

**INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAMME**  
**CHARLES UNIVERSITY SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

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# CHARLES UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION: SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

1. That fuller attention is paid by the university's senior leadership to horizon scanning and future proofing in the efforts to realise the university's mission and vision.<sup>1</sup>

7. New quality arrangements should be predicated on innovation and development and not on the reinforcement of a compliance mindset that simply calibrated quality on the basis of inherited norms provided by the government.

**Charles University underwent an international assessment at the height of its preparations for institutional accreditation**, which is one of the most significant changes in Czech higher education in recent years. The documents that were created for this purpose, as well as the conclusions of the international team, were utilized immediately after the final report was delivered to the university. The self-evaluation report prepared by the university was used as the basis for the assessment of the institutional environment, the quality of which the university was required to prove to the National Accreditation Authority for Higher Education. The international evaluation process itself **provided evidence that Charles University has a functioning quality assurance and assessment system**, which is a *conditio sine qua non* for the granting of institutional accreditation, i.e. for entrusting the right to develop, manage and evaluate degree programmes to the autonomous competence of the relevant higher education institution for the next ten years. **One of the first tangible results of the international evaluation was the granting of institutional accreditation to Charles University in the spring of 2018.**

However, this was not the only outcome, as the **conclusions and recommendations arising from the international evaluation were repeatedly discussed at various levels**, in particular by the Board for Internal Evaluation, the Rector's Collegium and the meetings of the expanded Rector's Collegium. These bodies **set out the priority tasks** to be addressed by the University **in the period 2018-2020**, i.e. in line with its current strategic plan, **and the tasks it will elaborate on in the new plan.**

In the last two years, the University has endeavoured to increase the quality of educational and research activities and thus strengthen its standing, not only in the Czech Republic, but also among universities in Europe and the world. **A number of changes have been made at Charles University** during this time. These were **also influenced by external factors**, in particular by the amendment to the Higher Education Act of 2016 and its consequences for accreditation and quality assurance, or by substantial innovation of the national research evaluation system. In both these areas, the **University was a pioneer**: it was the first Czech university to receive institutional accreditation and, at the same time, the first university to launch its own comprehensive research evaluation system. **The orientation of the University towards the search for its own paths and the future** was also manifested in the area of internationalisation through the establishment of an alliance with five top world universities.

**The most important changes and reflections on them form the body of this report.** Preparation of the report was coordinated by a thirteen-member **management team** comprising four Vice-Rectors, the Chancellor, the President of the Academic Senate, the Chairman of the Study Committee of the Academic Senate, three members of academic staff, a student and a staff member from the Rectorate. Six members of the team are also members of the Board for Internal Evaluation. The material prepared by the management team was then circulated to the faculties and university institutes for comments. Following the incorporation of all suggestions the material was subsequently 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. **The report will be made available to the faculties for further internal discussion.** The suggestions made during the preparation of the report, together with the conclusions of the international team, will be of considerable value **in the preparation of the University's new strategic plan for 2021-2025.**

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<sup>1</sup> The recommendations of the IEP evaluation team from 2017 are given in the introduction to each chapter. The numbers of these recommendations correspond to the numbering given in the *Charles University Evaluation Report 2017*.

## 1. GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

### 1.1 STRATEGIC PLAN

2. *That the impetus for structural/organisational changes – in areas such as medicine, science and the arts – be supported by the creation of a specialist task force under the auspices of the Rectorate with a view to aiding faculties in this type of change management.*

3. *The university ensures, through a process of self-critical analysis of action plans, that goals set and, more so, the processes defined to reach these should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound).*

4. *The university considers a further refinement in priorities so that there is clarity across the organisation about ranking (first order, second order etc.) and also that, alongside funding, other criteria might be applied to determining priorities, for example strengths in disciplines.*

**Strategic management and planning** in Czech higher education, and therefore also at Charles University, takes place in **five-year cycles**. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports issues its own strategic plan for higher education as a whole, which then becomes the framework for universities and their strategic plans. At Charles University, individual faculties, too, produce their own strategic documents. Every year, the strategic plan of the university is then elaborated into an implementation plan. **The University has now begun to discuss its new strategic plan for the period 2021-2025.** Its **main strategic goal** is to develop as a modern and innovative university that is open to the world and that continuously strives to improve the quality of education and research activities and actively contributes to the well-being of society. **When preparing its new strategic plan, the University takes into consideration the recommendations arising from the international evaluation.**

**In 2019, a concept of the final document was adopted with the intent to make the plan simple, easily understandable and readable, encompass only a small number of key priorities** and development goals, consider their interdependence and elaborate them into sub-steps using the SMART approach. **The reason for the selection of each priority should be clearly laid out**, as shall the developmental potential of the university, and **there must be a clear concept of the path to be taken by the University in order to achieve its goals.** This path will be elaborated by the University in its annual implementation plans, in which it will indicate the steps that it will take or refine its objectives in line with its development. The resulting document will also be inspired by the priorities of major partners in education and research, in particular universities participating in the newly formed 4EU+ alliance (cf. 6.2).

The IEP evaluation report stated, amongst other things, that **fragmentation**, which manifests itself in e.g. a high number of workplaces, degree programmes, incommensurable study experience, or a high number of research topics without identifying the key ones, are among the internal factors that **hamper the development of the University.** In its new strategic plan, Charles University will therefore focus on **strengthening its internal integrity and cohesion.** One of the key priorities will be **unity in diversity ('in pluribus unitas')**, i.e. an emphasis on the integrity of the University through common and unifying elements and mechanisms of university governance, while respecting the special aspects and autonomy of the different fields existing at the university. The functional balance between centralisation and decentralisation will be based on a common concept of education and research policy, including quality assessment, and on the university principles for the allocation of its institutional resources. The faculties and other constituent parts of the University will, through their own activities in their specific areas, contribute to achieving the University's strategic goals and, at the same time, developing their own fields and subjects.

### 1.2 PERSONNEL POLICY

6. *That the “gatekeeper” role for the Rectorate in some staff appointments be consolidated as a visible sign of how the Rectorate can play a non-threatening and nuanced part in the staff appointment process as an aid to institutional efficiency and the securing of strategic goals, namely by ensuring that the academic competence expected of the candidate fits into the overall developmental strategy not only of the faculty but of the university as a whole.*

The recommendations of the international team also focused on personnel policy. In 2017, the University joined the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers initiative and subsequently **received the Human Resources Excellence in Research Award at the beginning of 2019**. It is notable that the University **joined the project as a whole institution, and not as individual faculties**, as is the case with other Czech universities, since under the Higher Education Act, labour relations lie within the competency of the faculties and personnel policy at universities is highly decentralised. So far, the situation has been no different at Charles University. The commitments made by Charles University through the granting of the HR Award thus relate to the university as a whole, and mean that solutions for the University's personnel policy and career development will be designed so as to systematically apply to the University *in toto*, and not individual constituent parts.

The objective of the University's participation in this project is to achieve **the more strategic management of its human resources** and to create a more professional, transparent and prosperous working environment, including opportunities for career growth. In the first step, in November 2017 the University adopted the principles enshrined in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and committed itself to their implementation. The year 2018 was devoted to the preparation of an **internal analysis** of the extent to which current practice at Charles University was in line with the principles contained in both documents, **and subsequently to the development of an action plan** outlining which measures will be adopted by the University, and when, in areas where there is a major difference between principles and practice. The analysis was prepared in cooperation with the university management, the project team, faculties and other constituent parts, and discussed by the university bodies. Preparations also included an inquiry among academic, research and support staff focusing on the extent to which the university fulfils European principles. The analyses submitted by the University were also based on the recommendations of the IEP team. Internal evaluation showed that in the vast majority of the forty monitored areas, university practice is in full or significant compliance with the principles. However, areas were identified which the University needs to address in the coming years.

**The University has undertaken to adopt a number of measures** including, for example, amendments to the Competitive Hiring Process Code, preparation of university framework principles for career advancement which will be subsequently elaborated by individual faculties, preparation of rules for recruiting and employing postdoctoral staff, introduction of an employee appraisal system, establishment of a research evaluation system and conducting of the first evaluation, strengthening of the awareness of both incoming and existing employees, development of doctoral schools, and the strengthening of popularisation activities concerning the results of research work. In particular, the **action plan** summarises the most important steps that the University must take in the coming years, especially in relation to its staff. The importance that the University attaches to personnel policy is also reflected in the fact that among the **five areas** addressed by the new strategic plan the first one focuses on **people and their development**, from applicants for study or employment, through students, to professors.

