



CHARLES
UNIVERSITY

SUMMARY FINAL REPORT

on the Evaluation of Creative Activities

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I. SUMMARY FINAL REPORT

on the Evaluation of Creative Activities at Charles University

As stipulated by Article 13 of the Rector's Directive No. 17/2024 of March 26, 2024, this Summary Final Report reviews the evaluation process of 43 Research Areas (RAs) of Charles University (CUNI). It summarizes the main outputs at the aggregated levels of a) the four main areas of the university (Humanities; Social Sciences; Natural Sciences; Medical Sciences); b) the university in toto; and it provides recommendations for further development of creative activities at CUNI.

The report is based on the entire material that has been made available to the Board and its individual members, as described in detail below. The report highlights the principal findings of the 4 panels across all 43 RAs and is, by necessity, brief. To gain a proper understanding of any individual RAs, the individual evaluation reports must also be read. The benchmark for the evaluation is the expertise of the Board members, practices and standards relevant for the RAs at CUNI in relation to their international research environment, as well as practices and standards of comprehensive universities internationally.

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1 The evaluation process

1.1 Description of the evaluation process

A kick-off meeting took place in Prague on October 14, 2024, bringing together the 12 Creative Activities Evaluation Board members (3 for each panel) as well as Ladislav Kristoufek, CUNI Vice-Rector for Research and chair of the meeting, Jiri Tuma, representative of the Internal Evaluation Board present as observer, and 2 CUNI administrative representatives of the Research Support Office (RSO). The objective was to share information about the entire evaluation process and define responsibilities, including election of panel chairs, as well as chair and co-chair of the Board.

The self-assessment reports from the 43 CUNI RAs were submitted and made available to the Evaluation Board at the beginning of December. The Board members then provided the names of 4 external expert reviewers for each RA, 2 who had agreed to provide a written evaluation and 2 who had agreed to provide gradings. Official invitations were sent to the proposed external experts (around 160) in December 2024 together with a written assessment report template. The template stipulated that the benchmark used for written evaluations and gradings was the expertise of the evaluators, experienced practices and standards for each RA in relation to its international research environment, and considerations with respect to the size and scale of each RA.

The deadline for the external experts to send their written assessments or gradings was April 2025. Most of these external evaluations were provided on time. Since the members of the Board are not experts in all 43 RAs, identifying suitable external reviewers proved sometimes challenging. Moreover, the nomination process itself was quite complex: many experts were not available and, in some cases, even after contacting additional candidates, it was not possible to secure two written reports and two additional gradings for all RAs. In this regard, one recommendation to prevent this situation in future cycles, could for instance be to establish a larger pre-approved pool of external experts or setting up a structured process for early outreach and confirmation of availability.

According to Articles 3 and 4 of the Rector's Directive No. 17/2024, two independent bodies were to be established for the purposes of the evaluation process: (i) the Creative Activities Evaluation Board, serving as the supreme body with responsibilities listed in paragraph 2 — *inter alia*, to “supervise the course of evaluation from the point of view of compliance with its principles, rules and organization,” and to “notify, if necessary, the panellists of any deficiencies, factually incorrect information, internal contradictions, or differences in requirements applied when evaluating the level of individual research”; and (ii) the Expert Panels, which are the main executive bodies, where “the number of panel members corresponds to the number of RAs”, with “the chairperson and deputy chairpersons appointed and removed by the Rector from among the members of the Board”, while “other members are also appointed and removed by the Rector”. Expert Panellists are, *inter alia*, pursuant to Articles 4(8) and 11, responsible for carrying out the assessment for their assigned RA (including two written assessments and two additional grades), proposing an overall grade for the given RA after calibration, and submitting it to the Board. In addition, under Article 10(2), the on-site visit is attended also by “members of the Board sitting on the relevant Panel.”

Accordingly, the Rector's Directive, Appendix 1, and the Kick-off Board meeting materials (which also refer to previously undefined word “evaluators”) have given rise to uncertainties regarding the independence of these two bodies, their respective competences and responsibilities, the extent of their interaction, and the scope of their work. The term “RA” has been also used interchangeably with “research field” in the Directive and Appendixes, reduces conceptual clarity and makes it challenging to interpret the intended scope of each term, particularly in relation to the respective

responsibilities of the Board and the Panels. As a result of these ambiguities, Article 11(3), read in conjunction with Appendix 1 concerning the “first calibration” within each panel, was inconsistently implemented, with e-mail consultations rather than formal meetings of all panelists. Expert Panel members often did not know who the other panellists within the same RA were, and they received limited centralised guidance. The reviewers’ geographical separation and the tardiness of many reports made it challenging to organise such meetings. Consequently, the “double calibration” under Article 12(3) was conducted by the Board itself, with only an informal and limited “first calibration” and only in specific RAs.

An on-line meeting was organized between the members of the Evaluation Board, the Vice-Rector for research, and members of the Internal Evaluation Board on June 6, 2025, to prepare for the on-site visit. The on-site visit took place from 11-16 June 2025. For each RA, it consisted of a 1-hour conversation between representatives of the RA and the members of the board serving on the relevant panel. One member of the SOC panel could not attend; secretarial assistance for note-taking purposes was provided by CUNI. This on-site visit was the occasion for the board members to clarify or complete data presented in the self-assessment report and clarify future plans and challenges of the RA. It also allowed the RA representatives to provide their answers to the points or questions raised by the external reviewers in their written reports. These 1-hour meetings with RA representatives were followed by discussions among the Board members on observations during this short on-site visit, focusing on commonalities and differences across RAs and across the four panel areas. A summary of preliminary results was then presented to the Vice-Rector and representatives from the internal evaluation Board.

Based on the material collected throughout this process, Summary Evaluation Reports were written for each of the 43 RAs by the Board members serving in the relevant panel and present during the conversations with the RAs during the site-visit; grades were finalized as stipulated in Directive No 17/2024, Article 12.

Finally, based on the entire process, including the Summary Evaluation Reports of the 43 RAs as well as the preliminary presentation of results made at the end of the on-site visit, the Board has synthesized its findings into this Summary Final Report. To ensure consistency, the final report has been prepared by the members of the board who were present at the on-site visit and who have participated in producing the Summary Evaluation Reports and in calibrating across RAs within each panel.

1.2 The Board's reflections on the evaluation process

The current evaluation process differs significantly from the previous evaluation process in 2020. Most notably the unit of assessment was different – 22 faculties or institutes in 2020 versus 43 RAs in 2025. In addition, the previous review focussed more on bibliometric evaluation whereas in this round there was more focus (as recommended by the previous panel) on significance and impact. Hence the materials available to the reviewers/panels were structured differently. The last review was heavily impacted by COVID-19 with one effect being the curtailment of in-person discussion between reviewers and researchers. However, in 2025 all four panels meet in-person with representatives from each RAs during the site visit. Finally, in 2020 more than 700 reviewers were involved in the process whereas in this round fewer than 170 reviewers were involved, providing more consistency. Therefore, it is not possible to directly compare the results of the two evaluation processes to determine quantitatively whether research has improved over the past 5 years. However, where logical and sensible, we will highlight areas of improvement or decline and assess whether previous recommendations have been implemented. While the Board finds that it is

important to secure continuity across evaluations, and that changes to the format therefore need to be made with caution, the Board also wants to use this opportunity to reflect on the evaluation process and give its recommendations for possible improvements.

