation. The remainder of credits will be used for specialisation within the same degree (i.e. elective and optional subjects).

Until mid-2016 the preparation and approval of degree programmes took place in three stages, these being faculty → university → national level. In this area, the faculties enjoyed complete autonomy and by law the University had no authority to halt the accreditation process (see Appendix A). In this system, therefore, the University's only roles were those of coordinator, mediator and methodological support provider, through which it sought to ensure the quality of applications and the conceptual development of degree programmes. An important tool for these roles was the annual overview of accreditations prepared for the following calendar year. This document was discussed by the Rector's Expanded Collegium with the goal of debating possible content overlaps with upcoming and existing degree programmes.

Preparations for degree programmes and the elaboration of accreditation files took place at faculties, with cooperation between prospective guarantors, heads of departments involved in the teaching of courses, and the heads of faculties and self-governing bodies. Students chiefly contributed to the preparation and approval of applications for accreditation through their representatives in the academic senates of faculties. External stakeholders could contribute to the approval process through their membership of faculty's and the University's research boards; their participation in the process as a whole was not further formalised, and depended on customary practice of the given programme. One example of good practice in this area is the Faculty of Education, which, when preparing its new accreditation, conducted an extensive survey among students concerning both the conceptual approach to teacher training and requests for changes and quality improvements.

Degree programmes were designed according to the following pattern: study goals and graduate profile → state examination and parts thereof → curriculum (subject structure, distribution of compulsory, compulsory-elective

and optional subjects) → compilation of study curriculum (specialisation). The key standard to be assessed in the course of the University's methodological support was the compatibility of this structure, i.e. that the key competencies and skills in the graduate's profile were reflected in the contents of the final examination and its parts, with these parts being connected to individual compulsory subjects or the range of possible of compulsory-elective subjects. The accreditation application itself then contained the basic characteristics of the degree programme (graduate profile and study goals, expected number of students enrolled), and in particular spatial, infrastructural and informatic support (e.g. classrooms, laboratories, apparatuses, IT systems, libraries) for the degree programme, rules for the enhancement of curricula and suggested topics for theses, characteristics of subjects, requirements for the admission of students and their study progression, staffing, development of research associated with the department and individual teachers taking part in the degree programme. Following approval of the proposed application by the faculty's research board and academic senate, the dean of the faculty sent a draft of the degree programme to the Rector, who in the case of completely new programmes, set up committees for their assessment; in the event that any deficiencies were found, the applications were returned to the faculty for remedial work. Subsequently, the request was forwarded to the national level for assessment.

However, in this area the amendment to the Higher Education Act recently introduced institutional accreditation in the various fields of education, i.e. the new option of autonomously approving degree programmes in one out of 37 areas (e.g. Economics, Chemistry, General Medicine and Dentistry, Education, etc.) as a further option; this strengthens the role of the University in the process, because many of these areas are associated with more than one faculty, and it will therefore be necessary to ensure the close collaboration of faculties when applying for institutional accreditation (see also Appendix A). In addition, all applications for the accreditation of degree programmes must additionally be approved by a self-governing body of the University, i.e. the newly established Board for Internal Evaluation. A new system of accreditation for degree programmes is currently in preparation at CU.

The changes resulting from this new legislation have placed significant demands on the University, its faculties and the academic community as a whole, as the University will strive for institutional accreditation of degree programmes in as many areas of education as possible; on the other hand, this also gives the University the opportunity to discuss the concept and further development of degree programmes (e.g. transformation of existing fields of study into degree programmes and their profiling). In the first stage the University prepared a new set of internal regulations concerning accreditation and quality assurance and assessment. The discussion on the concept and further development of degree programmes was initiated by a series of round-table discussions with the participation of the management of the University and representatives of the faculties. During the ongoing preparation of new rules for accreditation, the fact that the University communicates with faculty representatives and does not seek to impose its own authority, but endeavours to promote cooperation between university management and the faculties and common discussion in the framing of new rules and procedures so as to ensure, on the one hand, compliance with the law is assured when assigning degree programmes to education areas, and on the other, that the new rules are properly thought-out and meaningful, and based on intra-university consensus, has been regarded very positively. Faculty representatives who participate in the process highly appreciate this element as they can compare the situation at the University with the situation at other universities, at which the aforementioned processes are more centralised and more tightly controlled from above. The University regards the application of the principle of subsidiarity in education as one of its strengths, while at the same time fulfilling one of the basic principles of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. This can help motivate academic community and other stakeholders to seek the most beneficial approaches for the development of areas of education and the greatest benefit to students, as well as effective preparation for employment in the professions, academia or science, and therefore for the development of educational activities in general.

A similar approach, i.e. discussions concerning the very concept for teaching, should be applied by the faculties. The guarantors of degree programmes should have even greater influence than before on teaching within specific degree programmes, although this would have to reflect the real options available to their department, faculty and staff. The focus of programmes should take both the needs of vocations and professions for which they serve as preparation, and the needs of higher levels of education for which they are the entry stage, into consideration. The development of new approaches to teaching should therefore include feedback from employers, graduates and students themselves, as well as other stakeholders outside the University where required (see also Chapter 4).

Besides faculties and guarantors, a further important role in the new creation, approval and assessment system for degree programmes will be performed by the Board for Internal Evaluation, which became operational in autumn 2016. The Board is made up of not only academics, but also includes four students. Students will be able to make a greater contribution to the development of the University's educational activities. The University recently laid out the legislative framework for the operation of the Board (definition of competencies, rules of procedure, definition of quality assurance and assessment system). One of the major tasks currently faced by the University is the elaboration of specific procedures for the preparation of applications for institutional accreditation in areas of education and the discussion and approval of degree programmes. Whether or not the new approval system for degree programmes is more flexible and less bureaucratic than the current one will depend on the nature of the processes in question. In this connection, preparations for regulations setting the standards for the University's degree programmes, i.e. definition of the University's minimal requirements for teaching and

related research activity, are underway.

The students of the University are not a homogeneous group, and support for their studies is therefore based on the identification of their needs, which in some cases may widely differ. One possible sorting criterion for students is e.g. differing phases of study or differing contact with the university, from before the degree itself starts up until the student has graduated. Another sorting criterion are students who require greater attention and support for a variety of reasons (health, socioeconomic etc.). The University's general vision for all groups of students is to support them at all phases of study, and especially to ensure that they are adequately informed of their duties during study, receive assistance in solving problems through information and consulting services and to foster their personal development.

The University monitors the overall dropout rate of students from their studies. The drop-out rate in master's programmes is approximately one quarter, for long master's degrees one third, and one half for bachelor's and postgraduate programmes. The drop-out rate in the individual degree programmes is highly variable and the combined result of structural and individual factors. With regard to external structural factors, a major role is played by the recent, large-scale opening-up of higher education in the Czech Republic, the fact that higher education in the Czech language is free of charge, and the fact that funding for educational activities at universities has stagnated or declined in recent times. Internal structural factors detected by the University's recent study are the lesser degree of readiness of secondary-school students for higher education, openness and other conditions for admission, degree of professional orientation and the difficulty of degree programmes, whether newly enrolled master's students have completed a bachelor's degree at CU or otherwise, and the low scholarships offered for doctoral programmes, which force many postgraduate students to combine their studies with work. The faculties have additionally highlighted a number of individual factors, such as the choice of degree programme, study in multiple degree programmes or time devoted to study. Similarly to the Ministry of Education, the University, too, is seeking consensus in this area with regard to the acceptable drop-out rate so that it is open and accessible, while simultaneously maintaining the quality of graduate associated with the Charles University brand. It has therefore prepared two projects focused on the continuous gathering of data from different groups of respondents (prospective students, students, graduates) and its subsequent assessment.

The overarching university department for student support is the Centre for Information, Counselling and Social Services (CICSS). In addition to general information services, at university level there is also a psychological counselling centre (including a separate one for international students), legal counselling centre, social counselling centre and career counselling centre for students. There is a network of counselling services at faculty level. Personal development courses are open to all students. Candidates for mobility can choose from the University's range of seminars on study abroad. At university level, information and counselling services and services for students with special needs are assessed every two years through questionnaires. However, at faculty level such assessments frequently do not exist or services are of a different standard.