The outcomes of changes made up until now in the area of personnel policy include, in particular, the **amendment of the Code of Ethics**, and an **amendment to the Competitive Hiring Process Code** is also being prepared. This had previously set the basic rules for the whole university; however, in practice, it was different at the faculties. The proposed amendment enshrines the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Upon its adoption, the University will ensure that faculty practices are harmonised as much as possible. One of the long-term goals of the university is to establish a **university-wide Relocation Centre for new employees** and/or visiting academics from abroad or the **establishment of a transparent, functional and benefit-linked career development path** framed by a **career code** at the institutional level. The goal is to create a basic framework that should become a tool for transparency and, as far as possible, the standardisation of career development, including a consistent link between the gaining of the academic positions of associate professor and professor and internal wage regulations.

The Action Plan foresees that most of the new measures will be adopted in 2020, so the **University is currently in a something of a period of transition**, when many things are still at the preparatory stage. Due to the fragmentation of the university and the division of competences between the university and faculties, which is a result of the historical development and Czech legislation, it can reasonably be assumed that in some areas this will be achieved through a hard-negotiated compromise between faculties, and in some areas it may be merely a search for the greatest common intersection; as a result, the

change may be too radical for some, but too moderate for others. For the most part, though, these steps will allow the faculties to tighten up their practices. At the same time, the university is obliged to evaluate the results of its past practice at intervals of several years and use this as a basis for planning any measure that needs to be taken in order to ensure its compliance with the Charter and the Code. Both will be the subject of ongoing external evaluation.

### 1.3 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

*5. That the university consider ways in which it might introduce a small number of professional/managerial staff roles to provide expert advice in areas such as quality and research management and alleviate pressures on senior academic leadership roles.*

Charles University draws on the experience of its senior staff when addressing issues concerning its own development. The Board for Internal Evaluation, which guarantees, supports and develops the provision and internal quality evaluation of the University's educational and creative activities, thus playing an essential role in developing a culture of quality at Charles University, was established on the basis of this principle. Another example of this is the support given to potential applicants for prestigious research grants, in particular European Research Council grants, where the University has appointed an applicant support coordinator. Support is provided through the European Centre and takes the form of regular consultations on applications. The appointed coordinator is an outstanding academic, who had also served as chairman of the Computer Science and Informatics panel for the evaluation of these grants. The University will continue to develop this practice in the future.

### 1.4 PRINCIPLES FOR THE ALLOCATION OF GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES

*4. The university considers a further refinement in priorities so that there is clarity across the organisation about ranking (first order, second order etc.) and also that, alongside funding, other criteria might be applied to determining priorities, for example strengths in disciplines.*

The **University's Principles for the Allocation of Funds and Subsidies** are an important management tool of the University. They are the basis for the distribution of institutional funds provided to the University from the state budget for educational and research activities between the faculties and other constituent parts. The Principles reflect both the priorities used by the Ministry of Education to allocate budgets between individual higher education institutions and activities prioritised by the University. They are discussed annually with the faculties and other constituent parts of the University and approved by the Academic Senate on the basis of a proposal submitted to it by the Rector. The further division of allocated funds lies within the competency of the faculties and other constituent parts. **The principles thus represent a combination of centralisation and decentralisation. Centralisation** consists of, on the one hand, solidarity funds (not only cohesion, but also the rules for the distribution of the fixed part of the budget), and on the other, a contribution to the fund for the support of university projects, infrastructure, or the 4EU+ alliance etc. On the other hand, the **motivational performance component is based on competition between the faculties** in the field of research, foreign academics and students, mobility, or, as the most recent indicator, completion rate of studies. In the near future, the University expects that the results of the research evaluation will also be linked to the budget breakdown principles. The University also intends to strengthen the link between Principles and the contribution of constituent parts to its objectives as defined in the new strategic plan.

### 1.5 DATA, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

*2. That the impetus for structural/organisational changes – in areas such as medicine, science and the arts – be supported by the creation of a specialist task force under the auspices of the Rectorate with a view to aiding faculties in this type of change management.*

Management and its quality, as related to the recommendations of the evaluation team, are perceived by the University primarily in terms of vision and goals, people, data and information, and communication. In 2019, the University continues to **integrate existing and introduce new university information systems**. This year, the implementation of a unified Document Management System for the entire university, including its faculties, will be completed, and the University is already in the process of connecting it with other systems, especially the Public Contract Registry, the Study Information System and others. A tender for the provision of the Economic Information System, which will allow the harmonisation of economic and payroll administration at the University, is currently underway. Thanks to the ongoing internal evaluation of research, significant progress has been made in the development of an information system for the recording of results and evaluation of research activities. In addition, the University started work on **improving the collection of data and information**, and **networking with faculties and institutes of the University**. Intensive co-operation with faculty representatives for selected strategic projects, including data collection, technology scouting, HR Award, electronic filing system, etc. is ongoing.

As far as **external feedback** is concerned, information on nationwide comparison is provided by the allocation of budget between higher education institutions which contains a performance component. The comprehensive national evaluation of research activities is entering its implementation phase and the Ministry is preparing a new system of institutional funding for research which will lay emphasis on excellence.

In addition, thanks to the 4EU+ alliance, there has opened up an opportunity to continuously review the operation of Charles University. This will only deepen in the future. A further important external assessment is the HR Award project, especially its “gap” analysis and action plan, and the evaluation of research activities at Charles University because it is conducted by renowned international scholars.

## 2. QUALITY CULTURE

### 2.1 INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND RELATED AGENDA

*16. That the university, through the BIE, ensures that there is a process in place throughout the entire university which ensures that all of these four steps (PDCA: plan - do - check - act) are taken at a level of high expertise for all existing programmes (“quality assurance ex post”), and that the first two steps - due consideration of programme objectives and fitness for purpose of input factors - are considered before new programmes are started (“quality assurance ex ante”).*

*8. That the university considers / reconsiders three cornerstones of a quality orientation as a basis for further development. First, higher education aims, including preparing students for active citizenship, contributing to their employability, supporting their personal development, creating a broad advanced knowledge base and stimulating research and innovation; secondly, “system” - these could be called overarching “social” or “political” - objectives, which coincide largely with Bologna aspirations and tools, such as permeability of learning paths, mobility, recognition, social inclusion, and transparency; and thirdly, ensuring institutional profile or hallmark as a learning experience and programme outcome.*

The implementation of **institutional accreditation and related agendas** is one of the most important areas in which the University has taken a number of key measures over the past two years. The preparation and launch of a completely new degree programmes accreditation system were highly demanding tasks, which were also subject to considerable time pressure due to the late creation and approval of the legislative framework by the Government and Parliament of the Czech Republic and the need for the accelerated accreditation of many degree programmes. Charles University has supported this new accreditation system with three key elements.

Firstly, there is the **conceptual planning of the development of degree programmes and educational activities**. For this purpose, the University uses **accreditation prospects**, which allow faculty and university representatives to discuss the concept and offer of degree programmes. The University ensures that every **degree programme fits into its overall concept for educational activity**. The faculties prepare an overview of the degree programmes that they intend to submit for approval. This prospect is **approved** by the management of the University and the faculties. The University has set three key priorities in this area: integration, innovation and internationalisation.

Secondly, the University **has set standards and measures of quality** for the preparation and development of individual degree programmes. The **Board for Internal Evaluation** defined the pillars of degree programme proposals. These are:

- **Profiling.** Besides the obligation to briefly describe the objectives and course of study for the public, the submitting body describes the aims and objectives of the proposed degree programme, its professional and scientific background, its relation to public demands and other aspects.
- **Curriculum.** A new curriculum typology has been implemented to allow greater flexibility in study and support different types of innovation. The implementation of some newly formulated content requirements and curriculum recommendations, such as the requirement to implement research training courses, is being prepared.
- **Staffing.** A clear structure of responsibility for the degree programme guarantor, the guarantors of the core subjects of the curriculum, and other teachers was defined. This is related to the requirement to balance the age structure of the guarantors and teachers in the given degree programme. Personnel profiles of key teachers were also implemented, and their research activities updated in relation to the curriculum.
- **Research.** A clear requirement was defined for linking educational and research activity at degree programme level. For this reason, the Board for Internal Evaluation began to intensively monitor grant activity and the research results achieved by the workplaces that guarantee the given degree programme. In addition, the staffing sheets of teachers are monitored, particularly those for key teachers and guarantors.

