

PROGRESS REPORT 2021

FULFILMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FOLLOW-UP INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY BY THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION – INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAMME



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FULFILMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FOLLOW-UP INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY BY THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION – INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAMME: PROGRESS REPORT 2021

#	Recommendation	Activities and Plans
Governance and Institutional Decision-Making		
1.	The university looks carefully at ways in which a more holistic approach can be taken to recognising and rewarding improved academic and administrative staff performance both financially and, as appropriate, in terms of promotion opportunities.	<p>In 2020, a pilot evaluation of academic and research staff took place at selected workplaces of three faculties, and an evaluation of technical and administrative staff was prepared and piloted in parallel. In the first quarter of 2021, an evaluation of all staff members at the Rectorate and selected auxiliary units took place. In the coming years, evaluation of administrative staff will be implemented at all faculties and other constituent parts of the University.</p> <p>The introduction of principles for career advancement and the evaluation of academic and research staff and lecturers are key steps towards the strategic management of human resources at Charles University. These are the goals that the University set to implement during the first year of its new Strategic Plan 2021-2025, and that are also part of the University's action plan within the HR Excellence in Research project.</p> <p>The draft of Principles for Career Development is currently being discussed and should be finalized in the second quarter of 2021. This will result in a previously missing university-wide framework, which will allow the faculties and other units to set up a system tuned to the fields in which they realize degree programmes and conduct research. Employees will be evaluated according to how they fulfil their role in the fields of reaching, research and third role of the university. All faculties and units should implement the principles of career development and the employee appraisal system by the end of 2022.</p>
2.	In relation to the strands of data management, information and communication, the university: i) redoubles its efforts to embed information systems that allow for the consistent and comprehensive capture of data as these relate to the quality assurance and enhancement of programmes and that, importantly, these systems are interoperable. ii) reflects on the ways in which information is disseminated and communicated, paying particular attention to the vertical and horizontal flows of information within faculties.	Improving communication, information sharing, data management, cooperation between faculties and sharing good practice across the University are priorities of Charles University, which the University will address and which it has incorporated into its Strategic Plan for 2021–2025. For example, the University has committed itself to accelerating the digitisation of its agendas and linking the current heterogeneous applications into a set of mutually interoperable and interconnected ones. The University will build on the recently modernized IS Věda system (recently used e.g. during the internationally guaranteed evaluation of research); the system for the evaluation of degree programmes is almost ready for operation. In order to support cooperation between faculties

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		and share good practice across our alma mater, Charles University will introduce an internal information portal and utilise electronic tools to support teamwork.
3.	Particular attention is paid to the highlighting of key priorities, SMART goals and KPIs in the finalised university strategic plan for the period 2021-2025.	<p>The approved Strategic Plan meets the recommendations of the evaluation report. The University discussed the recommendations from both EUA-IEP evaluations, as well as other evaluations that took place at the Charles University in 2019–2020, and incorporated them into its strategic plan for the next five years. The plan focuses on a limited number of areas and priorities. Its draft was repeatedly discussed at the University and later also with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, whose recommendations were aimed mainly at setting specific benchmarks that Charles University is going to achieve by 2025.</p> <p>An evaluation of the University's fulfilment of the strategic plan is scheduled for 2024.</p>
Quality Culture		
4.	The university brings an increased impetus to the sharing of quality culture across and within faculties. This can be facilitated by appropriate communication platforms and in settings covering the full range from formal to informal, for example, focus groups and departmental discussions.	<p>One of the priorities of the strategic plan is the introduction of a comprehensive system for the continuous evaluation of degree programmes, with the main goal being the in-depth examination of their implementation, including finding ways to improve their quality. Every programme is to be evaluated once during the period for which it is accredited. Results of regular surveys among applicants, students and graduates, as well as evaluation of cooperation with professional sphere will be an integral part of the system.</p> <p>The IT environment was launched in 2020 to cover the entire evaluation, from the preparation of data, through the completion of the evaluation report at the faculty, to its approval by the Internal Evaluation Board of the University and the publication of its most important findings. The pilot evaluation will take place in 2021.</p> <p>On top of that Charles University will establish a university-wide platform to support quality enhancement in education, which will focus on individual components and aspects of educational activities (drop-outs, student surveys, university teaching methodology, curricular design, internationalization of degree programmes and introduction of mobility windows, etc.). The outputs of</p>
5.	Active student engagement with a quality culture needs to be encouraged, supported and developed.	
6.	The BIE finds time to consider an enhancement agenda for all levels of study and how student involvement in that process can be best facilitated.	
7.	The university considers the development of arrangements for the measurement and enhancement of quality in professional service areas.	