Most importantly, the Board wants to compliment CUNI for having initiated this thorough evaluation process, and to thank the staff of the Rector's Office for their invaluable support during the entire process. The Board also wants to stress its appreciation of the great effort that the RAs have devoted to describing themselves, and providing many insightful and frank reflections on strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

The Board also believes that the evaluation format can be further improved to the benefit of CUNI and its many strong and dedicated researchers.

With respect to the overall evaluation format, the Board offers the following observations and reflections.

First, universities around the world differ in many respects. An evaluation by external experts always runs the danger of overlooking local complexities, conditions, and constraints. During this evaluation process, the Board discovered that the expert reviewers were not aware of the very complex decision-making structures and the details of how money for research is distributed at CUNI, and that some of the expert reviews therefore requested strategic decisions or strategic use of funding that are out of the remit of the RAs.

Second, the site visit was very beneficial for getting a full understanding of the RAs and their operational conditions, and the individual Summary Evaluation Reports as well as this Summary Final report have benefited greatly from the meetings with all RAs during the site visit. However, the site visit was very dense, especially for some panel areas, and it would have been beneficial to have more time for conversations with representatives from the individual RAs, opportunities for visiting laboratories and other research environments, and opportunities to engage with scholars in more junior career stages (e.g. PhD students, postdocs).

For future evaluations, the Board therefore recommends that

1. CUNI provides a concise description in English of the university's overall institutional structure, its decision structures, and its distribution of funding for research, and that quantitative information used in the self-assessment reports (e.g. distributions of FTE, publication metrics, and similar) is also provided in aggregate form for the entire university;
2. each RA in their self-assessment reports provides additional information about, for example, which strategic decisions are inside and outside of their remit, how decision power is distributed within the RA, and how funding for research is distributed within the RA, with specific examples;
3. CUNI revisits the format of the site-visit to consider how to resolve the practical complexities of panel areas of very different size, and whether it is feasible to develop a format that allows time for conversations with representatives from different career stages, presentations of key achievements, visits to laboratories or other key infrastructure, and other measures to provide a more complete picture for the review panel.

With respect to the use of grades, the Board offers the following observations and reflections.

The chosen evaluation format combines a formative assessment focused on qualitative descriptions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, with a summative assessment focused on a set of grades that are algorithmically transformed into one, final grade for each RA. These two components call for different information in the self-assessment reports, and part of the variation between

reports may be due to the individual RAs responding to contradictory incentives: on one hand, achieving the highest possible grade by focusing on describing primarily past successes, or, on the other hand, receiving the most detailed and useful feedback and potential assistance by focusing on their challenges. These differences may have introduced potential bias in its gradings, or limitations to the level of detail in constructive feedback.

As to the grades themselves, the Board has found the descriptions open for different interpretations that made them difficult to operationalize. In particular, the Board has observed significant variation between expert evaluators and wants to stress that this calls for caution in the use of these grades. The Board also notes that outcomes may reflect differences in the academic environments and evaluative cultures of individual reviewers.

Further, the Board has been requested to calibrate grades both in relation to the international standards of each RA and in relation to other RAs within the same panel area. The Board wants to stress that these two kinds of calibration cannot be easily merged. For example, what is perceived as a high standard internationally within one RA may be perceived as substandard from the perspective of other RAs within the same panel area, and vice versa. Similar differences may even be seen between subfields within each RA

Finally, the Board also wants to stress the difficulty of using the grades for ranking RAs against each other. As documented throughout the reports, the Board has observed considerable progress across the RAs. The Board therefore wants to stress that, as for all kinds of research rankings, general progress across the units ranked will lead to smaller differences in ranking value between the units ranked. This may frustrate the top ranked units that primarily see the result of a new ranking as others moving closer, and it may frustrate all other units that do not see themselves changing their position in the ranking, despite considerable progress.

For future evaluations, the Board recommends that

4. CUNI conducts an internal evaluation of the use of gradings;
5. CUNI provides clear guidance to each RA on how to address both the formative and the summative component of the assessment;
6. CUNI considers measures that would balance the reporting of accomplishments vs challenges by individual RAs.

Finally, with respect to the evaluation process, the Board offers the following observations and recommendations.

While the Board applauds CUNI's honorable intention of keeping an arm's length to the evaluation to secure its independence, the Board also admits that it has been difficult for the chairs of the Board and of the panels to fully live up to the responsibilities that this principle puts on them. To ensure an efficient and consistent process of evaluation, the Board believes that more centralized support would be beneficial. Clearer guidance on next steps with associated deadlines, centrally coordinated Panel meetings, and centrally prepared schedules and timelines for on-site visits would be greatly appreciated. Such support would streamline the process, enhance coordination, and allow Board to focus more fully on the substantive evaluation work

Hence, for future evaluations, the Board recommends that

7. CUNI considers whether the university's intention of keeping an arm's length to the evaluation and the need of the Board for more centralized support can be jointly accommodated by drawing on, for example, an external consultant or agency.

2 Panel-specific summaries and recommendations

2.1 Humanities

The panel highly appreciates the work done within the RAs that are part of the Humanities of CUNI, Prague.

We have noted progress and improvement in most of the RAs in important fields. The international visibility of the Humanities at CUNI has improved. We also note that the RAs are strong in delivering high-impact publications (monographs, journal articles). The RAs generally have a fine level of grants (national grants, international grant participation). And they are very committed and motivated to pursue their academic work in university.

Thus, at present the Humanities have a good starting point for a continued positive development. There is a strong potential for excellent research and international cooperation. We also consider Cooperatio a valuable stepping stone for the further development both of each RA and of the Humanities in general. The new PhD programme reform (which was a recommendation of the 2020 review) provides a basis for a potential further strengthening of the Humanities. Finally, Prague is an attractive location, which the Humanities should also use to their advantage.

That said, our evaluation work in the Humanities panel has also uncovered areas for potential improvement. In general, the Humanities still have very few prestigious international grants. Some areas appear weakened due to a generation gap and/or a gender imbalance of the staff; the failure to recruit and retain promising young and/or female scholars may hinder a continued positive development of an area. The RAs suffer from substandard salary levels leading to suboptimal working conditions (many researchers need to take on extra duties or indeed jobs), recruitment, and retention. Finally, the RAs' performance is weakened by inadequate control over their own funding.

Importantly, there are some partly structural conditions that may negatively affect development of Humanities unless they are corrected.

First, in the Humanities in general, not only at CUNI, current bibliometric methods suffer from blind spots. Publishing strategies in the Humanities for good reasons often prefer to give room for more monographs and publications in languages other than English (including Czech) than the current bibliometric logic supports. We have taken that into account in our assessment, and we recommend that the Humanities engage in discussions at the university or national level about the future development of bibliometrics in academia.

Second, few research outputs are available as open access. While open access publications require institutionally supported funding (due to high costs involved), they greatly enhance the visibility and broaden the reach of the publications. It would be beneficial to prioritize making more research output available as open access. Critically, however, the RAs should be able to make decisions on which publications deserve to be supported.

Third, CUNI faces a significant structural imbalance in its funding landscape. National funding – primarily from government sources like GAČR – is essential but largely covers basic operational costs, leaving limited scope for ambitious or large-scale research initiatives. This chronic underfunding is particularly problematic in the Humanities, limiting the university's ability to initiate or host expansive international projects.

Lastly, we wish to comment on the quality of the material submitted in the evaluation process. The self-reports substantially differed from one another. Some areas did not provide enough detail regarding their international collaborations; others did not provide information on citations. The

evaluation process could be improved if the evaluators had access to a list of all publications, grants, perhaps CVs., etc.