The internal logic of the goals and the means for achieving them are under scrutiny for every degree programme proposal. In the future, the University intends to significantly strengthen the international context in this area, i.e. to draw more inspiration and examples of good practice from abroad, particularly with regard to the 4EU+ alliance, from which the University expects close **cooperation and the opportunity to compare itself with the world's leading universities.**

Thirdly, the University is preparing to **systematically monitor and evaluate** its degree programmes and their outcomes, including issues highlighted by IEP evaluation, i.e. in particular fitness for purpose and the overall learning experience. Preparations for the system, which will be launched in 2020, are focusing mainly on **defining the content and terms of evaluation** and developing a **system for collecting and evaluating information on the implementation of degree programmes.** Pre-defined key areas include personnel and premises, linkage to research activities, the international dimension, implementation of curriculum, and the course and results of study (e.g. completion rate), as well as changes that have taken place since the granting of accreditation and the prospects for the subsequent period. The information on these areas should provide the Board for Internal Evaluation with a comprehensive view on the implementation of the given degree programme. This should, in turn, answer the question of how the concept outlined in its proposal works in practice, the extent to which it fulfils its objectives, where its strengths and weaknesses are, where it stands in the context of other degree programmes, and in what ways it can be further innovated and improved. In addition to the resources already included in the Study Information System (e.g. scope of study, number of students, characteristics of subjects, personal records of teachers), the information provided for the evaluation of degree programmes will offer **newly prepared modules, i.e. Questionnaire** (tools for conducting surveys between different groups, which has already been launched), **Tracking** (systematic tracking of student trajectories) and **Evaluation** (platform for interconnecting information from other parts of the information system, recording evaluation reports on degree programmes, informing of both key actors and the general public).

**The University attaches a key role to the system for the regular quality assessment of degree programmes,** as it is evaluations by internal experts as well as independent reviewers that allow it to reflect more deeply on its educational activities, which should help it to develop them conceptually and base them on proven international standards and good practice. It also sees it as an important opportunity to start discussions with faculties and degree programme guarantors on the values that should characterize education at Charles University in terms of one of the IEP team's recommendations, i.e. that the University's considerations concerning the improvement of its activities, which are the basis of its further development, should be based on three pillars. These are (1) the objectives and purpose of higher education, including the preparation of students for active citizenship, the supporting of their



employability and personal development, the existence of a broad base of advanced knowledge and an environment that encourages research and innovation; (2) a framework of social and political objectives that are in line with the Bologna principles, and tools such as study permeability, mobility, recognition, social inclusion or transparency; and (3) to ensure that Charles University's profile is imprinted both in everyday teaching and in learning outcomes. At the same time, the University will also focus on how its profiling as a research university translates into everyday educational practice.

## 2.2 OBJECTIVES, CONCEPT AND FRAMEWORK OF EDUCATION

*12. Reinforce the synergy between learning and teaching and research through improved curriculum design - embedding of research methodology courses or research practice not only through final year projects / dissertations and participation in current research projects of academics but also - and not just as an option but rather as an essential hallmark of a university which sees its mission to be in line with a "Humboldtian tradition and aspiration" - by fully embracing the overarching educational concepts of student-centred, problem-based learning. The BIE should be an important agent of change in this respect.*

*15. The university review and recalibrate the quality of the wider student experience, including by reference to best practice elsewhere in Europe, and that this benchmarking of excellence be taken forward by university and faculty senior leaders.*

In 2018, the Board for Internal Evaluation adopted a resolution on two hundred and thirty-five degree programmes, all of which had to undergo a rigorous assessment and decision-making process on how long they should be accredited for. It was only the end of the first wave of new accreditation that allowed the Board to find time to reflect on which areas and data are truly essential and which are not. The objectives, concepts and framework of education at Charles University were thus defined.

The goal of Charles University is to prepare a successful graduate of good standing in society who contributes to the development of society and promotes the reputation of the university. In order to achieve this goal, the University establishes and offers quality and attractive degree programmes, which are secured by outstanding scholars and experts. At the same time, the University strives to ensure the effective functioning of study and education, which is achieved through the able organisation of teaching and the effective use of human and material resources.

The University achieves its main goal, i.e. the preparation of high-quality graduates in high-quality degree programmes, through activities in several areas. First of all, it pays **special attention to the conception and preparation of degree programmes** that reflect professional standards and developments in the given area of education and the current situation in society. The University and its constituent parts (faculties and their workplaces responsible for degree programmes) are responsive to current societal demands and anticipate future needs. Secondly, the **University continuously evaluates the implementation of its degree programmes**, the goal of which is to establish the **comprehensive evaluation of degree programmes by the Board for Internal Evaluation**, which will include **the assessment of teaching by students and graduates** and other tools providing **feedback on the quality of the educational process**. Thirdly, in order to **fulfil the principle of unity in diversity** (*in pluribus unitas*), the University focuses on interconnecting degree programmes within faculties and across the university, which leads to better use of material and human resources and enables students to gain a broader and more diverse outlook in various areas of education.

The University considers a **high-quality degree programme** to be one whose content reflects current scientific developments, societal relevance and the best practices of other educational institutions that offer education in the same area. Such programmes are provided by a sufficient number of **high-quality teachers** with appropriate professional qualifications. The University places emphasis on the **excellent research of its workplaces**, which is directly reflected in the educational process. The close link to research is particularly accentuated with regard to higher types of study. Last but not least, the University consistently focuses on the **interconnection of knowledge and skills in the education process and the application of new educational practices**, currently in the field of indirect teaching. In connection with the **forthcoming evaluation of degree programmes**, increased attention will be paid to the discussion and **reflection on the fundamental values shared in the educational process and reflected in the principles of quality of education at the University**.

Degree programmes require quality assurance during the entire educational process. The University focuses on several areas. First of all, a **high-quality material environment suitable** for educational activities, i.e. sufficient, well-equipped teaching premises. **Support services** such as libraries, access to electronic resources, and distance learning play an important role. Special attention is paid to **teachers and their professional development**. In addition to personnel selection, this also involves the application of the Career Code and, last but not least, support and development of pedagogical competencies. The University closely monitors the needs of students and offers **auxiliary services** such as accommodation and meals, sports facilities and diverse cultural activities.

In order to achieve these goals, the University uses **decision-making mechanisms** based on the **interdependence between University management and the faculties** (decision-making and management) and administrative support (activities and decision-making). Charles University is built on a long tradition and a high degree of democracy. University management realises that appeal to tradition often masks rigidity and unwillingness to change. **However, changes in these areas cannot be made from the top** as they require the approval and active cooperation of the faculties and their workplaces. As revolutionary changes of managerial nature could jeopardise the whole system of teaching and research, the management of the University endeavours to hold dialogue with the faculties and introduce changes gradually. The careful division of responsibilities between the University, its central institutions and faculties brings a desired **balance between centralisation and decentralisation** and **ensures organisational unity while respecting and promoting field-specific diversity** (unity in diversity).