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		<p>the platform's work will be implemented in the evaluation of the quality of degree programmes.</p> <p>One of the goals of the Strategic Plan is to introduce a comprehensive system of life-long learning for academic, research, managerial and support staff with the goal of continuously developing the erudition of teachers and researchers, as well as the quality of our internal administration. The University's Centre for Pedagogical Skills – Paedagogium, which participates in fulfilling this goal, will become a platform to facilitate contact between staff members involved in teaching across the University and support the exchange of experiences and the sharing of good practice. The University has already introduced a number of training programmes for non-academic and administrative staff, e.g. the Managerial Skills Development Programme, which encompasses eleven topics, the Socio-Psychological Skills Development Programme and courses in the areas of IT, law, economics, etc. The offer of courses is available to all employees on the Charles University Educational Portal.</p> <p>Students are involved in quality assurance at all levels. At the university level, this is done mainly through the Internal Evaluation Board of Charles University. Each of its four Panels has one student as a member. Students are full members of the Board, i.e. they actively participate as rapporteurs and evaluators both in the accreditation of degree programmes and as student representatives in the preparation and implementation of the system for their evaluation.</p> <p>Within academic self-government, students have the opportunity to actively comment on related internal regulations or other important methodological and strategic documents concerning quality assurance through the Study Commission of the Academic Senate of Charles University.</p> <p>At faculty level, students are involved in the preparation of degree programmes through the student chamber of faculty senates. They are able to comment on the accreditation documents of individual degree programmes, propose modifications to curricula, or comment on the outputs from faculty surveys (student assessment of teaching). In addition to these tools, which are in operation at all faculties, faculties can also utilise their own tools. Examples of good practice include, for example, student councils at the Faculty of Education or the cooperation of student associations with the management of individual institutes at the Faculty of Social Sciences.</p>

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Teaching and Learning		
8.	<p>The university takes forward an analysis of drop-out rates and any subsequent actions as a key institutional priority. Depending on the outcome, more consideration should be given to study counselling services.</p>	<p>Improving the graduation rate is one of the goals of Charles University's Strategic Plan 2021–2025. In order to achieve this, the University will utilise the following tools in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – information and counselling service for applicants so that when considering to study at Charles University, they are capable of judging which degree programme best corresponds to their expectations and preferences; – continuous adjustments of degree programmes and curricula and, if appropriate, rules for the organisation of study and related changes in the assessment of teaching and study, – emphasis on ensuring that students are familiar with the practical application of their acquired knowledge and its importance for their future career from the beginning of their studies; – support for such activities and projects, with the inclusion of student associations and initiatives, that will strengthen the social integration of students and thus contribute to increasing the quality and relevance of education; – enhancement of diagnostics services related to study and career capabilities for applicants and students, strengthening of counselling services, support for the enhancement of study competencies, and the building of resilience, including prevention and well-timed assistance against burnout syndrome. <p>The University entered the first year of its new Strategic Plan by launching a pilot analysis of the premature termination of studies in the first half of 2021. A sample of degree programmes on which the methodology to track student progression will be tested was selected. Data from the study information system will be used for the analysis. A pilot survey will be carried out among students who left their studies during the 2020/2021 academic year. The survey will be realized every year and will form an integral part of a system of university surveys among different groups of respondents (applicants - students - graduates – drop-out students).</p>