The adaptation process is a key factor in supporting first-year students. The University endeavours to ensure that such students experience a seamless transition from secondary education to the university environment. First-year students are supported at university-wide level and at all individual faculties, to which student associations make a large contribution. Many faculties prepare adaptation programmes, workshops, summer schools, and brochures for new students, as well as using information technology to send out newsletters or information e-mails. At some faculties, students from higher years act as so-called student tutors. A university-wide *Orientation Week* is organised for this target group, followed by a cycle of seminars entitled *Effective Study*. Similar activities are organised at the faculties. Ongoing assessment of every event is performed at university level; on the other hand, there is no comprehensive overview of whether assessment takes place at the faculties. Other weaknesses include the lack of any greater degree of cooperation between the CICSS and the faculties in the preparation of these adaptation programmes.

The University's priority for students with special needs is to make study accessible to them so that barriers resulting from their disability are not an obstacle to their participation in and successful completion of degree programmes. Conditions for students with disabilities (of whom there are currently approx. 400; this number has doubled in recent years) is regulated by the Rector's *Standards for Support Provided to Students and Prospective Students with Special Needs*. The basic tools for the support for students with special needs include a modified recruitment process, various types of modifications to study conditions and study checks, provision of key support services, access to physical environments or other special modifications to premises and their fittings. Services also include the greater awareness of University staff of the educational needs of students and prospective students with disabilities and the adoption, consulting and implementation of student suggestions for improvements to support tools. Support is provided through mutual cooperation between many University and faculty bodies. Support services for students with special needs are faced with diverse problems, which are addressed on a continual basis. The University also endeavours to look after the welfare of students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and devotes particular attention to students and prospective students from low-income environments and those who have to combine study with caring for a small child. The University considers it vital that socio-economic disadvantages are not an obstacle to students successfully pursuing study. Support is provided to these disadvantaged groups through consulting services and in particular through social scholarships (these were granted to approx. 300 students in 2015). Students who are caring for small children have the option to suspend their studies for the period when they would otherwise be taking maternity or parental leave, which does not count towards their maximum length of study, or they can request an

individual study plan. Childcare services include e.g. nursery schools, which are located at the Hvězda Student Dormitory and the Faculty of Science. Some faculties also provide children's play areas (Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Physical Education and Sport). The University is preparing a university-wide questionnaire survey aimed at identifying the needs of both of the aforementioned groups of socio-economically disadvantaged students, the results of which shall form the basis for the further development of activities in this area.

The University's long-term vision for support services for international students is to provide them with conditions for study that are comparable to those available to Czech students. This target group chiefly includes international students studying in foreign-language degree programmes, students who enter the university as part of a mobility programme, and international students who study in Czech. International students are supported primarily at their home faculties through activities organised by coordinators, orientation days (or weeks at the beginning of the academic year), information materials, etc. An important role is also played by student associations (e.g. the *Charles University International Club* and *Erasmus Club*) that bring international students together and connect them with Czech students (e.g. through *buddy programmes*). The CICSS provides support to international students through guidance services (psychological counselling for English-speaking students, information service, art therapy) and a guidebook for international students (see Appendix F). Another form of support was e.g. the holding of the *Welcome to the Czech Republic* integration and adaptation course. International students who study in Czech can also use services and support to the same extent as Czech students. The main indicator for the meeting of performance objectives is the success of international students in their studies. However, no other qualitative and quantitative data and information from various faculties and other departments of the University (Institute for Language and Preparatory Studies, and Dormitories and Refectories) is available for the assessment and improvement of services. If this information were available it could lead to the development of activities at university level (e.g. regular orientation days for all international students, more seminars and sports and cultural activities, etc.).

The University's vision for students on postgraduate degree programmes is to foster high-quality junior scientists and teachers who will be competitive on a European scale. Support for students in doctoral programmes (except for scholarships and grants) is organised at both university and faculty level. However, differing standards apply at individual faculties. The main service available at university level are *soft skills* seminars focusing on teaching skills and academic writing. At the faculty level services for students in doctoral programmes are assessed in regular course evaluations if the postgraduate studies are included. This is often not the case (see Chapter 4). At the university level there has been a lack of more systematic support for the development of doctoral studies, and at some faculties the provision of information, material and counselling support is inadequate. In 2016 the Doctoral Studies Board was established. Its purpose is to coordinate the activities of individual units engaged in the development and support of postgraduate degree programmes. At the same time, a platform for postgraduate courses should be established as a comprehensive, university-wide information portal.

Charles University endeavours to ensure that its graduates can participate fully in the labour market. The University therefore focuses on preparing them for the labour market (*Career Management System*) and cooperates with potential employers. Career advice (and coaching) is provided as a service at university level to students of all faculties through the CICSS. Some faculties also support students through other career counselling activities (e.g. mentoring), or have their own career centre (Faculty of Mathematics and Physics). Student support further includes the mediation of job offers and temporary jobs during study. Seminars and workshops to promote career development are organised at both university and faculty level. Students can participate in a number of career days and job fairs, which are usually industry-focused (medicine, mathematics, computer science, physics and other natural sciences). *The Graduate Fair* is particularly oriented towards students of the social sciences and humanities. Upon graduation, students also have the opportunity to further educate themselves, primarily through lifelong learning courses. A comprehensive overview of these options is given at the regular, university-wide *Lifelong Learning Day*, which is held concurrently with the *Alumni Festival*. The University assesses the impact of these events at university level through an analysis of available feedback. It appears that, at least in some areas, these activities, as well as the ability to nurture graduates who are true experts in their field, lead to their considerable success on the labour market, often in major multinational companies.

Overall, the quality and range of support services for students of the University varies between faculties (diversity of services, different concept of services). Some services are only provided to target groups at university level. At many faculties there is no clear definition of individual competencies, information is not available from a single source and there are no clear rules for assessing the quality of services provided. Therefore, information and advisory services shall form a more integral part of the strategies of individual faculties. An assessment of these services is to be included in the upcoming university-wide assessment of study environment (see also Chapter 4).

3.5 Scientific and Research Activities

Science and research constitute an essential part of the University's activities. The nature of scientific inquiry is highly varied across the large number of subjects nurtured by the University. In a domestic context some subjects are unique (e.g. Arabic studies, addiction studies, Egyptology, phonetics and climatology). The diversity of subjects makes the University one of the most multi-disciplinary institutions in the entire European region; in the Czech Republic the University, along with the Academy of Sciences, is the highest-performing scientific insti-

tution in the country, accounting for approximately one third of all recorded scientific results.

The University's ambition is to play a visible role in both a European and a global context. The results of research, the number and quality of publications, international recognition, success in obtaining grants such as the prestigious ERC and MSCA grants, as well as achievements in student research competitions, can be regarded as indicators of the quality of the University's research. While the University enjoys great success in obtaining national grants, there is considerable room for improvement with regard to international grants, particularly those awarded by the European Research Council. The systematic assistance provided by the University for obtaining this type of grant is still inadequate.

Although the wide spectrum of research fields hinders university-wide activities (e.g. preparation of programmes to foster science, financial participation of faculties, evaluation of scientific results and grant consultation), at the same time it provides great opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration within a single institution, laying the groundwork for a multidisciplinary approach to the resolution of complex issues faced by biomedicine and material science, as well as by the social sciences and humanities. However, this extraordinary potential has not yet been adequately utilised.

The University's disposition has resulted in highly diverse scientific research and achievements. Two years ago, following an agreement with the faculties and other constituent parts of the University, a list of flagship subjects – those which it values most highly and on which it wishes to build its future development (see Appendix E) – was drawn up. The list is fairly broad and includes over sixty areas in all fields of the natural, medical and social sciences and humanities. On the one hand, the University's scientists achieve results recognised across the globe (for example some subjects in mathematics and computer science, particle physics and optoelectronics, social geography, material and physical chemistry and cardiology, as well as archaeology, including the University's unique school of Egyptology, its internationally recognised departments of Sinology and computational linguistics, etc.); on the other, some subjects or areas urgently need to increase their quality and anchor it to European standards. Development strategy must at the same time focus on disciplines and areas that are specifically national (in the sense of subjects that do not exist at other universities) or unique due to historical or social reasons and for which international comparisons are difficult or impossible. A critical analysis will have to be carried out to determine which fields have low growth potential, and appropriate measures will have to be taken.