## 2.3 INTEGRATION OF DEGREE PROGRAMMES

*9. Issues of quality focus and enhancement opportunities should be carefully reflected upon by the BIE and that aligning outcomes from individual programme reviews with broader considerations relating to programme duplication, core shared programmes and modularisation should be regarded as a key benchmark for success in enhancing the university's provision.*

A positive example of finding a balance between centralisation and decentralisation is the **integration of degree programmes**. A key measure in this area was the analysis of the structure and scope of current educational activity, which was conducted as part of the University's application for institutional accreditation. Based on this, negotiations on the structure of educational activities were launched in cooperation with the faculties in autumn 2017. In places where the analysis was able to identify content affinities, overlaps or duplications, scattered faculty degree programmes are being gradually integrated into larger units, or proposals for joint degree programmes provided by multiple faculties are submitted. So far, the University has **succeeded in integrating approximately sixty**, chiefly small in terms of the student numbers, **degree programmes in History and Philology**, which have been integrated into larger wholes (e.g. East Asian Studies), and in several cases similar degree programmes at multiple faculties were united into a single, inter-faculty degree programme. More intensive integration is hampered by the fact that it is not uncommon for integrable degree programmes that their current period of validity varies, which makes negotiations especially difficult in those cases where the relevant programmes have recently, before the granting of institutional accreditation to Charles University, undergone the accreditation process, i.e. due to the fact that the entire, demanding process would have to be repeated within a short period of time, but with changed requirements. Therefore, the Board for Internal Evaluation **grants short-term accreditation to degree programmes that must be accredited and have the potential to be integrated so as to create a uniform time commitment to create a new integrated degree programme proposal** for all departments of the given faculty or multiple faculties. It is not possible to remove duplicities at short notice due to the current structure of teaching and the functioning of faculties and their workplaces. In some cases, this is also impossible for reasons of capacity. The process of integration at Charles University is therefore in its infancy; it is a long-term goal that requires extended preparations and discussion with faculties.

**In the future, the University will focus on integration, especially in doctoral studies**, where there are a large number of degree programmes and where the consistency of educational and research activities must be strengthened; the evaluation team came to the same conclusion.

## 2.4 INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

In order to enable the University to meet the objectives related to the provision, evaluation and development of educational activities, **a modification of the decision-making procedures and bodies responsible for conceptual planning and control and/or the assessment and evaluation of degree programmes was introduced.** At university level (the Rector and the Collegium) in particular, the conceptual planning of educational activities to determine the direction that should be taken by the University is underway. This is continued by the Board for Internal Evaluation which, through the granting of institutional accreditation, has started to approve degree programme proposals since 2018 and will provide degree programme evaluations from 2020 onwards. Bodies and faculties of the University are supported by the **Department of Quality of Education and Accreditations**, which was established in January 2018. Its task is to provide not only **methodological and organisational support** connected with other administrative and control activities, but also **conceptual support**, consisting in the monitoring of current trends and their introducing to University bodies so that selected elements are reflected in the University's own quality assurance system. This division of roles ensures effective quality assurance in the phases of conceptual planning, preparation and development of degree programmes (*ex ante* quality assurance), as well as in the implementation and evaluation of the results of already implemented degree programmes (*ex post* quality assurance).

## 3. TEACHING AND STUDY

### 3.1 CONTRIBUTION OF EXTERNAL PARTNERS TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

*22. The process of programme accreditation should ensure that external stakeholders have an appropriate say in the development of the curriculum and the BIE is perfectly placed to ensure that faculty guarantors involve the relevant external expertise when updating their programmes and then offering those programmes for accreditation.*

When designing and, above all, implementing high-quality teaching, the University utilises not only its own academic staff and international experts, but also **involves professionals.** This applies in particular to those degree programmes that prepare graduates for regulated professions. A greater degree of their involvement is typical, for example, for the **training of future teachers, doctors and non-medical staff** (general nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, etc.). This trend has met with a favourable response from students, and the University will continue the practice.

An example can be mentioned from the Faculty of Education, where the preparation of new degree programmes included a review of existing curricula, i.e. primarily analysis at the level of the degree programme guarantor, students and academic staff who were to participate in its implementation. **However, an integral part of this was communication with the professional community**, as well as **with graduates.** In 2019, **representatives of the relevant professions were invited to take part in new accreditations through a seminar.** The participants in this meeting, i.e. former students, primary and secondary schools teachers, representatives of professional associations and representatives of the Ministry of Education, provided feedback on the intentions for new accreditation as presented by faculty management. Suggestions for further modifications in the curricula could be submitted in writing or through individual personal meetings with representatives of the individual programmes. **Based on their suggestions, some key pillars of accreditations** in the training of future teachers were consolidated, in particular **increased reviews of practical work experience, specialised didactic subjects and specific involvement of professionals in some practical seminars.** The goal of these measures is to change curricula in accordance with current requirements.

### 3.2 FEEDBACK ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

*10. That steps are taken to review the student feedback process to ensure greater consistency in questionnaire design and that wider thought be given to how this might link with other approaches to a holistic*

*concept of programme assessment. Such a review might also give some thought to the problem of “questionnaire fatigue” amongst students, something that was raised during a number of meetings with the team.*

*13. Analysis of student drop-out rates should be a priority for the university including wide-ranging terms of reference to embrace, amongst other things, admissions guidance, criteria and practice; supporting diverse learners through the development of the curriculum and approaches to pedagogy; the role of technology in supporting and enhancing learning; and the embedding of pedagogical training for teachers.*

*14. The university should develop a more systematic tracking of student destinations, including analysis of student preparedness for the world of work and, perhaps most importantly, the opinions of external stakeholders on the relevance of Charles University graduate attributes to the needs of business, industry and the not-for-profit sector.*

Since Charles University was advised by the IEP team to focus on greater consistency when examining the quality of teaching, the University communicated with the faculties. In the case of **student evaluation of teaching**, the University has not made any progress, agreement on a common core has not been reached, and the **organisation of teaching and student surveys continue to differ** from faculty to faculty. The management of the University and its academic community receive a general overview of the results of these surveys thanks to the annual *Report on the Evaluation of Educational Activities by Students and Graduates at the Faculties of Charles University*.

For the time being, the common core for the provision of feedback on the quality of teaching will be the **system of three university-wide surveys regularly conducted among applicants, students and graduates**, for whom the University will use the **Questionnaire module**, which is a newly built part of the information system. At the turn of 2018 and 2019 a **pilot survey of students** in the final years of bachelor's and master's degree programmes, which focused on the conditions of and facilities provided for study, was carried out. At the beginning of 2019, a **pilot university survey among graduates** was carried out. This **contained a common section and left space for** faculty-specific sections, which was utilised by six faculties. In order to avoid overloading of the respondents, both surveys were coordinated and, in case of potential overlap between the two target groups, each respondent was approached in only one of them. The University intends to continue with this practice. The survey of applicants is still in preparation. All three surveys will be closely linked and their results will be stored in anonymised form in the **Tracking module**. This will link the data stored in the University's information system with data collected through questionnaire-type surveys. In the future, it will be possible to follow a student's progress through study, from admission and through study, up to employment. At the same time, the University expects that the results of these surveys and the data from the Tracking module will be **included in the aforementioned systematic monitoring and evaluation of degree programmes**. This will enable it to systematically investigate the learning experience and further improve the quality of its degree programmes. A comprehensive analysis of premature terminations of studies, as recommended by the evaluation team, has not yet been carried out; however, the University will pursue this as soon as it has completed a system for conducting surveys between different target groups and, in particular, an evaluation system for degree programmes. The first broader analysis in the spirit of IEP team's recommendations, from which the University will draw inspiration for similar activities, was the **analysis of doctoral studies**, the results of which will be available in late-2019 (cf. 4.2).

### **3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS AND INTRODUCTION OF MODERN TEACHING METHODS**

*11. That the university consider the establishment of a supportive approach to enhancing teaching performance (“teach the teacher”), also with regard to the call for introducing more updated learning concepts based on blended learning, guided independent learning, individualised learning paths, and multi-purpose-module based programmes.*

With regard to the development of pedagogical skills and the introduction of modern forms of teaching, the University has decided to implement a combination of voluntary-based training and education for employees.

### 3.3.1 Development of teachers' pedagogical skills

Innovative approaches in teaching are directly linked to the professional development of higher education teachers, which is currently concerned not only with increasing their erudition, but also with systematically improving their didactic and pedagogical/psychological competences, which in turn enable the systematic enrichment of higher education with innovative methods and approaches (e.g. student-centred learning, cooperative learning, experiential learning, use of distance learning elements, etc.).

Charles University academic staff can take advantage of a large number of options. The faculties and the Rectorate offer staff training courses and one-off seminars focusing on the development of didactic, presentation, communication, organisational and managerial skills. Due to the high degree of interest in these educational opportunities, the University has expanded and systematised the range on offer. The new range is aimed not only at fledgling academics and PhD students, but also at more experienced teachers, as the supporting of pedagogical skills is seen as a significant element of the lifelong learning and professional growth of academics.