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9.	<p>The change agenda in relation to teaching and learning requires significant commitment from all parts of the university and the team recommends that the response to this challenge should be driven at the institutional level by the appropriate Vice-Rectors.</p>	<p>The transformation of teaching so that Charles University becomes a sought-after institution for not only Czech, but also international, students is anchored in the new Strategic Plan. The goals in this area include the integration, innovation and internationalization of education across faculties, increasing permeability at the national and international level, interconnection of educational and research activities and the professional sphere, interdisciplinarity, the introduction of modern forms of education and new technologies in teaching and learning supported by the Charles University Library, and the digitization of resources. Other goals are to educate students in the areas of active and responsible citizenship (e.g. critical thinking, tolerance, openness to cooperation), entrepreneurship and active job creation and to link lifelong learning and degree programmes where appropriate and to open up educational opportunities for different groups of citizens (including the Junior Charles University and the University of the Third Age for senior citizens). The University is aware that such changes require strong leadership at both university and faculty level.</p>
Research		
10.	<p>The results of the analysis of doctoral studies are widely disseminated across the university and that the staff and student research communities have an appropriate level of input into the modification of goals.</p>	<p>The analysis of the conditions for doctoral study commissioned by the University was passed on to all faculties and discussed within the University's statutory bodies. The results of the university-wide discussion were incorporated into the Strategic Plan 2021-2025. Measures proposed in the analysis include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased grants for doctoral students and their use as an incentive; • more effective offer of grant support; • more intensive use of opportunities available through international cooperation (chiefly within the 4EU+ Alliance and with the University's strategic partners); • inclusion of doctoral studies into the career advancement system; • establishment of demanding, internationally comparable and field-based criteria for individual disciplines across the University and intensive tracking of study progress;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expansion of the range of pedagogical and soft skills courses in order to support the students' professional and personal development; • optimisation of the number of doctoral students per a supervisor. <p>The University expects that these measures will significantly improve the standard of doctoral studies.</p>
11.	<p>Given the important performance issues that need to be tackled in the area of doctoral studies, the timeline for the agreed goals is "front-loaded" in the new university strategic plan.</p>	<p>The University's new strategic plan in the area of doctoral studies stems from the analysis of doctoral studies at Charles University, subsequent proposals for measures to improve the conditions of doctoral students (prepared for Charles University by the National Training Fund in 2019 and in-depth discussion within Charles University. The planned measures are supported and supplemented by the results and recommendations of the internal internationally guaranteed evaluation of research at Charles University, which took place in 2019-2020 (cf. above).</p>
12.	<p>The key challenges for the university in research continue to be bound up with prioritisation and effective resource management and the team recommends that these continue to be placed at the heart of the on-going deliberations on the future direction of research. The diversification and internationalisation of the research body and a high level of creativity in salary and reward structures also need to be a part of the essential underpinning of the future research strategy.</p>	<p>The Strategic Plan 2021–2025 subscribes to the recommended principles of research policy, when it commits Charles University to support key research fields (which also includes fields that are small in terms of size or important for the society), fields with potential to improve their quality, new topics and collaborations, including interdisciplinary cooperation. The tool for achieving this is a system of research support programmes. The Strategic Plan states that <i>"We will assess and improve our institutional programmes for the support of research so that they become an effective incentive for the development of high-quality science at the University and for acquiring the best researchers from the Czech Republic and abroad."</i> Due to the relatively short time since the submission of the follow-up evaluation report, the system of research support programmes at the University has so far been modified in only one, albeit the most important, part. The PROGRES programmes, which even in 2021 form the basic institutional research support programme at Charles University, will be replaced by the Cooperatio programme from 1 January 2022.</p> <p>One of the main goals of this new programme is, in addition to ensuring the quality and development of research disciplines at the University, also to reduce the excessive fragmentation of research disciplines and workplaces at Charles University. The Cooperatio programme will be structured into approximately 40 broader research fields, in which all faculties and higher education institutes will cooperate and coordinate their research. Charles</p>

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		<p>University expects that this programme will facilitate the improved coordination of research activities in individual fields across the University. The new features include the close connection of this programme with the internationally guaranteed research evaluation system. Research areas in the Cooperatio programme are from the outset also conceived as units of evaluation, and therefore the Plan for the Development of the Research Area, which shall describe how the participating faculties and higher education institutes plan to develop research, will be an important input for the next evaluation cycle, which the University plans to conduct in 2024–2025.</p> <p>In the case of other forms of support (be they existing or new programmes) that discussion still lies ahead of the University. The plans for the diversification and internationalization of the research community are described above.</p>
Service to Society		
13.	<p>The university explores the best practice of strategic partners in commercialisation. This can replicate the exercise that has been done in relation to research management and should be overseen by the appropriate member of the senior leadership team.</p>	<p>The University has taken the first steps in this direction thanks to the "Transforming ReseArch & INnovation Agendas and Support in 4EU+" project, within which the introduction of a "Good Practice Library" is planned. Other projects which follow similar goals are the "V4+WB Network of Research Managers" and the "Administrators and the Engagement Readiness Monitor Project".</p> <p>At the moment, Charles University is also preparing an Intersectoral Cooperation Strategy for effective strategic cooperation with commercial partners which will define how and where (businesses, public administration, non-profit organisations) the University will look for new partners, types of cooperation scaling from sectoral to multidisciplinary, and whether the focus will be more on national or international partners. At the same time, this strategy will define the basic principles for managing the results of research, development and innovation, in particular industrial property rights and copyrights, as well as other rights related to intellectual activity when entering into contractual cooperation with external partners. The development of this framework will ensure compliance with all external and internal regulations relevant to the matter, thus minimizing the possibility of subsequent disputes. To this end, the Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer, which is preparing the strategy, will draw on a network of national and international contacts to ensure the transfer of examples of good practice.</p>

