
HR Excellence in Research: We incorporate ethical principles into everyday life

Ethics has always been an important topic for Charles University. However, in recent years, it has received more attention and has begun to be understood in a more comprehensive manner. In April 2022, Charles University adopted its first [Equal Opportunities Plan](#), based on a wide-ranging survey, committing itself to implementing measures to cultivate organizational culture, to improve working conditions, especially with regard to balancing family and work life, or to equalize the chances of those faced with a disadvantage. In short, with this plan, CU aims to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels safe and welcome and has the same chances to develop their own potential, regardless of any obstacles they may face.

One of the first steps taken in this direction was to create the position of a [CU Ombudsman](#). This position of defender of student and employee rights, i.e. the Ombudsman, was established at CU at the beginning of 2023 (it is regulated by [Rector's Directive no. 28/2022](#), as amended). During the past year, similar positions were created at all faculties and almost all units of Charles University. The persons holding this position accept and explore suggestions from students and employees and propose systemic measures to strengthen social safety and wellbeing at the university. The university Ombudsman is also responsible for coordinating all activities that take place in this area at CU.

Another important milestone is the newly established advisory body of the Rector – [the CU Equal Opportunities Board](#), in which all faculties and units of Charles University have a representative. The Board meets at least three times a year, and outside the meetings, carries out activities in three working groups, which are thematically focused on social safety, academic discourse, and pedagogical competencies. The Board comments on strategic materials that relate to equality and promoting social safety at the university, but it also serves as a very important communication channel between the Rectorate, faculties, and units for the equal opportunities agenda.

Charles University feels very strongly that efforts to create social safety, i.e. an environment of collegiality, integrity, equality, respect, openness, and attention to the needs of others, are essential for the sustainable functioning of an institution that subscribes to the values of democracy and that strives to be part of the global university community. We share this philosophy in our current strategic plan: “The core of a university are people. ... If we are to reduce the gap between ourselves and the world's best universities, care for people, their talents, and their experience, intuition and expertise must be our top priority. The best people make the best university.” ([CU Strategic Plan 2021–2025](#)). We also collaborate with other institutions on social safety in order to cultivate the environment of Czech universities as a whole.

The basic premise for ethics in the HR Award is that the university community is made up of all people – regardless of their gender, marital status or social circumstances, age, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or disadvantages. And this is the main prerequisite and goal of a prosperous, free, and welcoming university.