### 3.3.2 Pædagogium – Centre for Pedagogical Skills

In 2018, the Pædagogium – Centre for Educational Skills became a coordinating platform for the systematic support in this area. It oversees diverse activities aimed at supporting didactic skills and the sharing of pedagogical competence and examples of best practice. The core is the **Pedagogical Skills Course**, which was piloted in 2017 and has been opened twice a year since then. It focuses not only on pedagogical/psychological skills, but also on the basics of rhetoric and vocal hygiene. This is followed by the **Practical Teaching Workshop**, an interactive workshop that facilitates the sharing and review of university teaching experience and a number of courses focusing on the creation and use of didactic tests, advanced work with e-learning (not technological instruction, but didactic training), etc.

**Common principles of these training programmes** include, in particular, openness to innovation and new trends, an evidence-based approach to higher education and, last but not least, respect for the needs, specific aspects and experience of the target group of academic staff. Interactive study support in LMS Moodle also forms an integral part of most courses.

The further direction of the described activities is set out both by the University's Strategic Plan and by the ongoing evaluation. Following repeated requests from academic staff, the Pædagogium will further extend its range of services to include, for example, peer observations in teaching, with follow-up reviews, networking of people interested in pedagogical innovations, lectures by foreign experts, etc. An important planned step is the **creation of an electronic textbook on pedagogical skills**. Activities organised through the Pædagogium form the basis of a system that the University will continue to develop and support. For this purpose, the University is looking for examples of good practice at universities abroad. Activities aimed at educating academic staff have been included in the activities of the 4EU+ alliance of European universities, and every year the University also receives visiting professors who focus on the development of pedagogical skills, psychometrics and related topics.

### 3.3.3 Training of academic staff in e-learning

The next step in the University's efforts to improve and enrich academic staff is their **training in e-learning**. Attention is focused on the correct definition of learning outcomes in e-learning, the creation and use of modern electronic study materials (sound presentations, videos, recordings of lectures) and on the possibilities for testing students using the LMS Moodle tool (creation of questions, composition of tests, analysis of test questions).

To this end, and in order to use digital means, in 2017 the University established the **Centre for the Support of E-learning** which offers a central installation of LMS Moodle, as well as a tool for Adobe Connect webinars and tools for storing Stream server video recordings. Qualification courses, academic literature and anti-plagiarism checks utilise the **Turnitin system**. The basic pillar of the Centre's work is the **high-quality staffing of the workplace**.

Academic staff and students find in the Centre stable, everyday support for their work (several hundred academic staff turn to it every year). It also runs a guidance and referral portal and organises regular training sessions and training for groups of academic staff on requested topics. Training sessions are

oriented both towards technology (software functionality) and didactics (modern didactics with the application of technology). Both the transfer of experience and communication with faculties is secured through a **network of faculty e-learning coordinators and a network of faculty coordinators for the implementation of the Turnitin system**. The University has also recently tried to support MOOC courses.

Indicators of the successful fulfilment of the University's strategies in this field or feedback from e-learning users, e.g. as part of the evaluation of specific training courses, which often provide feedback on satisfaction with e-learning tools, are continuously evaluated. The contents of the queries sent to the Centre are regularly evaluated, and instructions or offers of training courses are created on the basis of this feedback.

## 4. RESEARCH

### 4.1 EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF RESEARCH WORK

*17. The university should move beyond a (valid, first-step) process that allowed self-identification of excellence in research activity and initiate a follow-up process that establishes robust criteria for flagship status; in the course of applying these criteria, the university should make more use of external peer review while reducing reliance on mere bibliometric methods. This might help with a further reduction in the list of centres of excellence, more targeted funding than is currently the case and greater opportunities for growth for areas where there was strong evidence of research output.*

*18. Allowance be made for academic freedom in order to set individual research agendas, thus ensuring a fruitful balance between individualisation and planning.*

Recently, the University has, in line with its strategic intent and recommendations arising from international evaluation, been **intensively involved in the preparation of a system for evaluating the quality of research work** – both its principles and components, and the necessary infrastructure. The goal was **to find a tool to help the university to ensure the conceptual development of the disciplines** that its workplaces deal with, to ensure that they meet international standards, and to **strengthen the position of Charles University as an important research institution** in the long term. The intention was then to find a system that would meet the needs of the University, be based on a qualified judgment reflecting different aspects of research activity, promote orientation towards its quality, provide an independent, international perspective based on demanding standards and, last but not least, be usable not only in the area of research, but also in the area of education.

The need to design this system to meet the needs of the University was determined by both **external and internal factors**. A **key external factor** is the existence of a **national evaluation of research organisations**, both retrospectively and prospectively. **Retrospectively**, because, over the long term, the University has, to a large extent, adopted the results of the national evaluation, even though it has suffered from some serious deficiencies, e.g. the mechanical link between the individual result and its financial value. This made it difficult to support the conceptual development of research work at university level, as each workplace was able to calculate how much money it had contributed to the University's budget.

Despite this setting, Charles University has succeeded in finding and developing a **system of research support programmes** that is unique in the Czech Republic and that **contributes to the long-term priorities of the University as a whole**, i.e. **interdisciplinary and inter-faculty cooperation** aimed at **interdisciplinary research** and **overcoming the historical fragmentation of fields and workplaces** (PROGRES), **the activities of outstanding research groups** that bring together experienced researchers, postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students (UNCE), **establishing new groups by talented international researchers, or junior scholars returning after** long-term stay abroad with the aim of receiving a prestigious international grant (PRIMUS), and the **award for outstanding researcher workers** (Donatio Universitatis Carolinæ).

**Prospectively**, because the **national evaluation system is undergoing a fundamental change** that should bring it closer to a comprehensive evaluation, as envisaged by the principles of e.g. the Leiden Manifesto, which the University considers inspiring. This new national system aims to break the aforementioned mechanical link between individual results and institutional support for the university. The

result of evaluation will now be the inclusion of institutions in a grading scale based on aspects including not only bibliometry and peer review, but also an assessment of the institution's facilities. **Charles University will thus be faced with a decision on how to use the institutional funds that will be allocated to it as an institution. This is what the internal evaluation system is intended to assist it with.**

In addition to conceptual causes, other essential external factors causing the University to introduce this system included, in particular, the slow implementation of the new national system and its specific features, which do not give the University the essential tools for it to make do without its own system.

**The internal reasons include**, in particular, **strengthening the independence and autonomy of the University**. If it is to be one of the world's leading workplaces in the field of science and research, it must develop its own initiative and not rely on national evaluation, especially if it can make only a limited contribution to its design. The University plans to use the **conclusions of its own evaluation** especially for the preparation of strategic documents, development of disciplines and research areas, internal administration of the University and its constituent parts, preparation of programs to support science, decision-making on the funding of research activities from institutional funds, support of excellence, and the accreditation and evaluation of degree programmes and the development of educational activities in general. **The results will also be used to find a consensus on the University's flagships**. Until the results of the evaluation are available, the University **has, based on discussions with the faculties, managed** to at least **integrate existing flagships into broader units** that are more transparent for both strategic partners and the public. However, this is only a transitional step.

On this basis, in the course of 2018, the **Strategy for Creative Activity Evaluation at Charles University** was prepared and discussed extensively within the University (faculties and university institutes, Rector's Collegium, Extended Rector's Collegium, Board for Internal Evaluation, Scientific Board, International Advisory Council). This defines the objectives, tools, rules, procedures and actors of the University's evaluation system for scientific work, thus constituting another substantial part of the University's quality assurance and assessment system.

In accordance with international principles and the recommendations arising from the international evaluation of the University, this **system is complex, and based on judgement and independent international evaluation**. The evaluation is based on **multiple evaluation tools** (self-evaluation report of constituent part, research indicators, bibliometric analysis, peer review, on-site visit) that provide both the necessary context and different perspectives on research activity and its quality. Thus, the primary factor is not numbers, but the requirement that the results of individual tools be discussed and assessed while taking into account past practice, the results of outstanding international universities that have been selected as benchmarks, and the experience of members of the relevant evaluating bodies.