2.2 Social Sciences

We appreciate the work carried out within all RA of Social Sciences during the last assessment period. Compared with the previous evaluation, the effort to prioritise research quality has been significant. In our view, the COOPERATIO Programme has had a positive impact on several RAs, leading to stronger collaboration within existing RAs and to the launch of new initiatives in newly established ones. Nevertheless, its overall effectiveness remains constrained by the fragmentation of RAs across multiple faculties and departments and by the absence of budgetary autonomy. This structural complexity complicates decision-making, particularly where teaching needs tend to prevail over research priorities, and where smaller RAs within their departments are often disadvantaged. It could therefore be considered to allocate at least a small portion of the budget directly to all RAs to strengthen collaboration and promote research within them.

Some RAs have already developed effective measures to promote high-quality publications, strengthen doctoral training, and support grant applications. However, such practices are not systematically shared across the university or among RAs. Facilitating the exchange of best practices—through meetings or internal guidelines, at least within the Social Sciences—would contribute to improving overall quality. Finally, strengthening administrative support available to all RAs, including smaller ones, remains essential to improve access to and management of national and international research funding.

We particularly appreciate the shift from quantity to quality in research outputs compared with the last evaluation. At the same time, current bibliometric approaches still fail to capture adequately the scholarly value of research rooted in national language traditions. Given that many RAs are closely tied to Czech linguistic and cultural heritage, citation-based international metrics often undervalue their outputs. Efforts toward internationalisation should therefore be balanced with national academic responsibilities, especially in disciplines where teaching in Czech and publishing in the national language remain essential. Publishing in English remains crucial for international visibility, but complementary evaluation methods should also recognise research excellence in Czech or other national languages. High-quality research outputs, regardless of language, should be appropriately valued and incentivised.

Gender imbalance persists at both senior and junior levels, with women underrepresented among full professors and early-stage researchers in several RAs. Some RAs with a less complex structure have already adopted targeted measures, such as sabbatical-based support for women's promotion to full professorships. However, addressing gender imbalance would also benefit from university-level initiatives, such as improved childcare facilities and flexible work arrangements.

Limited financial resources continue to constrain development within RAs. Low salaries and the high cost of living in Prague make it difficult to retain researchers, many of whom rely on supplementary income. This undermines the stability and depth of academic engagement. The high proportion of part-time PhD candidates further weakens the research profile of doctoral programmes, as many pursue the degree primarily as a formal qualification while being employed elsewhere, which limits their participation in research activities. The forthcoming PhD reform provides an opportunity to prioritise a smaller number of full-time doctoral students fully dedicated to research, thereby enhancing overall academic quality. The expansion of English-taught BA and MA programmes has proved effective in attracting international PhD candidates and could be further developed

to strengthen international recruitment. As regards senior staff, the same difficulties linked to low salaries apply—especially in RAs where the private sector offers more competitive conditions. Heavy teaching obligations also continue to limit the time available for research and participation in competitive funding schemes. Allowing for reduced teaching loads for researchers who secure major international grants could serve as an important incentive for participation in international projects.

2.3 Natural Sciences

We appreciate very much the efforts and scientific achievements within the RAs in the Natural Sciences section of CUNI. We have noted a significant improvement with respect to the last reporting period. In particular, the RAs have been successful in attracting talented early career researchers that fill the assistant professor positions. Their success is evidenced by their strong scientific output as well as success at obtaining prestigious early career funding, with several ERC starting grants and ERC consolidator grants awarded during and after the reporting period. Programmes such as PRIMUS or Junior Star have been major drivers in attracting these young scientists and providing them with the environment and resources needed to carry out world-class science. We stress that these promising researchers are really the university's future, and care should be taken to retain them and to provide them with resources they need. This includes childcare support (discussed in more detail in the overall report), possible access to internal bridge funding between their grants, and accelerated promotion to more senior ranks, e.g. by giving them higher priority for lab space / office space allocations for their groups. Salaries remain a limiting factor at all levels: junior and senior faculty, students, and postdocs alike. This is a university-wide problem, and it is discussed above in the general summary.

Securing big prestigious international grants for senior scientists (e.g. ERC Advanced grant or ERC Synergy, or HFSP) remains quite rare. The same way in which PRIMUS / Junior Star programmes have been successful in motivating and enabling young researchers to apply and be successful in attracting top funding, it would be worth exploring various incentives / training / administrative support to increase chances also for the more senior researchers to attract prestigious international funding. One possible option to achieve this might be through senior hires. For example, a special scientific chair could be endowed to attract researchers from abroad to establish new research directions, with start-up package and possible options to also open several hiring lines in related topics at junior level.

In this respect, the new Biocentrum campus Albertov, as collaboration between natural sciences, math and physics and medicine, presents itself as a unique opportunity to open new research directions with senior as well as junior hires (through different RAs) whose labs would be housed in the Biocentrum. It would also address possible shortcomings of some RAs that have been asked to expand their scope by external reviewers and to focus more on translational research. This could open new directions such as biophysics / machine learning for biosciences and medicinal chemistry. It appeared to the evaluation panel that the Biocentrum campus Albertov would benefit from more coordination and stronger support at the CUNI leadership level, along with providing start-up packages for senior hires for Biocentrum that would make the positions attractive to excellent senior and junior scientists from all around the world.

Another important aspect in attracting foreign researchers as well as PhD students and postdocs is the ability to communicate in English. In contrast to the last evaluation period, almost all RAs surveyed have significant portion of foreign PhD students and have also been successful in hiring some non-Czech speakers. The situation can be further improved by making the working language for all

administrative tasks English at university-wide level. Similarly, for many of the surveyed RAs, the external reviewers commented on having difficulty finding the relevant information on their English-language section of their website: even basic information such as overview of RAs and research portfolio of individual researchers can be hard to find in the English language section of the websites. This makes the task of finding the relevant information more difficult for the external reviewers, as well as for prospective students.

While individual RAs each have some internal rules for appointing new young researchers and typically have informally some anti-inbreeding rules in place (e.g. requirement of a minimum 2-year research stay abroad), the precise criteria still vary among faculties and even among departments and should be further harmonized at the university level.

The scientific output in most RAs is quite strong, and all of the RAs had publications in Q1 journals and publications in top venues for more specific RAs. Very high-profile publications (e.g. Nature or Science) are occasionally present but remain rare.

In almost every RA, the external reviewers have raised the issue of gender imbalance. In part, this is the case across almost all Natural Sciences departments in universities around the world and CUNI is not the only institution facing this problem. The situation is improving at the junior level, but there are further steps that individual faculties as well as CUNI can make, such as providing subsidized childcare (both nursery and kindergarten) for each faculty.

Finally, the panel has noted limited support at CUNI for tech transfer opportunities. Creating spin-offs, filing / licensing patents, and encouraging entrepreneurial careers for their students is an essential part of every world-class university. It appears that currently, the tech transfer office is not at the level required to easily support tech transfer tasks. Existing successful examples at CUNI of creating spin-offs / translational results have been in cases where the whole process has been usually handled internally by the respective department. There is hence room for improvement at the CUNI level, which would then benefit all the scientific RAs. On a similar note, while there are successful examples of industry-funded research and collaboration with the university, several scientists noted that industry collaboration does not result in scientific papers and thus is less rewarded in researcher's evaluations than a published paper. University should consider possible ways to encourage and value tech transfer and industry collaboration where appropriate, as this can become an additional substantial source of funding in the long term.