The basic division of competencies with regard to the development of research activities is defined in the Higher Education Act and the statutes of the University, according to which the strategic focus of research activities lies within the competency of the faculties. Nonetheless, areas of vital importance are discussed in advance with the Rector. Proposals for measures which the University intends to adopt for the development of research activities are always discussed with the faculties and subsequently approved by university bodies.

In relation to research, the Academic Senate approves the University's strategic plan, and especially principles for the allocation of block grants and subsidies (see also Chapter 3.2) or the structure of university programmes to support research. The competencies of the Research Board chiefly concern the development of research policy and individual disciplines, habilitation procedures and appointment procedures for professors. Consultation and recommendations for proposed science promotion programmes are also given by the International Advisory Board, which can also assess research centres' proposals for new activities and programmes, discuss the findings of assessments of scientific and educational activities and conduct assessments of individuals or teams nominated for medals, block grants or awards granted by the University. The Grant Council administers internal grant competitions that support student research.

At Collegium level the development of research activities and the setting of the University's priorities is the responsibility of the Vice-Rector for Research, the Vice-Rector for Projects and Publishing and the Vice-Rector for Academic Appointments, who propose conceptual and organisational changes to support the development of research. They are supported by the Department of Science and Research of the Rectorate. Documents and proposals are subsequently discussed by the Rector, the Research Board and the Academic Senate of the University. Depending on their nature, they are then issued as Rector's provisions (e.g. tender documents for university competitions, rules for assessing the quality of research, publication of habilitation theses or handling of the results of research) or strategic documents. At the faculty level, the development of research activities is the responsibility of the vice-dean for research who, with the support of the faculty's administration, chiefly sets the agenda for doctoral studies, grant-based activities, the concept for the development of research at the faculty, internal assessment of research, including the documentation of its results, the faculty's role in habilitation and professorial appointment proceedings, and the granting of honorary doctorates. The specific content of the activities of the vice-dean and the research department differ among the faculties. The faculties state that they are more or less satisfied with the existing distribution of competencies; however, some point to a possible risk of excessive centralisation and the resulting growth in administration.

An essential part of the development and organisation of research activities is their funding. From the point of view of the university as a whole, the most significant institutional resources are those allocated by the Ministry of Education, as their use is not specifically stipulated, which allows the University to discuss its priorities for the conceptual development of scientific and research activities (see also Chapter 3.2). In connection with the nationwide transition from the system in which institutional resources were distributed among universities through multi-year projects (research projects), to the system in which it is up to individual universities how they dispose of funds, the University introduced science promotion programmes as of 2011. After five years in

operation the whole system was assessed with respect to its results, disposition and bureaucratic burden. Based on this assessment and following a university-wide discussion, a new concept was prepared in the 2015/16 academic year. A new system of complementary university programmes covering the basic institutional funding of scientific and research activity (PROGRESS programme), the financing of scientific and research projects by undergraduate and Ph.D. students (the University's Grant Agency), establishment of top teams, laboratories, and groups composed of junior researchers (PRIMUS programme), support for carefully selected University centres of excellence (UNCE programme), and finally personal grants for outstanding academic personalities (Donatio Universitatis Carolinae programme) was introduced following relatively complex negotiations involving the Research Board, the International Advisory Board and the Academic Senate. In the Czech context, this system is unique as it is provided by no other domestic university.

The **PROGRES** programme is a fundamental tool for the development of science and research in all major subjects fostered at CU. One of its objectives is the promotion of interfaculty, interdisciplinary and international cooperation and the appreciation of the uniqueness of some subjects. Although the programme is essentially non-competitive, project proposals are evaluated by three independent commissions (for the natural sciences, the medical sciences, and the social sciences and humanities) based on the self-evaluation report of the submitter, which must include in particular a summary of information on the implementation of the programme and a list of the most important scientific achievements. The main objective of the programme is the gradual stimulation of interfaculty collaboration between related subjects as a counterweight to the historic fragmentation of various fields (the University includes *inter alia* three theological faculties and five medical faculties; some subjects are fostered across three to five faculties). Up until now, the University has succeeded in promoting joint interfaculty projects to only a limited extent – evaluation of previous programs has shown that, in some instances, declared cooperation was merely formal. In the coming years, therefore, the University must insist on real, consistent cooperation between participating constituent parts and teams.

University research centres (UNCE) promote research excellence at CU. The objective of this project is to support larger groups who are excellent in the long-term and to ensure that they receive special, stable support that eliminates the otherwise very onerous dependence of scientific and research work on success in a variety of grant competitions. In approving projects the commission assesses the composition of the research team and the quality of its existing scientific and research activities, as well as the quality and value of the proposed project. Continual assessment of the fulfilment of the group's activities is carried out, with a final report submitted at the end. A total of 27 research groups currently receive support. A further round of this programme will be announced in 2017.

PRIMUS is a new programme (starting in January 2017) for young researchers who intend to establish a new group or laboratory. The main objective of the programme is to increase the permeability of the otherwise relatively rigid system of scientific research in the Czech Republic, where it is difficult for young scientists to obtain starter funds for the creation of new research groups. The primary target group are young researchers with long-term experience abroad, who are not employees of the University at the time of submitting an application. The University provides the same amount to fund these projects as the faculties (maximum of 60,000 EUR per year for three years, with the possibility of an extension for a further two years). A further objective of this programme is to increase the success rate in attracting international grants (e.g. from the European Research Council), which is one of the University's weaknesses. The commission assesses the applicant's previous scientific and research activities, the harmony of the proposal with the University's and the centre's scientific focus and its benefit to the development of the field at the University, the conditions for the supervision and teaching of Ph.D. students and the composition and quality of the research team. The fulfilment of a project's goals is subject to continuous assessment, with a final report submitted at the conclusion of the project. In the first year a total of twenty projects submitted by outstanding young scientists were selected.

The **Charles University Grant Agency** supports students in their first encounters with research competitions so that they are subsequently ready to compose a grant application, submit it to agencies and councils outside of the University, and successfully meet the goals of the approved project. These are not, however, "preparatory projects", as students can obtain funds amounting to tens of thousands of Euros. Despite the considerable interest among students in research projects, only around a third of projects receive support. The primary criteria for the evaluation of applications by the commission are the importance of the theme, the quality and feasibility of its treatment and the quality and innovativeness of the methodology. Upon project completion a report on its fulfilment is submitted. The objective of **competitions for specific university research** is to support research carried out by doctoral students in particular through their own research and their involvement in the research teams.

The **Donatio Universitatis Carolinae** supports outstanding scholars who have made a significant contribution to the prestige of the University, with the objective of providing them with extraordinary conditions in which to work.

The abovementioned programmes are complemented by a competition offering a relatively smaller amount (200,000 EUR), for the **best scientific monograph** to honour the best monograph- or book-type publication created by University authors. Its objective is to promote this method of publishing the results of research, which has hitherto not received due appreciation in the national assessment system.

It is currently difficult to assess the success of this system. The PROGRESS programme (and its predecessor

PRVOUK) supports interfaculty and interdisciplinary cooperation, and was used to fund i.e. the so-called incubation centre, created jointly by the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics and the Faculty of Education, for research into specialised didactics across a variety of education fields. However, in many cases the boundaries between faculties have not been overcome. Nevertheless, the faculties regard its contribution to the development of research at the University as unquestionable. The UNCE programme is generally considered to be very successful; within the Czech system it gives much-needed financial stability to the research teams that have shown the highest quality over the long term. The PRIMUS programme is possibly the most ambitious of these projects because it focuses on the resolution of probably the most serious problem affecting Czech (and Central European) research, i.e. the high impermeability of the system, low mobility of researchers and predominant academic "inbreeding". The chief long-term goal of the programme (i.e. to attract as many outstanding young researchers from abroad as possible) could be met only partially in its first year; while several successful applicants in the natural sciences and mathematics were attracted from prestigious American universities, most of the projects were awarded to young researchers who were already working at the University. In the coming years, therefore, the University should focus on attracting more high-quality applicants who are not members of its own academic community.