**The first evaluation cycle started on 1 March 2019** and will run until the end of 2020. The chosen **benchmark universities** are Universität Heidelberg, Københavns Universitet, Università degli Studi di Milano, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Universiteit Leiden and Universität Wien. The first four of these are partners of Charles University within the 4EU+ alliance, and the remaining three are partners with whom the University is engaged in long-term cooperation. **The Creative Activities Evaluation Board, which is the supreme body of evaluation, is composed exclusively of outstanding foreign academics and researchers**; it was set up as an independent body and on the basis of recommendations of the International Advisory Board and nominations from the aforementioned partner universities. The Expert Panels will be set up in a similar manner. While the Board is responsible for the course and results of the evaluation as a whole (i.e. assessment of the research quality of relevant constituent parts), the **Panels** oversee the peer review and assessment of individual fields and research areas.

**Charles University is the first university in the Czech Republic to undertake such a complex and internationally driven research evaluation**; a similar evaluation has taken place only at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. At the same time, the University is aware of a number of **pitfalls** that can undermine the intended purposes and objectives of the evaluation. These include, for example, the **need to link university and national assessments** in order to avoid the duplication of requirements for faculties and institutes, which could bring a shift towards formality. Another not inconsiderable problem is **finding a significant number of peer reviewers**, as the university develops a number of disciplines in which bibliometric analysis does not provide a basis for assessing their standard. The outcome of the evaluation will depend heavily **on the personal involvement of actors at all levels**. This



means primarily the sufficient involvement of burdened members of the Board and panels in the evaluation so that qualified conclusions are reached for both the University and faculties, institutes and academic and research staff. For all of the mentioned internal actors, this is something new that must succeed, as otherwise there is a risk that it will crumble and shall not continue. Once the evaluation has been carried out, it will be essential to find agreement **within the university on how to deal with conclusions and recommendations**, i.e. how to further conceptually develop and fund research. The University will have to find e.g. a balance between planned research and research deriving from the professional interests of academic and research staff and students. However, the University's existing science management system already leaves significant scope for faculties and university institutes and their staff to identify research topics themselves. The University came to this conclusion in the course of the self-assessment that was carried out in connection with the preparation of the documents for the HR Award (see 1.2).

## 4.2 DOCTORAL STUDIES

*19. That the university continue to investigate ways in which it might help provide adequate financial support for all its doctoral candidates and that this should be allied to an in-depth study and analysis of the reasons for the high drop-out rate in third cycle studies.*

*20. That at a time when financial pressures continue to weigh heavily on doctoral candidates that the university should look carefully at how it might ensure the consistency and quality of the learning experience for research students across all its faculties. This should be seen as a matter of internal quality assurance/enhancement and made a priority for the BIE once institutional accreditation had been achieved.*

Doctoral studies represent an important link between educational activity and the preparation of young researchers for their future careers. **The University's objectives in improving the quality of doctoral studies are long-term.** In the past two years, **analyses of the status of doctoral studies** in particular were carried out and **Doctoral Study Programmes Coordination Boards were established.** At present, the task of the University is to **strongly define its concept for doctoral studies and to link it with elements of research work, and in particular with the activities of individual research teams or postdoctoral positions**, and to present the study to applicants. In the future, the issue of doctoral studies will also be dealt with in cooperation with strategic partners, e.g. within the 4EU+ Alliance, which will contribute to its greater internationalisation and quality.

### 4.2.1 Strengthening the consistency of doctoral studies and harmonising demands placed on students

Emphasis on the consistency of doctoral studies and the setting of common standards led to the **establishment of ten Doctoral Study Programmes Coordination Boards in individual fields of education** throughout the University in June 2018. These bodies bring together the chairs of Subject Area Boards, which carry the main part of responsibility for the content of individual degree programmes and their implementation, and faculty representatives. The aim of this measure is to support cooperation between individual Subject Area Boards and to create space for **strategic decision-making on the direction and development of programmes** in the given area and to **establish common standards for thematically related doctoral degree programmes.**

The Doctoral Study Programmes Coordination Boards also **initiated an intensive discussion on demands placed on students**, and also a **discussion on the organisation of doctoral studies.** Based on this discussion, a partial amendment was made to the University's internal regulations, as well as modifications to the Study Information System and to the portfolio of soft skills courses offered.

Institutional accreditation proved to be a very effective tool, one which significantly contributes to the unification of requirements and to the improvement of quality in the implementation of individual degree programmes at Charles University, as well as to their integration where appropriate.



#### 4.2.2 Improving efficiency in the administration of doctoral studies

In May 2018 a Rector's Measure, the *Manual for Doctoral Studies*, which summarises the activities, rights and obligations of the various subjects involved in doctoral studies, was prepared. In addition to students, the manual deals with Subject Area Boards, guarantors, supervisors, Doctoral Study Programmes Coordination Board, deans and the Rector. Reviews were conducted of both individual Subject Area Boards and faculty candidates for the position of supervisor. By its internal regulation, the University has set **limits on the number of students that can be led by a single supervisor when working on their final theses** in order to avoid situations in which a supervisor does not have the capacity to devote him-/herself fully to tutoring duties. At the same time, the management of the University enshrined the **system for the remuneration of supervisors** depending on the success of their graduates and the year of their final thesis submission. The parameter of **graduation in the standard period of study, increased by a maximum of one year**, is beginning to assert itself in other evaluation criteria. Meetings of Doctoral Study Programmes Coordination Boards also provide scope for providing methodological assistance to Subject Area Boards. At the same time, this exchange of experience leads to effective feedback between the chairs of the Subject Area Boards, faculty representatives and representatives of the management of the University. In particular, methodological seminars are organised for new supervisors.

#### 4.2.3 Enhancing the support for doctoral students

The poor situation as regards the **socio-economic situation of doctoral students** is a direct consequence of national legislation and the system of financial support for higher education institutions. Although Czech universities managed to negotiate an increase in a scholarship for one doctoral student from € 3,600 per year to € 5,400 (i.e. € 450 per month), it is still insufficient. Through its internal regulation, Charles University guarantees a basic doctoral scholarship at all faculties, amounting to at least € 420, which is equivalent to 78% of the minimum wage in the Czech Republic (however, as a scholarship, it is not subject to taxation). This minimum is increased by another € 80 per month following the successful completion of the state doctoral examination.

Until recently, the University has not received any monies to fund doctoral scholarships for students in foreign-language degree programmes. The situation has now changed, and as a result, starting from the 2019/2020 academic year, the majority of faculties significantly **reduced tuition fees for foreign-language doctoral students** which, apart from reducing the economic burden on these students, also helps to support internationalisation of the University.

At the university level, further support aimed at the development of doctoral research activities and mobility is realised through the **Grant Agency of Charles University** and **competitions for specific university research**. These support students in their fledgling scientific work so that they are then able to process and realise a scientific project with other grant agencies. However, this is not "try-out research", as a student can receive funding of around € 10,000 (typically for a period of three years). Because of the considerable interest among students in research projects, only around a third of projects receive support. Students may also obtain funds for foreign mobility required by doctoral studies from the Mobility Fund.

**Further support** for doctoral students is provided at faculties, many of which involve doctoral students in the work of their research teams. The newly formulated strategic plan of Charles University for the years 2021-2025 assumes the widest possible involvement of students in research teams from the first year of study onwards, with the aim of strengthening students' motivation to work, making their studies more effective (the "science teaching" concept), but also to allow them to perform demanding work in the field, and improve their economic situation.

In 2018, the University commissioned **an extensive, university-wide analysis focusing mainly on the socio-economic standing of doctoral students** and factors contributing to the timely and successful completion of studies, but also comparing the organisation of doctoral studies with leading Czech (Masaryk University, Palacký University) and international universities (Universität Heidelberg, Sorbonne Université, Uniwersytet Warszawski). The results of the analysis will be available in the second half of 2019. This analysis will provide a deeper reflection on the status and quality of doctoral studies. The results obtained will be evaluated and reflected in the modification goals, which will be incorporated into the upcoming strategic plan.

Despite all the subsidiary measures that have been implemented so far, the University's competitiveness in terms of the socio-economic conditions that it can offer to doctoral students remains at a lower level compared to benchmark institutions abroad. This is an area to which the University will continue to pay systematic attention.