2.4 Medical Sciences

Medical research at CUNI covers all the major disciplines, is of a high international standard and effectively serves the patients in the Czech Republic. The international reputation of medical research from CUNI is evidenced by the involvement of numerous researchers in prestigious networks and membership of international committees. The successes and evidence of their international recognition are detailed in the individual research reports.

As noted, and discussed in the last review, the organization of medical research at CUNI is unusual and has historical origins. Medical research takes place across more than five faculties which are geographically separated. The number of researchers in each faculty varies and the research focus is distinct. Research has been combined into 15 areas broadly reflecting the major medical disciplines. Although most medical specialties were represented in at least one RA, the review panel thought that bioinformatic expertise was underrepresented and needed to be improved and expanded. Developing such expertise and links would benefit all RAs. The RAs are different in size and unevenly distributed across the faculties, making collaboration essential but challenged by

geographic separation. In addition, several RAs are not intellectually coherent. This is a challenging landscape for research leaders to develop and implement effective research strategies. Nevertheless, each RA scored very well in terms of research quality and output with grades ranging from B-through to A- with six RAs scoring A-. There was a clear correlation between research quality/output and the degree of cohesiveness of the RA. RAs that were intellectually focussed and had a critical mass of researchers co-located in a faculty performed better than RAs that were more spread out in focus and geography. Current initiatives to improve coherence and collaboration through re-allocation will reduce these challenges and will allow further integration and optimization. Despite these challenges, the creation of the 15 medical RAs does address many of the disadvantages of fragmentation which were evident during the last review process in 2020.

The major strength of each RA was the staff. There was clear evidence in each RA of talented, dedicated and productive researchers undertaking research of the highest standard. Importantly, this research was being translating into the clinic to benefit patients across the Czech Republic and, in some cases, across the world. There were numerous examples of top-quality individuals and research groups publishing regularly in the world's leading journals. In addition, in several RAs researchers had established networks of excellence across faculties and across the country. This type of innovation has been crucial to improving patient care across the Czech Republic and is supported by a very strong links with local hospitals. In general, the gender balance across all medical RAs was skewed among the older and more senior members of staff but much more balanced among the younger and more junior faculty. Most RAs have a good balance between full, associate and assistant professors and PhD students. However, there is a widespread shortage of research fellows (likely related to funding issues), a situation that needs to be addressed as they are the main generators of research output and actors of innovation.

A particular challenge within the medical research is balancing the demands of clinical and research work. Whilst a universal issue, the very low salary scale for research time at CUNI disincentivises clinicians to pursue a career in research especially early in their career when they have young families. The issue of low salaries (including PhD remuneration) compared with EU universities coupled with the high cost of living in Prague also affect non-clinical researchers. Higher salaries abroad cause brain drain especially as many European countries have a large medical research sector working in English, which most Czech researchers speak fluently.

Research funding is critical for establishing and maintaining a successful research groups especially with medical research which often depends on predictable long-term funding to maintain patient cohorts, to maintain and update lab equipment and to secure sample storage. The COOPERATIO funding is administered and filtered through faculties rather than going directly to the RAs tasked with developing and implementing research strategies. Whilst some RAs benefited from the system and have used the money effectively to support core facilities and/or emerging researchers, most RAs had seen little benefit. Overall, researchers within the RAs have been successful at attracting national funding. However, these grants are usually based around a single project rather than programmatic funding. Numerous researchers have secured EU funding, but success has been patchy. Better administrative infrastructure for researchers would lead to increased EU funding. Applying for these grants is more complex and requires a large amount of legal and financial documentation and coordination. Few researchers possess the necessary staff and skills. Better sharing of "best practices" by successful candidates could also improve funding outcomes. Participation in international consortia has been a useful adaptive strategy but comes at the price of giving up independence of directions and ideas.

Medical research at CUNI is strong with pockets of excellence. Most researchers at CUNI have managed to convert low and unstable research funding into very good and sustained research success. They are to be congratulated. Nonetheless there is room for improvement. Whilst many of the issues identified would be resolved by more funding, the structural landscape of medical research across so many diverse faculties will remain an impediment. Our recommendations are listed per RAs in the individual reports. However, our key recommendation would be to utilise the administrative resources across the five faculties at CUNI to bring in additional resources by supporting researchers applying for large EU grants. There have been notable successes in this area over the past 5 years and increasing the EU grant funding should be a top priority.

3 General summaries and recommendations

From an overall perspective, research at CUNI is strong, and in some areas it is truly excellent. Throughout the university, researchers are talented, highly dedicated, and productive; they carry out research of a very high standard. There is clear evidence that CUNI has many scholars who excel at an international level.

Significant improvements have been made since the last evaluation, but some challenges also remain.

In the following, observations and recommendations from the Board have been organized into sections relating to the Structure and development of the RAs (3.1.), Research output (3.2.), Research funding (3.3.), Research collaboration (3.4), Researchers' careers (3.5.), Research training (3.6.), and Societal impact & general visibility (3.7). Additional topics can be seen to figure prominently across several sections, e.g. internationalization.

Each section briefly describes the relation to the previous evaluation, summarizes the observations that the Board has made across the RAs, and provides the Board's recommendations aimed at further improving the performance of the university as a research institution.

Given that neither the Board, nor the external expert reviewers that have provided assessments and gradings of the individual RAs, have been fully aware of all details and complexities related to the inner workings of CUNI in general and the COOPERATIO programme in particular, the Board is aware that some of its recommendations may include suggestions that are already implemented, or have already previously been considered and discarded.

3.1 Structure and strategy

3.1.1 Relations to the previous evaluation

The previous evaluation expressed concerns about fragmentation and splintering that easily result in resources and efforts being duplicated, inability to react to rapid changes and emerging opportunities, critical mass not being reached, and opaqueness of decision-making power.

To address these challenges, the previous evaluation panel recommended the promotion of inter-faculty field/area communities. They anticipated this would improve research cooperation through increased administrative and scientific capacity to apply for international grants and thereby increasing high-impact publications, international and national visibility.