A further measure for the development of research at the University, which is still in preparation, is the establishment of an internal assessment system which, together with information taken from the national assessment system, should provide an accurate picture of the quality of research in a variety of fields. In a recent pilot study, the University performed a bibliometric analysis of the research results carried out by the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics and the Faculty of Social Sciences, which included a comparison with selected universities abroad (selected by the faculties themselves). A *peer review* was performed to only a limited extent – due to difficulties in obtaining suitable peers, a comprehensive review took place in mathematics only. It emerged that not all of the excellent results selected were considered excellent in the opinion of the peers (in some cases their comments corrected the scientometric results) or that for some disciplines it would be inadvisable to use bibliometric analysis based only on data from the *Web of Science*. Contrary to expectations, the pilot assessment showed that bibliometric evaluation was failing in not only the humanities but also, for example, in the case of large international collaborations that are standard in the field of particle physics. Conversely, the assessment by a panel of peers, including a brief justification of their classification, was highly valuable because it provided the faculty with important feedback and data for a deeper analysis of results in the field under consideration. More work is required in order to build a system that is able to identify disciplines that are excellent on an international scale, too, and that supports other disciplines on the road to achieving such quality. For now, discussions focus on the main components of the future system (self-evaluation report on the scientific and research activities of faculties and university institutes, bibliometric analysis and peer review of results, quality indicators of scientific and research activity), but not their specific content. It is planned to use bibliometric analysis to evaluate results in the majority of disciplines, and the *peer review* of selected excellent results in disciplines with differing publication cultures. The system must be interlinked with the one in place at national level, as well as the requirements related to research activities that form part of the accreditation process (both institutional and degree programmes) at national level.

A further recent measure adopted in order to foster scientific activities at the University was the development of research infrastructures using European Structural and Investment Funds. Large investments in recent years have included, in particular, BIOCEV (a joint biotechnological and biomedical centre of the six institutes of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and two faculties of the University, namely the Faculty of Science and the First Faculty of Medicine), the Biomedical Center at the Medical Faculty in Pilsen and the Teaching and Research Centre in Hradec Kralove (a joint campus of the Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Kralove and the Faculty of Pharmacy). Fifty research infrastructures currently exist at CU – both infrastructures defined as research centres and those that form part of European or global data-sharing networks. The University previously gave financial support only to infrastructures supported by European programmes. While in the past, individual centres came into being without a pre-existing vision, in the future, a strategic decision must be made to determine both the support given to existing infrastructures and applications and the securing of their sustainability and future funding. The ultimate goal is to interconnect them with the main trends in research at the University and the University's strategic plan.

Research and education at CU are inevitably linked to the very fact that, among academic and research workers at the University, it is the former that predominate (84%), and who, per the Higher Education Act, engage in both activities. Students on bachelor's degree programme become involved in research activities as part of science promotion programmes. This is more pronounced in the case of master's, and in particular Ph.D., students. The faculties chiefly support student research through the organisation of student conferences, cooperation in institutional or grant projects (or the submission of students' own grant projects; some faculties have their own internal grant system), as well as employment as auxiliary research assistants, practical experience in laboratories, provision of scholarships, and support for research mobility (see also examples of good practice in Chapter 3.4).

The conducting of research at a sufficiently high level within the relevant discipline or area of education is a further prerequisite for obtaining accreditation. An important role is played in the accreditation of degree programmes by their guarantors, who *inter alia* guarantee that the standard of teaching in a degree programme reflects the current state of scientific knowledge and that its teachers are outstanding scholars in their field (see also Chapter 4). However, as stated previously, the quality of research at Charles University varies. On the one

hand, scientists achieve results recognised across the globe, and on the other, some disciplines or areas urgently need to raise and consolidate their quality.

3.6 Third Role, Service to Society

Charles University is aware of its shared responsibility for the development of society and the resolution of major issues affecting the world today. Its ongoing task is to strengthen its dialogue with society and contribute to its social, cultural and economic development. Charles University therefore understands its third role in a broader sense.

In its dialogue with society the University works with public and private entities, organises regular discussion forums, round tables with prominent public figures from the Czech Republic and abroad, organises events for the general public and different age groups, organises lectures and commemorative meetings to mark important historical events (recently, for example, to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the birth of Charles IV) and helps to shape domestic and international university and research policy. The themes of these activities have both a regional and a European (or global) reach. Representatives of the University are regularly invited to speak to the traditional media, although in recent years the University has also been developing its presence in new media (e.g. regular posting of lectures, interviews and social events on YouTube). The University also published information about its activities on its own website and in the University magazine *Forum* and its online version, *iForum*. A significant cultural role is also played by University publishing house Karolinum, the largest of its kind in the Czech Republic (more than 400 titles published last year), and faculty publishers, who focus on the publication of scientific monographs and anthologies, textbooks and scientific journals for all disciplines cultivated at the University. The task faced by CU is the consolidation of this part of its social activities both at home and abroad.

As part of its social responsibility, the University also actively supports international students from countries experiencing, in the assessment of generally respected humanitarian organisations, the systematic breach of human rights and freedoms leading to discrimination in connection with access to education. The University provides these students with Václav Havel scholarships to cover the costs of accommodation and board as well as basic tuition costs in the Czech Republic. As part of its international aid programmes the University also supports students from non-European countries and cooperates with universities from developing countries (cooperation agreements with e.g. Mongolia).

Another vital component of the University's third role is lifelong learning, which is becoming more important in light of current demographic changes. In 2015 approximately 500 lifelong learning programmes, attended by over 20,000 participants, were realised. The University's professional development programmes, which are at the core of lifelong learning activities and whose prestige continues to grow, make a considerable contribution to society. The theme and content of these programmes are shaped by changes in the labour market, significant innovations in most professions and the need for frequent retraining. Programmes therefore help participants keep pace with the rapid development of knowledge, new methods and technologies, while helping to return the unemployed to work, sometimes even in a different profession. Thematic special-interest programmes designed for students from among the general public of different ages, different knowledge and skill levels and different initial experience form an integral part of the programmes. The University of the Third Age, whose fundamental mission is to provide participants with the opportunity of further education, occupies a special position in this regard. Participants in the University of the Third Age (approx. 6,500 in 2015) receive qualified instruction in new knowledge, theories and technologies from a broad spectrum of disciplines and put their leisure time to good use. It also supports the necessary inter-generational dialogue. Another special-interest lifelong learning project aimed at a specific target group is the Junior University. This programme is designed for students of secondary schools and chiefly aims to popularise university research and provide prospective students with comprehensible, up-to-date information about the University and options for study.

With effect from 1 January 2017 the Centre for Lifelong Learning was established at the University for the purpose of developing lifelong learning and with the goal of supporting (in cooperation with the Lifelong Learning Board) the expansion of activities in this area to other target groups and ensure the better coordination of inter-faculty cooperation and better use of synergies within the existing range of programmes, including the enhanced promotion of these activities. A further important component of lifelong learning is the creation of a complex professional development system for all University employees (not only those in key positions). No such system had hitherto existed at the University.

The University and society are further interconnected through the transfer of knowledge, skills and technology. In order to improve support for applied research the University has established the Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer as a gateway, guide and mediator for potential partners. The Centre coordinates and manages the University's innovation network, comprising technology scouts and knowledge transfer coordinators at faculties, presents the application potential of a number of departments and research teams and, last but not least, also represents the University in domestic and international transfer associations. The University is also an important expert partner of the Czech government and ministries in the preparation of a number of key documents (e.g. Czech Republic 2030 and others).

Given the fact that the University is highly heterogeneous, that it regards basic research as a key aspect of its activities and that there is considerable variation in the weight attached to knowledge and technology transfer at

various faculties, an important challenge faced by CU is to convince academics to think of knowledge transfer as a substantive complement to their primary academic responsibilities. This applies not only to faculties with a focus on the natural sciences or medicine; this potential is present, too, in the social sciences and humanities. One major field of application is in e.g. education or, more generally, the addressing of the general public, to which individual scientific fields have their own distinct approaches. An example of this might be the acclaimed *Czechoslovakia 38-89: Assassination* educational simulation, which was developed by experts from the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Mathematics and Physics in cooperation with the Institute of Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, or the internationally acclaimed *Corinth Classroom* educational application in the natural sciences, intended for pupils of primary and students of secondary schools, which was created by the University in collaboration with Corinth, a successful Czech start-up.