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14.	The wider sense of service to society is as an area for fuller consideration in the university's future development and that this is taken forward as part of the discussion around the content and goals to be agreed in the new Strategic Plan.	<p>Charles University has committed itself to the wider sense of service to society in its Strategic Plan 2021–2025. Our goals include, for example, creating the conditions for the stable development of the third role so that most workplaces contribute to it and, together with teaching and research, the third role forms an integral part of the activities of a well-run university.</p> <p>In the area of personnel policy and the relevant quality evaluations, Charles University will grant third role activities equal status to high-quality teaching and excellent research. Charles University has also explicitly committed itself to fulfilling the principles of sustainable development and their promotion within society through its research and education, to supporting workplaces that participate in cooperation in humanitarian and development cooperation, as well as to supporting open science. The University will also introduce a system for promoting the results of its research in the public sphere and create a stable funding system to support the knowledge and technology transfer, chiefly through intensive collaboration with our subsidiary Charles University Innovations Prague on the commercialization of our research results and greater engagement in international research cooperation, revolving around knowledge and technology transfer. The importance of Charles University as a strong public institution that is ready to serve society has been proved during the COVID pandemic, when the University, its students and employees helped in hospitals, schools, call centres, laboratories, and wherever help was needed.</p>
Internationalisation		
15.	Notwithstanding the excitement and potential of the 4EU+ Alliance initiative, the team recommends that the challenges and threats of the enterprise are kept under close and careful scrutiny by both the executive and deliberative branches of the university.	Even though the Strategic Plan declares that the 4EU+ European University Alliance is the most challenging international project for the coming period, as it aims towards integration and synergy in education and research, permeating all areas and levels of the University's activities (priority areas include complementary curricula, e-learning, joint courses, physical, virtual and combined mobility, a common framework for the evaluation of teaching and learning, joint research teams and support in obtaining major international grants), Charles University is aware that all steps must be carefully considered, and therefore planned activities are subject to intensive discussions within the managing bodies of the University.
16.	The university explores all avenues in its attempts to break down the barriers relating to international staff recruitment.	Increasing the proportion of international teachers, researchers and students has a firm place in the Strategic Plan 2021–2025. The fact that, out of the five

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		<p>key areas, "The Best People Make the Best University" is ranked first is a strong proof.</p> <p>One of the key goals of the University in this area, fulfilled thanks to the participation of Charles University in the HR Excellence in Research project, is to ensure internationally comparable working conditions. The key tools in this respect are the setting up of an adequate environment and support for faculties in meeting this goal, harmonization of procedures in the field of human resources development at individual units, introduction of framework rules for career advancement for academic, research and administrative staff, increasing of the professional, language and pedagogical competencies of employees, and support for the harmonization of work, study and family life.</p> <p>Support measures also include the establishment of a new workplace, the CU Staff Welcome Centre, that shall provide comprehensive support services to scholars, researchers and their families coming at Charles University from abroad, advertises doctoral, postdoctoral and other positions, and later also help with outgoing mobility of University staff.</p>
17.	<p>Some of the essential building blocks for a thriving international strategy are given added impetus, especially the development and enhancement of staff English language skills so that there is a more comprehensive capacity across the university and an improved uptake of opportunities for mobility together with the supporting enabling systems.</p>	<p>Charles University is aware that, if it is to achieve its goals, it must focus intensively on creating a consistently bilingual environment in which both international students and staff members can easily study or work. Therefore, its priorities include increasing the language skills of students and academic, research, managerial and administrative staff, and ensuring the availability of all key services and documents in foreign languages, especially in English. Language skills will therefore form an integral part of the framework career advancement rules and the employee appraisal system. The University will also expand its mobility portfolio to include all relevant staff and students, including administrative staff, and to enable them to gain experience abroad.</p>

The Strategic Plan of Charles University 2021-2025 is available [here](#).