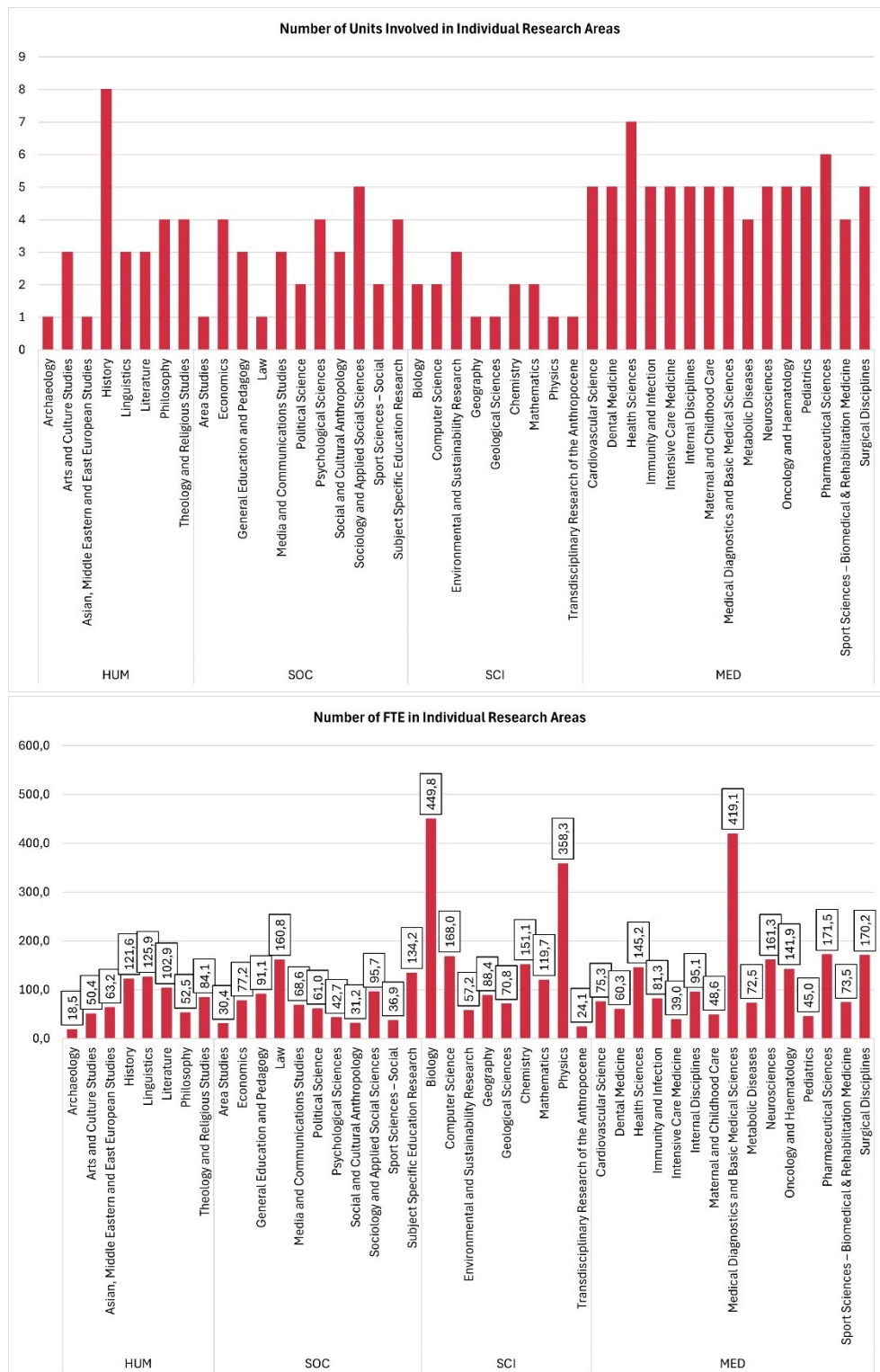
3.1.2 Observations by the Board

The COOPERATIO programme initiated in 2021 divides research at CUNI into 43 RAs, each composed of several research fields.

The programme is a *tool* to support communication, coordination and cooperation of all faculties and units where a particular research field is active or under development, while the overall *aims* of the program are to ensure conditions for the development and high quality of research. The goal of these changes is to position CUNI as a significant and internationally competitive research institution with an important contribution to the quality of life of society and to the sustainability of life in general (see Rector's Directive No 18/2021, and the COOPERATIO web page <https://cuni.cz/UKEN-1729.html>).

The 43 RAs vary considerably in size as well as in complexity. Measured in FTE, the size of the largest RA (biology, 449,8 FTE) is more than 24 times bigger than the size of the smallest (archaeology,

18,5 FTE). Similarly, while some RAs exist within a single faculty, others involve up to eight different faculties. Thus, while archaeology and biology involve only 1 and 2 faculties, respectively, a relatively small RA such as Paediatrics (45 FTE) involves 5 faculties, an intermediate size field like History (121,6 FTE) includes 8 faculties, while the large RAs of Physics (358,3 FTE) and Medical diagnostics and basic medical sciences (419,1 FTE) differ in involving respectively 1 and 5 faculties. When considering the number of departments and/or institutes involved in each RA, the complexity intensifies.



The diversity and complexity have both benefits and drawbacks.

Several RAs excel due to their disciplinary breadth and rich research portfolio. For example, TRAN (Transdisciplinary Research of the Anthropocene) is a unique RA also by international standards, praised for their excellent results. There are other examples of RAs with a very broad scope compared to international counterparts, e.g. sports science or Asian, Middle Eastern & Eastern European Studies. The former is praised for successfully including perspectives that often tend to be ignored internationally; the latter is praised for the role it plays in shaping area studies in the Czech Republic due to its wide array of languages and cultures.

However, the diversity and complexity also create very different conditions across the RAs with respect to the types, the character, the volume, and the intensity of the strategic actions that can meaningfully be developed and implemented.

In many cases, there is a positive correlation between the quality of research and outputs, and the degree of cohesiveness of the RA (e.g. archaeology, area studies, geography, geological sciences, physics, TRAN, as well as several medical sciences RAs). At the other end of the spectrum, there are small groups of researchers that are isolated geographically, intellectually or both (e.g. in some medical sciences RAs).

While all RAs strive to coordinate efforts, they vary substantially in their stand towards strategies and their maturity in articulating them. At one end of the spectrum, some RAs have taken individualized approaches focused primarily on, for example, employing world-class scholars who produce high-level international publications and attract prestigious grants, rather than on collaboration and joint actions. At the other end of the spectrum, other RAs have taken collective approaches focused primarily on coordinated or joint actions (e.g. training activities for researchers at different career levels in increasing their international visibility and network, or initiatives to coordinate and guide gradual developments of international collaboration into consortia eligible for international funding), rather than on initiatives to attract and retain outstanding individuals. Similarly, while some RAs act primarily as a structure for mutual information exchange, other RAs have developed elaborate five- to ten-year visions for their development, including clearly specified milestones and detailed plans for strategic actions devised to reach these milestones. Across the RAs, many initiatives deserve to be shared as best practices.

Finally, the added value from the RA structure is perceived differently across the RAs or indeed panels. In the humanities and social sciences, the COOPERATIO programme serves as a valuable stepping stone toward the continued development of the RAs. Within the natural sciences, the RAs have been most successful when RA funding has supported core facilities or emerging researchers. In the medical sciences, the programme has had little added value, although there are a few cases where it has led to significant advances.

The main problem, however, is the insufficient control over funding, which is distributed through CUNI Faculties. RAs do not have faculty-independent capacity to pursue strategic development. Highly fragmented RAs have thus limited capacity to realize long-term hiring plans, support specific research, or invest in prestigious grant applications.

3.1.3 Recommendations by the Board

The development of the COOPERATIO programme and the individual RAs should clearly distinguish two goals of strategic initiatives: to increase the agility of individual RAs, on the one hand, and to increase and intensify cooperation, coordination, networking, policy harmonization within and

across RAs, on the other. The former will allow the pursuit of emerging fields as well as focus on plans for future hires. The latter will revolve around plans for coordination and support actions. These two kinds of strategic initiatives differ in the kind of funding and decision power required. This difference needs to be transparent and reflected in the decision structures at the level of faculties, departments, and RAs, as well as in the expectations to strategies made at different organizational levels at the university.

Hence, the Board recommends that CUNI

8. channel substantial financial resources directly to the RAs (via the COOPERATIO programme, not filtered by the faculties), thereby review and reconsider how funding and decisions are best distributed across faculties, departments, and RAs;
9. intensify efforts to promote and support exchange of best practices across RAs to harmonize standards, policies and support across the entire CUNI;
10. make strategic decisions to preferentially support selected RAs, for example, through endowed chairs.