Both educational activities (*Science and Innovation Management* course) and offers to finance small projects at the proof-of-concept stage that are designed to provide academics with information about the topic and give them the opportunity to try out the process in real projects are used to raise awareness of knowledge and technology transfer. Another aspect is the need to sufficiently raise the visibility of the contractual research and innovation opportunities offered by the University. For this purpose, the University recently prepared and published a *Catalogue of Services* (part of which is presented in Appendix G), which includes brief profiles of research teams from all faculties. In 2017 the University will issue a *Catalogue of Innovation Opportunities*, which will include an overview of industrial property that meets the requirements for sale to investors. Past experience also shows the increasing demand for the stronger support from the University of academic entrepreneurial activities at faculties at which the commercialisation of research results is more advanced. This topic will be addressed by a project entitled *CU University Innovation Network*, which has been approved for financing from European Structural and Investment Funds. The goal of the project, whose implementation started in January 2017, is to complete the capacity for supporting transfer at selected CU faculties. At the same time the University is seeking a system to support the creation of *spin-off* companies. The Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer is currently working to find a suitable solution that will meet the requirements of researchers and investors and which will, at the same time, comply with the legislative framework of the Czech Republic and the European Union.

3.7 Internationalisation

The University conceives internationalisation as an area that forms an integral part and condition of all of its activities. As in other areas, internationalisation is developed through cooperation between the University, its faculties and other constituent parts. Strategic partnerships, inter-university agreements, mobility support, cooperation with international university associations and other activities are addressed at the university level and their concretisation is the responsibility of the faculties, with issues of major importance being discussed in advance with the Rector. Every year the University prepares a document on its priorities for the development of internationalisation in the given year. Its international cooperation is evaluated twice per year, and its activities in international organisations once per year. These assessments are used to reflect on whether to improve or otherwise target cooperation, especially when setting priorities for the next year.

In the years when the University was focusing on the restoration of disrupted relationships and its return to the community of free universities a crucial role was played by the European educational programmes, and the Erasmus programme in particular. The University currently places strong emphasis on the qualitative dimension of internationalisation, its deepening and the consolidation of cooperation with regions outside of Europe, in particular the countries of the Far East (China, South Korea, Japan), the United States and Australia. A major challenge for the University is also reinforcing the concept of *internationalisation at home* (e.g. through the provision of more lectures and courses by international experts, increased numbers of subjects taught in foreign languages, development of the language skills of students and staff, or facilities for foreign-language study).

Apart from the Rector, international relations are also the responsibility of the Vice-Rector for International Affairs and the Vice-Rector for European Affairs. The development of relations with international partners is overseen by the International Relations Department of the Rectorate and its close cooperation with international departments at individual faculties, with which regular meetings are held. The evaluation of international relations is reflected in regular meetings of the vice-deans for international affairs, which take place twice a year under the auspices of the International Relations Department of the Rectorate. Cooperation between the Rectorate and the faculties in the field of international relations takes place continuously throughout the year.

The development of international collaboration also involves the European Centre, whose goals are to consolidate the position of CU as a research university, contribute to the integration of its researchers into international scientific networks, enable young and novice researchers in particular to gain experience at international level and procure more funds for science and research from international sources. The Centre works with individual faculties and supports them in the submission of projects, through both individual consultations and the writing of grant applications, and the organisation of workshops and training in the field, including at international level. It works closely with national and European institutions responsible for European research projects (primarily Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+).

Currently, 61 degree programmes (one fifth of the total number of degree programmes offered) at the University are taught in a foreign language, predominantly in English, with more than half of these comprising doctoral programmes. Fourteen degree programmes are currently taught in cooperation with foreign universities, and

European universities in particular. The University also offers a number of opportunities for the joint supervision of dissertations, especially in cooperation with Francophone universities (France, Belgium, Switzerland). Twenty-one agreements were concluded in 2015. The core of foreign-language education at the University currently lies at the five medical faculties (degree programmes in General Medicine and Dentistry), which started to develop this form of study in the 1990s, and currently educate three quarters of the total number of students on foreign-language degree programmes (mostly from Germany, Great Britain, Portugal, Norway and Israel). Other faculties have only begun to offer more foreign-language degree programmes in recent years, in line with the increasing emphasis on the further internationalisation of education at CU. There is therefore considerable variation in the number of students studying in a foreign language at different faculties (see also Appendix B). The task faced by the University is to support faculties that strive to open themselves up more to these students and create conditions for their studies. It cannot be expected that most faculties will, in the immediate future, become sought-after places to study at as this is a difficult process that may only yield results after a number of years. The greater promotion of CU to international students is assisted by programmes such as *Study in Prague*, under whose auspices the University is presented at higher education trade fairs abroad.

One major activity that contributes to the internationalisation of the University's educational and research activities is the short- and long-term international exchange of students and academic staff. To this end the University primarily utilises international exchange programmes, intercollegiate agreements, strategic partnerships, its own Mobility Fund and postdoctoral support programmes. In 2015 a branch of the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy of the Czech Ministry of the Interior was opened on University premises in order to facilitate the appointment of visiting professors and students coming to CU from countries outside the European Union.

With regard to international exchange programmes, the most important for the University are European Union programmes, and in particular Erasmus+ and Erasmus Mundus. For many years CU has been one of the most active universities in Europe involved in this programme in terms of both the number of outgoing and incoming students; in 2015 the University received approximately 1,800 students, sending 1,300 to other institutions. However, a discussion is currently underway on maintaining the quality of the exchange programme while continually increasing the volume of student mobility. In 2015 more than 200 scholars from the University were nominated for short-term research stays abroad at 56 partner universities in 26 countries (mostly in German-speaking countries) as part of the University's mobility programme. 130 researchers from 23 partner universities sought a research stay at CU.

The University also has approximately 200 bilateral agreements with universities around the world in order to deepen its internationalisation. CU continually concludes new agreements or does not renew those in which cooperation failed to develop. When concluding agreements emphasis is increasingly placed on their quality and substance. These agreements, too, promote the mobility of students and academic staff. Due to the costs involved, most mobility takes place in Europe; in the future the University desires to increase mobility with institutions in Asia, North America, Latin America and Australia, although funds are limited. Some faculties consider the weakness of these agreements to be their lack of adequate, targeted dissemination of information on specific options and procedures associated with formally agreed partnerships.

In the context of consolidating the focus on the quality of internationalisation, strategic partnerships with 14 leading world universities came to the fore in 2015. The core of cooperation are joint research projects involving students of doctoral programmes on the one hand, and academic staff on the other. In the first year of the strategic partnerships approximately three dozen projects (seminars, conferences, academic mobility, etc.) with a total budget of 37,000 Euros were supported. The project, including the benefits of cooperation with the respective universities, will be evaluated in 2017.

The annual budget of the University's Mobility Fund is approximately 0.5 million Euros. The fund supports study abroad for periods of one or two semesters, international students studying at CU, visits of international academics and researchers at CU and short-term scientific or research visits abroad. While the costs of support from the fund continually increase, it is virtually always possible to support high-quality applications that meet all the criteria (approximately 400 applications received support in 2015).

A further activity undertaken by the University to foster the internationalisation of research at faculties is its fund to support high-quality graduates of doctoral programmes from universities abroad (Post-doc Fund). The year 2016 saw the announcement of the ninth call, in which a total of twelve researchers from abroad were selected. These started on 1 January 2017, while another eleven existing postdoctoral researchers continued at the University. In addition, the newly launched PRIMUS programme (see Chapter 3.5) will support the long-term presence of young researchers at CU.

The international visibility of the University is further enhanced by the active participation of its representatives in international networks and organisations, or in the governing bodies of some of these (e.g. UNICA, Coimbra Group, the Europaeum) and the participation of students and academic staff in and, in many cases, the co-organisation of projects, conferences, seminars, summer schools and competitions. CU is a member of a total of fourteen international organisations and networks. It recently joined the *Central Europe Leuven Strategy Alliance*, whose goal is to strengthen scientific collaboration between its partners in major European projects and serve as a platform for the exchange of good practices in areas such as the promotion of research and development and technology transfer. The University's links to LERU are also beneficial, particularly within the newly formed co-operation initiative with Central European universities (CE7), which was launched at Charles University in Octo-

ber 2016. CU played an important role in shaping this initiative. The University is currently preparing an assessment of the extent to which its participation in international networks and organisations is effective and which benefits arise for both the University and the relevant organisation from these memberships.