#### 4.2.4 Supporting the development of transversal skills for doctoral students

Based on the analysis of the scope and structure of soft skills and pedagogical skills courses (beyond the courses provided by some faculties), the portfolio offered by the University has been significantly expanded. The updated portfolio responds to faculty feedback and missing courses designed especially for beginners, not only in Czech, but also in English. This portfolio will form part of the newly launched electronic course list, which will be further promoted in the 2019/2020 academic year. These activities also respond to the **conclusions and goals** set out in the internal analysis and action plan **for maintaining the HR Award, and their development will continue.**

### 5. SOCIAL ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

*21. That the relevant senior managers in the Rectorate work closely with all levels of faculty staff to provide a more coherent approach and demand sensitive university response to external organisations seeking expert help and support. In this context, the Knowledge and Technology Office needs to receive full support in order to progress further the reinvigoration of its work since 2014.*

#### 5.1 KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER SYSTEM

The most significant recent change in the area of knowledge and technology transfer and cooperation with external partners is the **establishment of a subsidiary of Charles University, known as Charles University Innovations Prague s.r.o.** (June 2018), which synergistically complements the activities of the **Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer**. The purpose of the company is to represent Charles University in the ownership structure of emerging spin-off companies and to manage its industrial property portfolio at more advanced stages of the commercialisation process. The company focuses chiefly on **providing advisory and management services in setting up commercial companies** for the purpose of applying the results of the University's scientific and research activities or other intellectual property rights (spin-off companies), facilitating external capital involvement for these companies, negotiating license, transfer or similar arrangements between the University and third parties for the exploitation of intellectual property rights, for direct access to spin-off companies, for the commercial exploitation of the University's intellectual property, and for any other negotiations necessary to commercialise intellectual property rights that the University is authorised to dispose of. Although some divestments have already been made, the University perceives the subsidiary as a **long-term investment, the benefits of which will be felt over several years.**

The **Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer** team continues to focus mainly on searching for new projects, intensive work with technology scouts and coordinators at faculties and constituent parts, providing specialised services in patent and legal advice to the academic community, analysing possible applications of research results in practice and the opportunities that the new division of the knowledge and technology transfer agenda between it and its subsidiary opens for researchers at the University. The subsidiary takes over from the Centre cases involving the protection of intellectual property and seeks business partners for them, negotiates conditions with them and signs contracts with them on behalf of Charles University.

Reflection on the state of knowledge and technology transfer is particularly evident **in the annual report of the Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer**, in which the Centre sets out its strategy and goals for the following year and simultaneously evaluates the fulfilment of the strategy and goals set out for the previous year. Both quantitative (e.g. number of new cases) and qualitative (e.g. number of cases passed to subsidiaries) goals are set out. **The long-term goal of the third role** is to achieve the synergy of stable, efficient and uniform rules for transfer, the vocational training of the Centre for Transfer of Knowledge and Technology team, the mental coaching of researchers (including doctoral or other students) for entrepreneurship, ability to verify demand and support motivation of researchers for

transfer, easy orientation in the University's cooperation portfolio, and personal contacts with researchers and partners from the application sphere.

## 5.2 COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

The **Via Carolina Innovation Fair**, at which Charles University presents application partners from all over the Czech Republic and the general public with innovations that have originated at its scientific centres, and which can positively influence contemporary society, also contributes to strengthening systemic communication and cooperation with external partners. The event took place for the first time in 2017, and its second edition took place in 2019. In the course of 2018, the concept of **a specific industry-oriented meeting of researchers and representatives of commercial companies, known as Science Meets Business**, was also successfully tested. The central theme was water and environmental protection. Nine leading research teams from Charles University participated in the event, mostly from the Faculty of Science and then from the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, the Environmental Centre and the Faculty of Humanities. They were joined in this by twelve representatives of companies, who acquainted themselves with a wide portfolio of activities ranging from water purification using various technologies to climate modelling and flood forecasting, as well as the remediation and resolution of environmental burdens. Negotiations are currently underway for at least one collaboration contract.

To promote potential collaboration, the University also uses the continuously updated **Catalogue of Services**, and the **Catalogue of Innovation Opportunities**, and at the same time verifies the market potential of research results by searching in worldwide databases. The launch of the verification of the market potential of research results before e.g. the issuing of patent protection is a completely new approach to intellectual property protection at the University. The implementation of this approach is motivated by the discovery of a demand for a potential patent in order to guide further development to meet demand. By verifying demand, the University seeks to motivate researchers to pursue further research and development of the case.

## 5.3 INNOVATION NETWORK

**Cooperation with faculty staff** at all levels is based on the University's carefully built-up innovation network, which is a **network of innovative scouts who are employees of faculties, but partly also employees of the Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer**. This ensures the co-ordination of activities at the University towards practical application, as well as sufficiently flexible communication with the faculties. Recently, this has helped the University to launch the transfer of knowledge in the fields of social sciences and humanities. Based on seminars held at the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Education and the Hussite Theological Faculty, where researchers were given presentations on options for the provision of support by the Centre and inspiring examples of transfer in the humanities and spin-offs from abroad, the first university researchers are beginning to come forward with suggestions for the transfer of their results. This was reflected, for example, in the Via Carolina Innovation Fair in May 2019, where out of a total of thirty specific collaboration offers presented, ten came from the humanities (two years ago, only one offer with a focus on the humanities was presented). In addition, collaboration was established with the **Hybernská Campus of the Faculty of Arts**, where activities take the form of the first run of the Innovative Laboratory semester course, a practical project seminar. Students are placed in teams and develop social innovations (innovations with a significant benefit to society), from the initial idea through the creation of a business model to the verification of demand, under the guidance of lecturers from the worlds of start-ups and the non-profit sector. The Centre plans to increase the quality of training of its experts and innovative scouts and to increase the number of innovations with application potential, and therefore is preparing a project to develop its human potential and the strategic configuration of intersectoral cooperation at the University. The planned **intersectoral cooperation strategy** will define the basic principles for handling the results of research, development and innovation, and in particular industrial rights and copyright, as well as other rights related to intellectual activity at the University. At the same time, the strategy will define how the University will look for new partners, what type of partner it will look for (SMEs, multinational corporations, public administration, non-profit organisations), the fields on which collaboration will focus, on a scale from sectoral to multidisciplinary, and whether the focus will be more on national or international partners.

## 6. INTERNATIONALISATION

23. *The university should ensure the concentration of international partnering on those institutions in Europe, and also in select regions elsewhere, which can offer high calibre research links and/or complementary study programmes of high quality.*

### 6.1 STRATEGIC FOCUS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

International relations and collaboration with universities around the world have been established practice at Charles University for years, leading to a gradual expansion of bilateral contacts. However, over the past two years, these relationships have taken on a **new qualitative dimension**, supported by the IEP team's conclusions and recommendations of 2017. The University thus **orientated itself more towards cooperation with leading universities** and focused on high-quality research that, at the same time, contributes to reinforcing teaching and education, including the introduction of innovations. The trends of this development were outlined in the new **Internationalisation Strategy of Charles University**, which was adopted in autumn 2018.

In addition to standard relationships, the University has started to focus on some European and non-European universities, cooperation with which offers **more intensive scientific research potential or promises high-quality pedagogical development through joint programmes**. Indeed, this focus of the University's orientation opens up new avenues for understanding how to tackle joint research topics that contribute to new issues in research. This makes it possible to approach the topic in question from different angles according to the focus of the relevant research group at the relevant university; for Charles University, cooperation with a prestigious university has the benefit of further improvement of its activities, allowing it e.g. to utilise "best practices" and "benchmarking". Therefore, the goal is not the number of contractual partners, but the selection of prestigious workplaces with which the University is endeavouring to establish close ties. In addition to bilateral co-operation, these efforts result in close relationships based on the interconnection of several workplaces (universities). This includes contacts in the field of **university alliances**, such as 4EU+, CELSA, or LERU, and the establishment of increasingly intensive cooperation with **strategic partners**. At the same time, emphasis is placed on the linking research and teaching, known as research based education.