Further, the Board recommends that RAs develop and maintain ambitious and transparent development strategies that

11. clearly specify and prioritize short-term, intermediate-term and long-term goals;
12. describe strategic actions needed to reach the stipulated goals;
13. clarify the resources needed and the decisions that need to be taken (when and by whom) to initiate and complete these actions.

3.2 Research output

3.2.1 Relations to the previous evaluation

The previous evaluation found that more should be done across the university to prioritize, support and reward publications in international outlets. It made a number of recommendations aimed at enabling scholars to publish internationally and to encourage them to do so in high quality outlets. It stressed the importance of privileging the quality over the quantity of academic outputs in every way possible.

With respect to publications in Czech, the previous evaluation focused on the transition of an inward looking 'native' publication culture to an international publication culture, and it stressed that translations should not be understood as a tool to increase publishing in different languages.

Finally, the previous evaluation recognized that international publications need not be in AIS journals, but that especially for the humanities and the social sciences it could also be in Scopus-indexed journals, and that monographs published by renowned international publishing houses also are of importance.

3.2.2 Observations by the Board

The current evaluation combines (i) quantitative information on the distribution of articles in journals across quartiles in AIS (Article Influence Score, based on citations in Web of Science) and SNIP (Source Normalization Impact per Paper, based on citations in Scopus) with (ii) qualitative information on the publications that the RA has selected as representative of their best work. Despite some weaknesses concerning both methods, this dual approach allows for both a statistical overview of publication performance and a more nuanced understanding of disciplinary practices and research quality.

As a general observation, the Board notes that across the RAs, much of the research is of a high international standard, as evidenced by publications in respected international outlets and citation recognition. Details of these achievements and the specific indicators of international visibility are discussed in the individual reports. Publication numbers are generally very good across most RAs. Several RAs show further improvement compared to the previous evaluation, while others consistently maintain high publication levels, with a notable concentration of outputs in high-impact journals. A substantial proportion of these outputs are co-authored, and there is a visible trend towards an increase in international co-authorship. At the same time, especially within the humanities and social sciences, many of the listed publications are single-authored, which is aligned with international disciplinary standards. These observations reflect growing engagement with transnational research and the transition from predominantly national to international publication cultures is still ongoing. However, it appears that only few research outputs are available as open access. While open access publication requires institutional support due to the high costs involved, it greatly enhances visibility and reach of research results and should be further encouraged.

As to the quantitative information about the distribution of articles across journals with different impact scores, the Board has noted that while the proportion of articles in the top decile or quartile varied significantly most RAs reported >10% of articles in D1 and >25% in Q1 (See appendix for graphical overviews). While the relevance of these indicators naturally varies across disciplines, this distribution nevertheless reflects a solid performance and positive trajectory in terms of international reach and citation potential.

The Board acknowledges that publication traditions and standards vary considerably across the RAs and must be evaluated within their proper research context. Hence, we refer the reader to the individual RA reports where we have provided a context dependent assessment of the research output of each RA.

With regard to the qualitative information on the publications that RAs selected as representative of their best work, it should be noted that the top research outputs chosen for the evaluation represent only a small sample of the total publications within each RA. Whilst this limited sample cannot provide a complete picture of the overall research quality across each RA, the publications selected illustrate the capacity of researchers within each RAs to produce excellent research. For many RAs within the humanities and social sciences, monographs, book chapters and publications in languages other than English have figured prominently among the sample outputs listed in the self-evaluation reports, which aligns with international standards and needs to be respected. Finally, the Board observed that some RAs perceived declared parallel publication in different languages not as a legitimate way in which to reach different audiences, but instead as self-plagiarism that the university would discourage.

Overall, the findings indicate a gradual and consistent shift towards higher research quality, growing international collaboration, and greater methodological awareness regarding publication strategies. The challenge ahead lies in ensuring that these improvements are evenly distributed across all disciplines and that institutional support mechanisms—such as those mentioned in Recommendations—continue to strengthen the international visibility and impact of CUNI's research outputs.

3.2.3 Recommendations by the Board

The Board recommends a tripartite strategy to

14. further increase international visibility and recognition of research originating from CUNI;
15. recognize that CUNI, as the leading university in the Czech Republic, has a special obligation for carrying out research that investigates Czech language, culture, history, society, education; and

that this obligation is linked to the need for making research results available for different audiences and in different languages;

16. further develop the metrics used for quantitative evaluation purposes.

With respect to point one (recommendation 14), the Board recommends continuation and potentially intensification of recommendations that were already proposed in the last evaluation. The Board recommends that CUNI encourage strategic participation in major international research networks and consortia, prioritizing long-term institutional partnerships and mobility schemes to foster sustained international collaboration and co-authorship. CUNI should further increase its support for intensifying international publication in high-ranking publication venues, e.g. through dedicated funding for publication fees/page charges, open access, or linguistic revision. At the same time efforts and funding should be allocated by CUNI to promote green open access through the use of international repositories (e.g. ArXiv, MedRxiv, BioRxiv) and to establish a university-based manuscript repository for RAs for which such international repositories are not available.

One recommendation that has not sufficiently been picked up is the organization of courses and training programmes for researchers of different levels. Throughout the interviews it became clear that courses on academic writing skills (even in different languages), research methods, presentation skills, publication strategies, as well as peer-support mechanisms, mentoring for publication in top international outlets and targeted support for building international research profiles, could have a large added value.

Very few RAs have adopted a strategy of providing incentives for high quality publications. These local initiatives could be organized at the central level, creating equal opportunities for all researchers, and further substantiating CUNI's important international position.

With respect to point two (recommendation 15), the Board recommends that the RAs and the central office of CUNI collaborate on developing transparent policies for when, why and how to prioritize and recognize publications in Czech, and for when and how declared parallel publication in multiple languages can be a legitimate way to reach multiple audiences. To support this dual mission, the University should maintain institutional support for high-quality Czech-language research outputs, reflecting its national role and the specific publication cultures of the relevant RAs, while consider if and how dual-language dissemination strategies could be employed in a manner consistent with disciplinary practices, publication ethics, and audience needs, while avoiding unnecessary duplication. Several of the same actions that have already been mentioned in the previous evaluation, and in the recommendations for point 1, also apply here. Either within or among the RAs, or through the central office of CUNI, training and/or peer support actions aiming at, for example, screening papers, presenting research in different forms for national and international audiences, establishing international networks aimed at international contextualization of research made in national settings, etc, could provide great progress for researchers.

Finally, with respect to point three (recommendation 16), the Board recommends that CUNI continues to develop its evaluation format in accordance with the COARA agreement that it has signed. The Board emphasises the importance of field-sensitive indicators that appropriately capture different publication cultures and avoid one-size-fits-all approaches. Evaluation should meaningfully combine bibliometric information with qualitative methods, for example, peer-review-based assessment of research contributions, societal impact, and open-science practices. The refinement of evaluation criteria should be undertaken in ongoing consultation with RAs, ensuring transparency, regular review, and alignment with evolving international standards.

3.3 Research funding

3.3.1 Relations to the previous evaluation

In the previous evaluation, it was recommended that initiatives to help scientists apply for major international funding should be continued and intensified.