The University also provides space for meetings and cooperation of major international organisations. Most recently, for example, it hosted a meeting of Coimbra Group and UNICA working groups for the promotion of science and research and the first parallel meeting of the management committees of the UNICA, Coimbra Group and Europaeum university networks, after which the representatives of these associations gathered for a joint meeting on new trends and challenges in higher education and a meeting of experts on the topic of international rankings, again with the participation of representatives of the EUA, Coimbra Group, the Europaeum and LERU. A major boon in the forging of new contacts was the organisation of the fifth *Asia – Europe Meeting* conference, which was attended by representatives from more than fifty countries. The University also develops cooperation with international organisations and institutions (in particular the UN, the EU and UNESCO).

The faculties hold a variety of views on the internationalisation of the University. Some regard it as an area that is constantly improving, others take a critical view of the opinion, but agree that it is not the quantity of cooperation agreements that is important, but their quality. These views are also field-specific to a considerable degree. Nonetheless, the quality of international cooperation is almost always directly reflected in the published output of individual scholars and teams. There is a consensus that the international dimension is crucial to the development of the University and its faculties. Some faculties see the weaker aspects of the international dimension of the University as its limited promotion, lack of subjects offered in foreign languages, and the slow accreditation process, which discourages international partners from cooperation. Personnel policy is a problematic aspect in terms of internationalisation, e.g. inadequate language skills of students, lack of funds for the mobility of academic staff, departures of Czech academics and graduates in some fields abroad, and the closure of some faculties in the Czech environment or inadequate language skills of teachers and administrative staff. Assistance in the field of language training for both students and other workers is offered by the CU Institute for Language and Preparatory Studies, which offers both Czech language courses for foreigners and foreign language courses for students and university employees, including online courses. English language courses for staff are also offered by the CICSS.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND THE EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES

Charles University systematically monitors the quality of its activities. The chief, long-term principles on which quality assurance and assessment are based include in particular respect for internal cultures of faculties, other constituent parts of the University and individual disciplines, the involvement of academic staff, students, alumni and other relevant stakeholders in quality assurance and assessment, the transparency, objectivity, expertise and ethics of assessment, critical assessment based on verified data and put into context, and the maximum disclosure of all matters related to quality assurance. The goal of these principles is to promote a culture of the quality of institution based on strong academic autonomy, solidarity and partnership between individuals, disciplines and constituent parts, communication, and mutual respect. Given that the University is strongly committed to the principles of academic autonomy in relation to both the external environment and its internal organisation, for many years it has taken its inspiration for quality assurance and assessment mainly from the methodology used by the European University Association, which is based on the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, as this methodology takes into account the fact that the quality of higher education should be derived from its mission and focus, and offers basic principles according to which quality assurance and assessment should be enhanced, rather than defining quality standards that are applicable to all institutions and situations.

Although the University has been interested in assessing and assuring the quality of its main and auxiliary activities for many years, these have hitherto been a set of partial or occasional measures that did not form an integrated system. The creation of such a system is one of the priorities set out by the University in its strategic plan for 2016-2020. This priority has gained importance in connection with the adoption of the amendment to the Higher Education Act, as it stipulates that a complex, functional quality assurance and internal assessment system is a prerequisite for the granting of any accreditation for the education of students (see also Appendix A). The University took the first step towards the creation of this system by adopting an internal regulation to define it. This regulation was based on tried-and-tested tools (e.g. procedures and rules for the submission and consideration of applications for accreditation, rules and procedures for the recruitment of academic staff and associated rules for habilitation and appointment procedures, a study system defined by internal regulations, the assessment of educational activities by students and graduates, university-wide programmes to support research and self-evaluation reports for the period 2004-2012) and preparatory work performed by the University in the past two years.

In the field of education the first part of the system constitutes requirements for quality assurance and assessment for the accreditation of degree programmes and new areas of education (see also Chapter 3.4), and the second part is composed of various tools to support quality enhancement in educational activities. Many elements and entire components promoting the development of educational activities lie within the competency of the faculties or their centres, and the guarantors of degree programmes. Guarantors are accountable for the quality of their implementation to both their own faculty and the University, represented in this case by a newly es-

tablished self-governing academic body, the Board for Internal Evaluation. Here, as in other cases, the University bases the system on the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. it only establishes a framework of principles and rules at university level. In the case of the University, the elements that have proved are feedback from students and graduates obtained on the basis of sociological surveys and the ongoing monitoring of the conditions, progress and results of the admission procedure and studies. In the last two years the University has also prepared an evaluation system for theses, which will be verified in 2017.

University regulations provide a basic framework in relation to feedback from students and graduates. Faculties are highly autonomous in terms of the requirements for the relevant surveys; their duty, however, is to provide the University with a report on the configuration and realisation of those surveys, and on measures taken for the further development of educational activities based on their results. This report is discussed by the Academic Senate of the University. The common features of student surveys include e.g. the fact that assessments of teaching take place annually, that students can participate in their preparation, organisation and interpretation, and that the subject of assessment is the quality of the course and individual teachers. Currently, all faculties perform regular assessments of compulsory and compulsory-elective courses and teachers of Czech-language on-site bachelor's and master's programmes; at some faculties students enrolled in combined modes of study (i.e. combinations of on-site and distance study) are involved in the assessment, some faculties also perform assessments of doctoral studies, in individual cases students of foreign-language courses are involved in assessment, or assessments are performed of students' study environment and conditions, or conditions for students with special needs. The average response rate is approximately 25%, but there are major differences between individual faculties in this regard. Based on the recently adopted University regulation, assessments will be performed in all types and forms of degree programmes. In recent years, assessments of the quality of doctoral studies have been repeatedly performed by alumni. In the coming years it will be necessary to further enhance feedback from graduates on the basis of regular surveys organised by the University for graduates of all types of degree programmes (this has been done twice before, and CU will continue this practice) and strengthen the role of alumni in developing educational activities, for example through alumni associations. In the future assessment should also cover all lifelong learning programmes, and be chiefly based on feedback from their participants. The conditions, progress and results of admission procedures and studies are chiefly assessed in statutory annual reports on the University's activities and the University's own annual reports on admission procedures, and other interim analyses and assessments. In the near future this area is to be supplemented with a comprehensive, long-term survey of students' progress through degree programmes, their employment and retrospective evaluation of education provided. The evaluation of theses and dissertations will focus on how they are assessed and a systematic discussion of the requirements to be met by graduates of Charles University.

The aforementioned existing or prepared components should soon be interlinked in the newly introduced regular assessment of individual degree programmes. This is primarily a module for quality enhancement, and only secondarily for verification (i.e. in relation to accreditation). The assessment will be based on a self-evaluation report whose preparation is to be coordinated by the guarantor of the degree programme under scrutiny. This report will be discussed at a joint meeting between the guarantor of the degree programme, its teacher, members of the Board for Internal Evaluation, representatives of the faculty and student representatives, and subsequently debated by the Board for Internal Evaluation. This shall result in recommendations for the further development of the degree programme and the sharing of best practice. The results will be reflected in any future application for the accreditation of the degree programme.

An important role is played by the guarantor of the degree programme in linking the meeting of minimum requirements for educational activities and their enhancement. This institution was established by the University in 1999. The guarantor is a member of academic staff who, through his/her expertise and in his/her own name, bears fundamental responsibility for the quality and proper realisation of the programme for which he/she is the guarantor. The guarantor is charged with ensuring, in cooperation with the bodies of the relevant faculty, the quality of the content of the degree programme, the proper realisation of its teaching in accordance with the approved accreditation, and its development and regular assessment. The amendment to the Higher Education Act significantly strengthens the role of guarantors of degree programmes, which is largely incompatible with faculties' existing organisational structures. Unless they are simultaneously the head of a department, guarantors usually do not have the authority to make decisions in staffing policy and in this respect are entirely dependent upon the heads of individual departments and how they organise teaching. The alignment of the new position of guarantors with the existing system is one of the challenges facing the University, as is the interconnection of the quality assurance and assessment system for education and research.

With regard to the quality assurance of research, the University adheres to the principle that it is responsible in particular for the state and development of disciplines, while the development of individual departments is primarily the responsibility of the faculties and other constituent parts. The key component in this is a comprehensive, university-wide funding system for basic research which focuses on supporting the development of disciplines at the University, creating conditions for the long-term work of outstanding teams, establishing new laboratories and research groups or schools, and supporting outstanding individuals and research conducted by students. The funding of research projects from allocated institutional resources performs systematic quality checks both prior to acceptance of the project for financing and during its implementation in the form of interim reports and balance reports, and not least in the public defence of the final reports or results (see also Chapter 3.5).