A further avenue were the **university missions to selected universities**, which began to translate into more intensive contacts, and subsequently mutual cooperation. This includes the newly established co-operation with the Universität Zürich, which was reflected in joint projects involving collaborating staff at a meeting in Zürich in 2018, and which will similarly be held in Prague in 2019. Closer contacts with Macquarie University resulted in the signing of a cotuelles and co-operation memorandum in 2018. Discussions on scientific cooperation and cotuelles in the fields of Egyptology and medicine (audiology) are underway. Other missions were sent to Padua, Milan, Oxford, and Cambridge, and are translating into closer collaboration.

The University succeeded in **involving more faculties** (typically in alliance clusters) in closer cooperation with outstanding foreign universities, and the cooperation is therefore much broader. At the same time, **scientific cooperation with leading universities puts greater pressure on the quality of research**. Comparison with these institutions makes it possible to increase the standard of the University itself through benchmarking. **Education** is further improved by the creation of **new joint programmes** (double degree, joint degree) or contracts for **cotuelles**. Close cooperation also helps **the University become more deeply involved in international affairs as such which differs from the previous, very isolated, forms of cooperation**.

### 6.2 THE 4EU+ ALLIANCE

A completely new trend in internationalisation was introduced through the integration of Charles University into the 4EU+ alliance, which stimulated very intensive discussions focused on joint scientific and pedagogical activities from the very beginning. The cooperation between six universities (Universität Heidelberg, Københavns Universitet, Università degli Studi di Milano, Sorbonne Université, Uniwersytet Warszawski and Charles University) is a challenge to harmonise research activities utilising four thematic areas, the so-called flagships (*Health and Demographic Change in an Urban Environment; Europe in a Changing World: Understanding and Engaging Societies, Economies, Cultures and Languages;*

*Transforming Science and Society: Advancing Information, Computation and Communication; Biodiversity and Sustainable Development*), and teaching activities, including curricula. Part of this joint strategy is the full integration of mobility as part of individual educational programmes. This will allow for greater flexibility for both students and academics within the alliance, which may lead to an increase in their chances for future employment. In order to realise these goals, Charles University has created financial resources that will not only support its participation as a whole, but will also serve the faculties involved. In addition to financial support, the University provides faculties with its assistance or project consultation. The faculties have created the first wave of starting projects funded by the university. Although intensive discussions between participating universities are conducted at the level of their leadership, faculty deans are kept informed and, in addition, negotiations are underway with faculty coordinators of the 4EU+ alliance. The European Centre of Charles University participates in the development of these activities and negotiations in close cooperation with other departments of the Rectorate.

**Distinguished academics from partner universities are also being involved in the internal evaluation of Charles University's research activities**, both in the Creative Activities Evaluation Board (which is fully international, constituted based especially on the suggestions of the 4EU+ alliance leadership together with the proposals submitted by the International Advisory Board), and Expert Panels as well as reviewers. This will provide the University with an independent perspective on its scientific and research work and will help the partners in the alliance to become more closely acquainted with one another.

In February 2019, the alliance submitted an **application to the Erasmus+ “European Universities” project**. This application was successful. Nonetheless, the plan was that the cooperation of all universities would continue in the future regardless of the outcome of the selection process. A well-functioning governance structure has been set up, and faculties have become involved, bringing their own ideas to the process. Collaboration is becoming an important component of the University's internal culture as it entails the sharing of experience, giving Charles University the opportunity to learn how things are done at other universities.

Participation in the 4EU+ alliance of European universities means that Charles University **must learn to cooperate with partner universities more closely than it had done previously**. The alliances of European universities are also supposed to be **involved in changes in the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area, which means, among other things, that the University must be much more active in this field**. The greatest challenge will then be to **reconcile differences between partner universities**, such as educational curricula, conditions for ensuring permeability and mobility, or cooperation in the area of governance.

### 6.3 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Based on a deeper analysis, the University also selected fifteen universities, which it identified as so-called **strategic partners**. This led to the announcement of joint projects in which the home workplace would bound itself particular to long-term cooperation and student involvement. Already in 2018, seventy such projects from thirteen faculties received support, and were subsidised by the University in the amount of approximately 130 thousand Euros. In 2019, fifty-three submitted projects were evaluated. At the same time, this demonstrates that the University has also created funds for the development of this cooperation, and from which these strategic partnerships are supported, i.e. it established the **Fund for the Support of Strategic Partnerships**.

In 2018, the **Centre of Strategic Partnerships**, which coordinates all activities focusing on strategic partners, was founded by the Rectorate. A prerequisite for the submission of high-quality projects to a university-wide competition for cooperation with strategic partners was the definition of strict requirements. In addition, an evaluation committee was set up by the University's academic staff to select high-quality projects for financial support. Evaluation is performed using a methodology developed for the purpose, which is based not only on the quality of the project and its investigators, but **takes into account the prospects and duration of future cooperation, as well as the involvement of fledgling researchers, i.e. doctoral or post-doctoral students**. At the same time, the project as a whole includes an end-of-year evaluation (the first of these took place at the end of 2018). Information gathered from the evaluation is discussed within the Rector's Collegium, which can take decisions on the future direction of inter-university cooperation. Evaluation may also take the form of meetings between teams from cooperating universities (cf. e.g. cooperation with Universität Zürich or a joint multidisciplinary meeting

between University staff and the Università degli Studi di Padova under the title "Padova meets Prague" in May 2019).

## CONCLUSIONS

Charles University, one of the oldest seats of learning in Europe, places the **highest demands on the quality** of all of its activities. It supports the development of a wide range of fields in the sciences, medicine, social sciences and humanities, many of which achieve results which are **excellent in an international context**. Its internal administration is based on a strongly rooted institutional culture of a collegiate university with strong **academic autonomy**.

University self-government bodies and mechanisms, as well as external stimuli, including international evaluation, have highlighted the areas in which the University can improve its decision-making activities and the quality of education and research. The University has already **strengthened its self-governing competencies** by acquiring institutional accreditation. The relatively newly established **Board for Internal Evaluation** contributes to the **conceptual development of educational activities**, with an emphasis on their quality. The management of Charles University also pays special attention to **defining and fulfilling the quality of research activities, personnel development and internal administration**.

In the two years that have passed since the final report of the IEP team was handed over, **Charles University has succeeded in taking fundamental measures in a number of areas** in order to respond to the high degree of decentralized decision-making and internal heterogeneity. With the aim of **strengthening its integrity and cohesion**, activities associated chiefly with the **Human Resources Excellence in Research Award in staffing** were developed, a **functional accreditation process was introduced, the Board for Internal Evaluation was set up, the integration of degree programmes was initiated and Doctoral Study Programmes Coordination Boards were set up for postgraduate degree programmes, agreement was reached on a research evaluation system, the first cycle of the evaluation was launched**, and an **alliance of six outstanding European universities** was established with the aim of achieving close, mutual cooperation in all areas. **In all the above mentioned measures, the University is a pioneer in the Czech Republic.**

Although the core of competences for the development of educational activities, scientific activities or international cooperation and their staffing will continue to be based on the faculties, **the goal of the University is to further develop and strengthen mechanisms for interconnection, integrity and cohesion** and also fulfil the **principle of unity in diversity** (*in pluribus unitas*), which will be a key development priority for the period of the upcoming strategic plan.

In line with the recommendations of the IEP report, Charles University focused on developing its own strategic and innovative activities to **cross existing horizons**. A good example is the establishment of the **Pædagogium** – Centre for Educational Skills, which is an important tool for modernising teaching at Charles University.

**However, a period of two years is too short, and some major steps still await the University. In the case of educational activities, this is a shift** from quality assurance based on minimum standards common to all accredited degree programmes **to a reflexive concept of quality that focuses on developing university education in its complexity**. Another path taken by the University is to seek **consensus on shared values and quality objectives** and to incorporate them **into the internal culture of the University and its constituent parts**. The discussions are initiated by the **Board for Internal Evaluation through the preparation of a comprehensive system for the quality of degree programmes evaluation**, in which it will work closely with the faculties, academics and researchers, students, graduates, and external partners.

In all key areas, Charles University is developing in accordance with the recommendations formulated by the evaluators in 2017. The ongoing preparation of **the new strategic plan** is aimed at specifying further steps. **Therefore, the expectations with which the University approaches the follow-up international evaluation include the recommendations on the strategic orientation and key priorities of the University, as well as the selection of appropriate steps to fulfil them.**