3.3.2 Observations by the Board

As a general observation, the Board notes that, across the RAs, many different strategic initiatives have been developed aimed at i) increasing funding to selected strategic areas; ii) moving funding efforts from the local (seed money from the COOPERATIO, PRIMUS) to the national (CSF, NAKI, GAČR, TAČR) to the international level (COST actions, MSCA, Horizon2020, ERC); and iii) increasing participation in internationally funded research consortia and increasing the level of responsibility taken by researchers from CUNI in such consortia.

The Board also notes a considerable variation, both across RAs in the balance between local, national and international funding; as well as across faculties and departments in the kinds and levels of support offered to applicants for research funding.

In general, most RAs have been successful at attracting national funding, numerous researchers across the RAs have secured EU funding, and some have received highly competitive and prestigious awards such as grants from the ERC. However, especially at the level of international funding, success has been patchy, and additional emphasis and resources could improve the number of applications and their success rate.

3.3.3 Recommendations by the Board

The Board recommends that

17. CUNI increases and harmonizes the support offered to applicants for developing especially large and complex applications. This may include, for example, support for legal and financial documentation, or administrative support and/or teaching load reduction;
18. RAs develop and maintain long-term strategic plans for their funding activities, including how to develop and scale funding activities from the local, over the national to the international level; how to distribute labour among members of the RA; how to avoid or bridge major funding gaps;
19. RAs offer coordinated training and/or peer support actions for individual researchers and research groups on e.g. strategic planning of research funding, scaling of activities, allocation of administrative support, and sharing of best practices developed by successful candidates;
20. CUNI as well as the RAs develop strategic initiatives especially targeted at obtaining more EU funding. An important component should be sharing of best practices across the university. For example, copies of successful applications should be archived and offered as templates to interested applicants.

3.4 Research collaboration outside CUNI

3.4.1 Relations to the previous evaluation

In the previous evaluation it was recommended to increase collaboration with other institutions, nationally as well as internationally, as a means towards increasing national and international visibility, improving international recruitment, strengthening the capacity to apply for international funding, and sharing resources through collaboration on, for example, the training of junior scholars.

3.4.2 Observations by the Board

The degree of international research collaboration generally has improved. Many RAs have developed strategies for increasing participation in internationally funded research consortia as well as for increasing the level of responsibility of researchers from CUNI in such consortia.

However, international collaboration generally is less developed than national collaboration.

Not surprisingly, the Board has observed a variety of collaborative formats, corresponding to the RAs' different traditional and professional academic cultures: Participation in visiting programmes, organization and participation in international conferences, co-authored publications, participation in international clinical trials, guidelines-setting organizations collaboration within e.g. 4EU+. Europe is the dominant region.

3.4.3 Recommendations by the Board

The Board recommends that RAs

21. develop and increase participation in international research consortia;
22. increase the level of responsibility, including leadership roles taken by researchers from CUNI in such consortia;
23. develop and/or consolidate a leading role in the Eastern European region.

3.5 Researchers' careers

The previous evaluation made multiple observations and recommendations related to researchers' careers.

First, it was observed that researchers at CUNI spend too much time obtaining and managing grants at the expense of time for conducting and reporting their research, and it was recommended to support and reward research excellence through such measures as teaching load reduction, or sabbaticals at international institutions.

Second, it was observed that outstanding researchers need to be retained at CUNI, and it was recommended to provide more support in the form of competitive packages, to enhance priority for personnel and space allocation, and to establish a standardized evaluation process for researchers.

Third, it was observed that the university in general need to recruit more international scholars, and it was recommended to provide financial support aimed at improving international collaboration, that the university continues and intensifies its use of internationally advertised open calls for junior job openings as well as of the European job market and similar venues for graduate placement, and that all units exploit all available options for securing funding for recruiting first class international scholars at the early stage of their careers.

Fourth, it was observed that there was a dramatic imbalance in the number of men and women promoted to the associate and full professor levels, and it was recommended to make a concerted effort across the university to recruit, train, support, and promote women at all levels.

3.5.1 Observations by the Board

As a general observation, the Board notes that, across the RAs, the researchers employed at CUNI are highly dedicated and committed. There is clear evidence across the RAs of many talented and productive researchers undertaking research of the highest standards, and there are numerous examples of individuals and research groups who stand out as excellent on an international scale.

Yet, the Board has also found untapped potential for strengthening the career trajectories and improving the career prospects of existing staff, as well as for attracting and retaining strong, new scholars to CUNI.

Especially, the Board observed that,

- across the RAs, low salaries combined with high living costs in Prague constitute a significant problem. For some RAs, the consequence is that many scholars are forced to have multiple full-time jobs with a severe risk of burnout; for other RAs, the consequence is that scholars leave for more lucrative positions in other sectors, or for positions at other universities internationally;
- across the RAs, scholars experienced insufficient administrative support, high teaching loads, and challenging work-life balances;
- with respect to research infrastructure and facilities, conditions vary considerably between RAs, faculties and departments. For example, in some RAs, researchers did not have office space, or they only had access to insufficient lab facilities;
- in most RAs, the gender balance is poor, especially at the senior level. While some positive trends could be observed, they were primarily at the junior career levels, and only in some RAs;
- in most RAs, only few staff members are of non-Czech origin, especially at the senior level
- in many RAs, the distributions of staff across age and across career levels indicate challenges for career progression from the assistant to the associate professor level.

3.5.2 Recommendations by the Board

As the basis for its recommendations, the Board wants to stress that the future of the university is determined by its staff. It is important to attract and retain promising new scholars, and it is important to care for the existing staff, recognize its dedication, and ensure good working conditions and acceptable work-life balances.

On a general level, the Board recommends that CUNI

24. works strategically at keeping track of work force problems, responding to them; and engaging at policy level to increase resources. Low salary levels constitute a substantial risk of a continuing brain drain, whether in the form researchers leaving the university completely, or researchers being forced to complement their salary through second-employments. Similarly, high teaching loads constitute a permanent obstacle for increasing the research performance;
25. maintains a strong focus on the gender balance of its staff, includes considerations of gender diversity in all its policies, and creates a strong incentive structure for hiring more female scholars;
26. develops university-wide policies for e.g. work flexibility, or care-related extension of habilitation deadlines, harmonizes access to daycare facilities, articulating care responsibilities as a matter relevant for both male and female staff, and encourages both men and women to make use of the options offered;
27. maintains a strong focus on internationalization, and on the benefits as well as the dilemmas that it brings. For example, initiatives aimed at increasing the attractiveness of CUNI for international scholars may include establishing an International Staff Mobility Unit to assist foreign scholars with their transition to Prague; developing an explicit language policy with the aims of creating more teaching opportunities in English; enabling international staff better access to administrative documents and better opportunities to participate in internal policy and government bodies; clearly describing the expectations to foreign staff with respect to developing competencies in Czech; and providing funding for initiatives such as, e.g. teaching relief for

participating in language instruction in Czech. Initiatives aimed at increasing the international mobility of Czech scholars may include support for increasing international experience, etc;

28. develops university-wide policies and harmonizes support aimed at career development, e.g. start-up packages provided to new staff, individual mentoring, and similar.

3.6 Research education and training

3.6.1 Relations to the previous evaluation

The previous evaluation observed that PhD programmes at CUNI were fragmented and recommended to establish fewer programs that could utilize the resources of the university and the intellectual capacity of its faculty more efficiently.