Another important component is the evaluation of research work conducted by researchers and students, individual teams, and departments. These assessments are currently performed at faculties and university institutes with very different approaches, even within workplaces that focus on the same or related fields. At the university level no system is yet in place for the evaluation of scientific and research work, which is mainly due to the fact that publications and other results produced by the University are evaluated at national level, with a direct connection to institutional financing. The current intra-university debate is tending towards the assessment of research activity comprising three main components, these being the self-evaluation report on the research activities of faculties and university institutes, bibliometric analysis and the peer review of results, and the monitoring of selected indicators of research activity.

In the case of self-evaluation reports, the University will build on experience acquired during the recent (2014) preparation of a comprehensive report on research activities, an integral part of which were studies performed by individual faculties and institutes. A new element is the fact that the reports will be discussed by the faculties' research boards and by the Board for Internal Evaluation. Reports should focus on, for example, the vision and goals of the faculty or university institute, measures adopted for the development of research, and an evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses. The University recently performed a pilot evaluation in cooperation with the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics and the Faculty of Social Sciences. The default tool for this was bibliometric analysis. Based on the findings of the pilot study, a discussion is now underway on the form of the rules and principles for the future evaluation of results. The University is seeking a solution that will incorporate the different publication and citation practices of individual disciplines, as well as international comparisons. Bibliometric analysis should continue to form the basis for the evaluation of research results, except in cases where its application in the field of research is not suitable; in such a case, results will be evaluated on the basis of an expert assessment (peer review).

A further integral part of quality assurance at the University are auxiliary activities (e.g. administration and management of the University, utilisation of resources, infrastructure, information systems, information and consultancy services, services in knowledge and technology transfer, library services, publishing activities, services provided by Dormitories and Refectories, sports facilities). Regular evaluations of these activities are conducted at the University using a variety of sub-tools (e.g. feedback from service users and balance reports on the activities of constituent parts that provide a specific service, annual reports on the activities of selected constituent parts). However, as they cover highly diverse activities, no coherent system exists for such evaluation; CU plans to maintain this approach.

The guarantor of the quality assurance and assessment system as a whole shall be the Board for Internal Evaluation, which consists of representatives of University management, eminent academics and students. This body is charged by law with managing quality assurance and enhancement at the University. The University conceives it as a board that chiefly decides on accreditation, verifies that the University's requirements for the quality of teaching in degree programmes have been met, and evaluates them, prepares and approves applications of the rules set by the quality assurance system so that they respect individual areas of education and scientific disciplines, approves methodological materials and further develops the University's quality assurance system. The Board is organised into four panels, namely the natural sciences, medicine, the social sciences, and the humanities. As most elements of the system are applied at faculty level, the primary task of University management and its bodies is to guard the interests of the University as a whole, define a basic framework for its development, and provide support to the faculties and other constituent parts.

The quality assurance system and the development of CU are integrated within the University's strategic plan. The preparation of this document is a long and difficult process. In the case of the currently valid strategic plan for the years 2016-2020 (see Appendix D), this process lasted for about a year, and started with a synthesis of all the results and materials in the field of quality assurance gathered by the University in the previous period. Preparations utilised mainly the complex self-evaluation report, which was based on extensive studies of the University's four main areas of responsibility (teaching and research, internationalisation and the third role). These sub-studies were conducted in cooperation with the faculties and other constituent parts as an assessment of the University's success in achieving the goals set out in previous years, while at the same time reflecting developments at national and international level. Other supporting documents included annual reports on the activities or financial management of the University and several other sub-studies, e.g. an analytical report based on the graduate survey, pilot studies on the Bologna structuration of degree programmes, vertical permeability or drop-out rates, and extensive studies of information and advisory services. The actual draft of the University's strategic plan was then repeatedly discussed and debated by University and faculty bodies. Following approval by University boards, the individual faculties elaborated it into their own strategic plans.

The University's strategic plan is updated every year, and this version is also discussed by all key boards. Every year for the last five years the University has prepared an overall review of its success in achieving its individual priorities and activities as stated in the updated version, and, if appropriate, the reasons for or causes of failure to do so; some faculties took a similar approach.

Although the University is currently assessing a range of its activities (see above, e.g. the comprehensive assessment system for science promotion programmes), in the forthcoming period it will have to ensure that the conclusions of individual analyses and surveys are more interlinked, in order to form a comprehensive and easily accessible basis for formulating its further development. An important opportunity in this regard is the newly

established Board for Internal Evaluation, which will oversee the whole area of quality assurance, as well as self-evaluation reports on quality assurance of teaching, research and related activities (as required by the amendment to the Higher Education Act), which should describe the evaluations performed at the University, their main results, and preventive or remedial measures adopted, describe the University's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and risks and make recommendations for its further development.

5. MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Charles University is one of the most important educational and research institutions in both the Czech Republic and Central Europe. Its long historical tradition also makes it an important cultural institution in not only a domestic, but also an international, environment. The tradition nurtured by the University obliges it to cultivate learning and culture and to place the highest demands on its own activities across a broad spectrum of classical (theology, philosophy, law, medicine, mathematics) and more modern (ecology, computer science, social work, gender studies) disciplines, be they academically or professionally oriented. Historical developments have created the three theological faculties of various denominations and five medical faculties, as well as a variety of subjects that are further developed by the faculties. CU also nurtures fields of study that are unique on a national scale.

In the area of governance and decision-making, the University places strong emphasis on academic autonomy and the principle of subsidiarity, and is therefore characterised by a significant degree of decentralisation. Competencies for the development of teaching, research and international cooperation and staffing are bound up with the faculties. The task of University management and the self-governing bodies is therefore to serve the University community, create the best conditions possible for the development of the faculties and other constituent parts, a professional environment for the coordination of diverse activities and platforms for discussion and the building of consensus across the University. The embedding of this principle in relation to the development of the University is an advantage as it facilitates the better adaptation of teaching, research and auxiliary activities to the specific aspects of individual fields of study and workplaces, promotes the culture of an institution that is conscious of its traditions and its mission, and that is based on cooperation and taking into consideration the views of members of the academic community. At the same time, it is also a disadvantage, as it brings increased demands for coordination and communication, time required to discuss fundamental development measures, and the interconnection of individual workplaces and subjects. The development of the University is based on a common framework which creates greater or lesser scope for the different approaches taken by lower levels of administration. The University applies this principle in all areas of its activities.

A good cooperation, forged over the course of years, exists between the self-governing bodies of Charles University and the faculties. An important role is played by students due to their representation in the academic senates, other University bodies and faculties, working committees, and student clubs and societies. Communication between the management of the University, its self-governing bodies and the faculties has made considerable progress in recent times, as shown in the preparation of the University's strategic plan or the introduction of modifications to virtually all internal regulations as a result of the amendment to the Higher Education Act. In both cases a broad discussion took place within the whole academic community. However, the University must continue to systematically address the issue of communication. In the future, for example, it will be necessary to focus on communication about administrative matters between the University management, the Rectorate and constituent parts of the University (currently, individual employees in the same department often use different target groups for the dissemination of university-wide information), make even more use of the online environment, e.g. a shared document repository for specific user groups for open information from the administrative agenda. The preparation of the new internal regulations has brought positive experience in this regard.

The profile of the University, which is characterised by significant expertise in a broad spectrum of subjects, is associated with substantial demands on finance and staffing, while offering considerable potential for cooperation between individual departments and fields of study. Although CU recently adopted measures to consolidate this cooperation, including its largest institutional programme for the promotion of research, PROGRES, which rewards teams involved in transdisciplinary research or involving different faculties and/or other constituent parts of the University with the provision of additional resources, it does not utilise its interdisciplinary potential nearly as much as it could. There are still few joint projects between faculties or between individual workplaces of the same faculty. Habits change very slowly, and in this regard additional motivation and support at university level will be necessary, including the greater visibility of such cooperation in places where it works and brings valuable results. In relation to teaching and learning the discussion between the individual faculties, for example about degree programmes with the same or similar focus will, in the immediate future, receive significant support during preparations for the institutional accreditation of individual areas of education. Preparation of the application will also require the mapping, evaluation and subsequent optimal calibration of cooperation in research. In relation to its management and its development, in the immediate future the University will therefore have to focus on the better interconnection of related areas, e.g. during the implementation of accreditation, evaluation of degree programmes and the evaluation of research.

A prerequisite for fulfilling the mission of an institution such as Charles University are sufficient **funds**. As a public university, the University is funded mainly from public sources. However, institutional **support from the state budget** for the development of research and educational activities in the Czech Republic is **stagnating**, and every year the University is thus forced **to defend the budget for higher education and continuously strengthen its multi-source funding**. While in recent years it **has been able to increase both its own revenues**, and their proportion as a part of its budget, **as well as research funds obtained from grant competitions**, even these **resources do not allow it to develop** as it had resolved to do, i.e. to attract, **for example, a significantly higher number of junior and senior international academic and research staff** due to the financial conditions that it can offer compared to similar foreign institutions, or **to provide adequate conditions for doctoral students**. There is also wide variation in the situations faced by individual faculties; **faculties of the social sciences and humanities in particular** are faced with the **risk of insufficient financial resources**, although the University applies the **solidarity principle** when allocating funds (block grants). The need for an intensified focus on grant competitions exposes some small departments or faculties to the risk of loss of funding and also increases the overall demands on academics and researchers due to the preparation and administration of project applications and projects. For the time being **the University's weakness lies in obtaining of funds from foreign sources**, even though its research activities have a strong international dimension.

In **personnel policy**, too, **competencies are concentrated around the faculties**. At the university level, **recommendations exist for habilitation and appointment procedures**, i.e. in relation to the highest positions that academic and research staff can hold in the Czech Republic. The University places **high demands** on applicants for the titles of professor and associate professor, one of the reasons for which is that these are the only positions whose holders can act as guarantors of master's and doctoral degree programmes. The issue of **whether the University should have** comprehensive rules in place for all stages of teaching and research careers has been an issue for **intra-university discussion for many years**. **Current measures adopted by the University** in relation to junior academic and research workers and postdoctoral students **are only partial and focus mainly on research activities** (the UNCE and PRIMUS programmes, the Post-Doc Fund; educational activities are supported by the Mobility Fund). Although the number of **international academics and researchers who have worked at the University for an extended period of time** has increased in recent years, **both their numbers and resulting influence on the internationalization of CU are still insufficient**. The resolution of what is evidently the **most serious problem affecting Czech (and Central European) science**, i.e. the **relatively closed nature of the system and the consequent low mobility of researchers and the predominant "inbreeding"**, will occur only slowly. **Improvement** would be aided by both **increased financial support** earmarked for long-term stays of visiting professors **and the introduction of research semesters**, which are familiar from distinguished foreign universities, or **University support for incoming foreign teachers in the form of starting packages** (temporary accommodation, assistance with orientation in visa and tax issues, etc.).

As far as teaching and learning are concerned, Charles University places **relatively high demands on its students in comparison to other higher education institutions in the Czech Republic**. The University strives to encourage students to think critically, guide them to make the most of their potential and provide them with a comprehensive university education so as to enable them to succeed in demanding professions. **Unfortunately, developments at national level have not responded to the fact that, during the last twenty years, universities have become highly diversified**. On the contrary, the same criteria continue to be used for financing and quality assessment, irrespective of the missions and capabilities in the diversified higher education landscape. **CU can change this situation at university level only to a certain extent**, chiefly due to the chronic **underfunding of Czech higher education**. **The University was not given much room for the conceptual development of its educational activities by the accreditation system, either**, because by the end of August 2016 the **faculties had full autonomy** in education and the instruments available to the University were very limited. Despite this, CU was largely able to play the role of coordinator, mediator and provider of methodological support, and utilise at least those limited resources to oversee the development of degree programmes through the quality of applications for accreditation. At the same time **CU has endeavoured to develop the sub-components of quality assurance for accredited degree programmes**. In this respect, good **cooperation with its students** proved crucial. The University was able to create, for example, a **system for the student evaluation of teaching** and also ensure the provision of adequate **study conditions and facilities** for its students (information and advisory services, work with disadvantaged student groups, permeability of study, scholarships, etc.).

If the University is successful in gaining **institutional accreditation**, it will be **entrusted by law with important competencies that will give it increased competencies over the conceptual development of its own educational activities**. This is a significant opportunity and challenge for the University. **The first step towards this was to create the necessary legislative, organisational and support environment**. Another tool that CU is currently starting to build is a **system for the regular evaluation of degree programmes that will connect individual, otherwise separate**, components of the quality assurance in education, **and individual participants**, these being the guarantor of the degree programme, academic staff, students, heads of department and faculties on the one hand, and representatives of the Board for Internal Evaluation and independent peers on the other. The assessment of degree programmes shall also include the **continuous monitoring of how students progress through the various stages of study and how they assess it as graduates**.

Due to the large number of fields that the University cultivates, **scientific research** at the University is highly

diverse. This diversity hinders university-wide activities, such as the preparation of science support programmes, research assessment and grants consultancy. While **the University enjoys great success in obtaining national grants, there is considerable room for improvement with regard to international grants**, particularly those awarded by the European Research Council. In relation to development and the overcoming of problems faced while meeting the University's objectives, the **great advantage of this system is the complex network of programmes for the promotion of research and science, which is unique in the Czech Republic**. This system **covers various phases of the research careers of academics and researchers** (including support for student research, junior researchers and outstanding teams and personalities) **and supplements cooperation between individual departments and subjects**. The success of this system is currently difficult to assess as it was introduced only five years ago and in its present form is only just coming up to speed; however, its benefit to the development of science at the University is indisputable. Recently, and following agreement with the faculties and University institutes, **a long-list of flagship subjects that are most valued by the University and on which it plans to build its future development** was drawn up. **The task** faced by the University **is to introduce a system for the assessment of research** that should, together with information taken from the national system, provide a mosaic of the quality of scientific work in various fields. Some of its intended components were recently **validated through a pilot study**. Its results showed, for example, where it would not be appropriate to apply bibliometric assessments and where there would be considerable benefit in an independent *peer review*, as well as the difficulties in obtaining a sufficient number of well-qualified peers.

Internationalisation, which the University regards as **an integral component of its activities**, is fundamental to its development. Although, **in the context of the Czech Republic, the University has strong international outreach**, e.g. thanks to the large number and quality of its partner institutions abroad, wide range of opportunities for mobility, intensive international research collaboration and membership of a number of international organisations and networks, **its international aspect is still insufficient. In many cases the international dimension of teaching and research currently depends on the activity of individual faculties** (sometimes even teachers, too), and at university level **there is no overall strategy in relation to attracting talented international students and teachers**. This support should be both methodical and economic, e.g. in the form of scholarship programmes for talented international applicants for study, and accompanied by better presentation towards these applicants. Here, the University could utilise the hitherto underused potential of foreign-language communication in the virtual environment. A further problematic aspect in terms of internationalisation are the **still inadequate language skills of students, lack of funds for the mobility of academic staff, departures of Czech academics and graduates in some fields abroad, the closed nature of some departments and faculties** in the Czech environment and the **inadequate language skills of teachers and administrative staff**. For example, in relation to teaching in a foreign language, experience shows that its implementation in places where it has not previously existed is an administratively and organisationally demanding process that only delivers results in the long term. Support in the initial stages of this process is critical and is currently lacking.

Although the University has been interested in the **quality assurance and assessment** of its main and auxiliary activities for many years, these have hitherto comprised a **set of partial or occasional measures that did not form an integrated system**. Given the recent adoption of the amendment to the Higher Education Act, the optimal calibration of the quality assurance system is an important task facing the University. **The first step towards** its introduction is the **recent approval of internal regulations** that set out its principles, constituent parts and basic rules. **The proposed system was prepared** on the basis of discussions between the University management, the faculties, the Academic Senate and the wider academic community. By **implementing this system "from below", i.e. in cooperation with the faculties and other constituent parts, CU strives to support its internal quality culture and highlight examples of good practice**. One of the first critical tasks in this respect is the **transformation of degree programmes** and the **obtaining of accreditations within the new system**. At the same time, this **carries a substantial risk**, which is the incorrect calibration of the system, i.e. chiefly the **bureaucratic approach** to both accreditation and evaluation, **formalism and neglect of the differing nature of the various disciplines and degree programmes**. One objective factor that complicates this task is the **inadequate transitional period stipulated by the amendment to the Higher Education Act** and the consequent lack of time and excessive haste in its implementation.