Further, the previous evaluation recommended an increase in the salaries for PhD students to (i) allow PhD students to work full-time on their dissertations—thus improving the quality of their research—and (ii) to make PhD programmes more attractive to foreign students. Other recommendations included changing policies requiring a fixed high number of papers for graduating and giving more decision power to the individual PhD committee; intensifying monitoring of progress and feedback; and clear standards for supervision.

3.6.2 Observations by the Board

Across the RAs, the Board has observed that the number of PhD students remain high. According to information that the Board has received, compared to EU averages, enrolment is more than 20% higher than average. In addition, as stated in the “General Information” provided by CUNI, the university has already implemented reforms to enhance the socio-economic security of PhD students—such as increasing stipends and revising funding structures. At the same time, it is acknowledged that full-time doctoral candidates typically receive a scholarship, which must be often supplemented by income from teaching or participation in grant projects. Accordingly, the Board in this regard has observed that stipends still seem to be very low. Without having investigated the causalities in depth, the Board assumes that this is one of the reasons why many of the PhD students work only part-time, with insufficient time for research and limited engagement in academic life. This again causes the high drop-out rates, and the long completion times that we have also observed. As noted in the “General Information” provided by CUNI, standard completion rates are currently around 15–17% within 4–5 years—compared to EU averages, completion is more than 20% lower. This low completion rate has had a significant negative impact on both academic planning and on research productivity. Further, the ratio of PhD students to full and associate professors also leads to high supervisory loads, which further challenges the maintenance of effective mentoring.

The Board has identified some variation across RAs when it comes to the PhD programmes. Some RAs provide excellent examples of good practice, such as active participation in seminars and research networks, additional training in research and teaching, and the appointment of a second supervisor—often from another faculty within CUNI—to broaden the student’s academic network. These programmes have also become more attractive to international students, primarily due to the availability of English-language PhD and Master tracks. By contrast, other RAs still suffer from fragmentation, limited interdepartmental collaboration, and a lack of structured activities such as joint seminars or research groups. In some cases, PhD students devote most of their time to external employment, and not all programmes are available in English, which hinders international recruitment.

But generally, the RAs are aware that there is potential when it comes to establishing stronger PhD environments and a more structured graduate education which supports both the quality of the individual PhD student's academic work and of his/her future career opportunities both in and outside academia.

The Board has noticed that the RAs consider the new reform of graduate education (effective as from 1 March 2025 as provided in "General Information" elaborated by the CUNI) an important step which entails opportunities that it is important to exploit, but also potential negative consequences that need to be mitigated. The dilemmas of the reform concern both the balance between higher stipends and a smaller number of PhD students, and the fact that at its implementation, it will create budget deficits that may pause or slow down new enrolments for several years

3.6.3 Recommendations by the Board

The Board's recommendations regarding the PhD education at CUNI address both CUNI and the RAs. We recommend that

29. CUNI and the RAs evaluate and, if needed, revise existing practices at both university and RA level in light of the new reform and funding system. Special focus should be on increased collaboration at university level on structured graduate education (e.g. targeted courses for PhD students focused on research methodology and ethics, academic writing in multiple languages, language training, career planning and practical skills such as identifying and applying for research grants), and on continued internationalization of the PhD education (e.g. expanding the availability of English-language PhD programmes and Master English-language programmes; making English the working language for administrative procedures at the university-wide level; broadening international collaboration and mobility; and enhancing the global visibility and attractiveness of CUNI's doctoral education);
30. the reform offers an opportunity to restructure and unify PhD programmes within RAs, re-balance supervisory responsibilities, and prioritise exceptional full-time candidates dedicated to research. Selectivity and international competitiveness should be strengthened, while integration of PhD students into externally funded research teams should remain one of key objectives. Increased sharing of "best practices" by successful PhD programmes could also help improve the overall consistency and quality of doctoral training across the university;
31. equitable financial conditions should be ensured for "old-track" and "new-track" PhD students. Scholarship levels should be comparable and adjusted where necessary, taking into account inflation and the rising cost of living, to maintain fairness and support academic excellence across cohorts. Further, special attention should be paid to the specific situation and strategies of PhD candidates enrolled under the "old track", particularly regarding withdrawal patterns and structural factors that contributed to non-completion.

3.7 Societal impact and general visibility

3.7.1 *Observations by the Board*

Across the RAs, the societal impact is considerable, one that you would expect from a large leading public university that helps to shape society and provide a source of knowledge and domain expertise. The excellent examples of this work carried out by respective RAs include public outreach events organized by CUNI, public lectures, as well as talent programmes for high school students (summer schools, correspondence seminars, etc). The university researchers regularly appear in public media (TV, newspapers, radio) to discuss their research results as well as provide expert opinion on various topics. Besides scientific work, several RAs also publish monographs aimed at the general public. Finally, university researchers also play role in shaping public policy: several examples of high societal impact include advisory role to the government, municipalities and public officials. CUNI has a scientific communication office and has a high visibility in the media.

In terms of impact and visibility, translational results and strong ties to industry are also a hallmark one would expect to see from a top research university. While there are examples of successful collaboration with industry and spin-off companies, the examples are limited, and it is much less one would expect from a university of the size and quality of CUNI.

In terms of general visibility, multiple reviewers noted difficulty finding the relevant information on the English version of university website. Each faculty maintains their own website and for many it is quite difficult to easily find information about individual researchers and their research results. This not only complicates evaluation process but also limits the university's international visibility in terms of attracting top students or postdocs from abroad.

Finally, CUNI seems to have an untapped potential for engaging more with its alumni. Many western Universities work very actively with their alumni, e.g. through regular newsletters, meetings, alumni dinners. First, closer contact to the alumni may enable CUNI to draw on this network at, for example, job fairs for students where alumni can present their successful careers with degrees from CUNI. Second, by intensifying its relations with its alumni, CUNI may also cultivate a network to tap into for potential sponsorships and donations.

3.7.2 *Recommendations by the Board*

The Board recommends that

32. collaboration with industry and setting up of spin-offs is encouraged at university level, and that researcher evaluations reward translational outputs besides traditional bibliometric measures;
33. CUNI invests in services for setting up spin-offs;
34. CUNI intensifies its activities directed at university alumni;
35. CUNI coordinates with respective faculties on improving their web presence in English, making it easier for prospective applicants to navigate and find relevant information about each university researcher's work.

4 Executive summary of recommendations

The Evaluation of Creative Activities has highlighted the breadth of worldclass research at CUNI. This achievement is the result of the dedication of many researchers across all faculties often working with very limited budgets.

The 43 Summary Evaluation Reports provide detailed recommendations for each of the evaluated RAs. In addition, this 'Summary Final Report' provides general recommendations that apply across the RAs and which in some cases are recommendations to CUNI as a body, sometimes to the RAs as a collective. While the details of these recommendations can be found in Sections 2 and 3 above, the Board offers the following concise summary in closing:

First, the board recommends that CUNI invests in its staff and research students. First, this involves a revision of the system for distributing the COOPERATIO funds to ensure that fund go directly to the RAs in a transparent manner. Second, this involves working strategically both at making transparent decisions on preferential support of selected areas or initiatives, and at improving the general level of financial, administrative and other forms of support.

Second, the Board recommends that CUNI continues working strategically on using its funding efficiently and to the benefit of research and education across the entire university. This involves both active promotion of joint initiatives and sharing of best practices, and a harmonization of support and working conditions across the university.

Finally, the Board recommends that CUNI continues refining its incentive structures and the evaluation format to ensure that, across the entire university, incentive structures and evaluation format are aligned and well-suited for all areas of research.