REPORT ON THE INTERNAL EVALUATION OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY

2019

INTRODUCTION

Charles University prepared its first report on the internal evaluation of the quality of educational, creative and related activities ("report on internal evaluation") in autumn 2017 in connection with the preparation of an application for institutional accreditation as it forms integral part of this under the Higher Education Act.

The Act stipulates, in relation to this report, that a higher education institution is obliged to prepare such a document under the terms stipulated by its internal regulations, but no less frequently than once every five years, and to update it annually by means of an appendix in the period between the two reports. The Statute of Charles University requires in this matter that a report on the internal evaluation shall be prepared once every five years and always before the preparation of a new strategic plan or as decided upon by the Rector.

The purpose of the relevant provision of the Statute is to introduce a model in which the report on internal evaluation is one of the key inputs for the preparation of a new strategic plan, as an in-depth review of the CU's activities in the previous period, it represents an essential, well-founded contribution to reflection on its future direction so that the University develops in accordance with its mission and the demands placed on it by its employees and students, graduates, critical friends and representatives of society.

The preparation of the new Strategic Plan of Charles University for the years 2021-2025 should be completed in the course of 2020 through discussion and approval of the proposal by the relevant bodies of the University. Therefore, in accordance with the requirements of the Statute, the second report on the internal evaluation of Charles University, was prepared after a period of two years.

The concept of the second report differs from that of the first one due to the different contexts of their origin. While the 2017 report primarily served as the basis for the further development of the newly established quality assurance and internal evaluation system as well as proof that, even before its enshrinement in the legislation of Charles University, a number of elements were used to assess the University's activities, the 2019 report represents one of the major inputs for the direction of the University as a whole over the next five years.

Although their purpose might differ both reports are closely intertwined as they share a common background – the international evaluation of Charles University within the *Institutional Evaluation Programme* of the European University Association ("EUA-IEP"). Prior to the preparation of the first report, an initial evaluation took place, the results of which were received by Charles University in the summer of 2017. This being said, from the very beginning, it was CU's plan to undergo the follow-up evaluation, which was to focus on how the University dealt with the recommendations received and what progress CU had made in the meantime. From the outset, it also aimed to have international "critical friends" contribute to the preparation of a new strategic plan with their independent view.

The documents from the follow-up evaluation meet the requirements that the University places on the internal evaluation report within its internal regulations. These are:

- Charles University Self-evaluation Report, prepared on the basis of broad cooperation within the University community, which comprehensively documents what the University has done in the past two years, i.e. since the initial Internal Evaluation Report (2017), both in the light of the recommendations from the EUA-IEP initial evaluation, as well as on its own initiative;

- Charles University Evaluation Report, prepared by the international team on the basis of the Self-evaluation Report and particularly the on-site visit of the team consisting of discussion with a number of representatives (students, staff, University and faculty leaders, University partners), which represents an external critical review of Charles University resulting in a number of conclusions and recommendations for its further development.

The University therefore decided not to prepare another, separate document, but to work with what constitutes a synthetic review of its activities, including the identifying of strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and risks, contains recommendations for its further development, and fully meets the requirements placed on the internal evaluation report by the Rules for the System of Internal Evaluation and Quality Assurance of Charles University.

CHARLES UNIVERSITY SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

Contents

CHARLES UNIVERSITY SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. That fuller attention is paid by the university's senior leadership to horizon scanning and future proofing in the efforts to realise the university's mission and vision.[1]
7. New quality arrangements should be predicated on innovation and development and not on the reinforcement of a compliance mindset that simply calibrated quality on the basis of inherited norms provided by the government.

Charles University underwent an international assessment at the height of its preparations for institutional accreditation, which is one of the most significant changes in Czech higher education in recent years. The documents that were created for this purpose, as well as the conclusions of the international team, were utilized immediately after the final report was delivered to the university. The self-evaluation report prepared by the university was used as the basis for the assessment of the institutional environment, the quality of which the university was required to prove to the National Accreditation Authority for Higher Education. The international evaluation process itself **provided evidence that Charles University has a functioning quality assurance and assessment system**, which is a *conditio sine qua non* for the granting of institutional accreditation, i.e. for entrusting the right to develop, manage and evaluate degree programmes to the autonomous competence of the relevant higher education institution for the next ten years. **One of the first tangible results of the international evaluation was the granting of institutional accreditation to Charles University in the spring of 2018**.
However, this was not the only outcome, as the **conclusions and recommendations arising from the international evaluation were repeatedly discussed at various levels**, in particular by the Board for Internal Evaluation, the Rector's Collegium and the meetings of the expanded Rector's Collegium. These bodies **set out the priority tasks** to be addressed by the University **in the period 2018-2020**, i.e. in line with its current strategic plan, **and the tasks it will elaborate on in the new plan**.
In the last two years, the University has endeavoured to increase the quality of educational and research activities and thus strengthen its standing, not only in the Czech Republic, but also among universities in Europe and the world. A **number of changes have been made at Charles University** during this time. These were **also influenced by external factors**, in particular by the amendment to the Higher Education Act of 2016 and its consequences for accreditation and quality assurance, or by substantial innovation of the national research evaluation system. In both these areas, the **University was a pioneer**: it was the first Czech university to receive institutional accreditation and, at the same time, the first university to launch its own comprehensive research evaluation system. **The orientation of the University towards the search for its own paths and the future** was also manifested in the area of internationalisation through the establishment of an alliance with five top world universities.
The **most important changes and reflections on them form the body of this report**. Preparation of the report was coordinated by a thirteen-member **management team** comprising four Vice-Rectors, the Chancellor, the President of the Academic Senate, the Chairman of the Study Committee of the Academic Senate, three members of academic staff, a student and a staff member from the Rectorate. Six members of the team are also members of the Board for Internal Evaluation. The material prepared by the management team was then circulated to the faculties and university institutes for comments. Following the incorporation of all suggestions the material was subsequently discussed by the Rector's Collegium and the Board for Internal Evaluation. The report is submitted in this form to the international team and also the academic community of the

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

university. **The report will be made available to the faculties for further internal discussion**. The suggestions made during the preparation of the report, together with the conclusions of the international team, will be of considerable value **in the preparation of the University's new strategic plan for 2021-2025**.

1. GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

1.1 STRATEGIC PLAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2 PERSONNEL POLICY

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

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

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

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

The outcomes of changes made up until now in the area of personnel policy include, in particular, the **amendment of the Code of Ethics**, and an **amendment to the Competitive Hiring Process Code** is also being prepared. This had previously set the basic rules for the whole university; how-

ever, in practice, it was different at the faculties. The proposed amendment enshrines the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Upon its adoption, the University will ensure that faculty practices are harmonised as much as possible. One of the long-term goals of the university is to establish a **university-wide Relocation Centre for new employees** and/or visiting academics from abroad or the **establishment of a transparent, functional and benefit-linked career development path** framed by a **career code** at the institutional level. The goal is to create a basic framework that should become a tool for transparency and, as far as possible, the standardisation of career development, including a consistent link between the gaining of the academic positions of associate professor and professor and internal wage regulations.

The Action Plan foresees that most of the new measures will be adopted in 2020, so the **University is currently in a something of a period of transition**, when many things are still at the preparatory stage. Due to the fragmentation of the university and the division of competences between the university and faculties, which is a result of the historical development and Czech legislation, it can reasonably be assumed that in some areas this will be achieved through a hard-negotiated compromise between faculties, and in some areas it may be merely a search for the greatest common intersection; as a result, the change may be too radical for some, but too moderate for others. For the most part, though, these steps will allow the faculties to tighten up their practices. At the same time, the university is obliged to evaluate the results of its past practice at intervals of several years and use this as a basis for planning any measure that needs to be taken in order to ensure its compliance with the Charter and the Code. Both will be the subject of ongoing external evaluation.

1.3 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

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

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

1.4 PRINCIPLES FOR THE ALLOCATION OF GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES

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

The **University's Principles for the Allocation of Funds and Subsidies** are an important management tool of the University. They are the basis for the distribution of institutional funds provided to the University from the state budget for educational and research activities between the faculties and other constituent parts. The Principles reflect both the priorities used by the Ministry of Education to allocate budgets between individual higher education institutions and activities prioritised by the University. They are discussed annually with the faculties and other constituent parts of the University and approved by the Academic Senate on the basis of a proposal submitted

to it by the Rector. The further division of allocated funds lies within the competency of the faculties and other constituent parts. **The principles thus represent a combination of centralisation and decentralisation**. **Centralisation** consists of, on the one hand, solidarity funds (not only cohesion, but also the rules for the distribution of the fixed part of the budget), and on the other, a contribution to the fund for the support of university projects, infrastructure, or the 4EU+ alliance etc. On the other hand, the **motivational performance component is based on competition between the faculties** in the field of research, foreign academics and students, mobility, or, as the most recent indicator, completion rate of studies. In the near future, the University expects that the results of the research evaluation will also be linked to the budget breakdown principles. The University also intends to strengthen the link between Principles and the contribution of constituent parts to its objectives as defined in the new strategic plan.

1.5 DATA, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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

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

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

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

2. QUALITY CULTURE

2.1 INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND RELATED AGENDA

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

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

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

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

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

- **Profiling**. Besides the obligation to briefly describe the objectives and course of study for the public, the submitting body describes the aims and objectives of the proposed degree programme, its professional and scientific background, its relation to public demands and other aspects.

- **Curriculum.** A new curriculum typology has been implemented to allow greater flexibility in study and support different types of innovation. The implementation of some newly formulated content requirements and curriculum recommendations, such as the requirement to implement research training courses, is being prepared.

- **Staffing.** A clear structure of responsibility for the degree programme guarantor, the guarantors of the core subjects of the curriculum, and other teachers was defined. This is related to the requirement to balance the age structure of the guarantors and teachers in the given degree programme. Personnel profiles of key teachers were also implemented, and their research activities updated in relation to the curriculum.

- **Research**. A clear requirement was defined for linking educational and research activity at degree programme level. For this reason, the Board for Internal Evaluation began to intensively monitor grant activity and the research results achieved by the workplaces that guarantee the given degree programme. In addition, the staffing sheets of teachers are monitored, particularly those for key teachers and guarantors.

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

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

The University attaches a key role to the system for the regular quality assessment of degree programmes, as it is evaluations by internal experts as well as independent reviewers that allow it to reflect more deeply on its educational activities, which should help it to develop them conceptually and base them on proven international standards and good practice. It also sees it as an important opportunity to start discussions with faculties and degree programme guarantors on the values that should characterize education at Charles University in terms of one of the IEP team's recommendations, i.e. that the University's considerations concerning the improvement of its activities, which are the basis of its further development, should be based on three pillars. These are (1) the objectives and purpose of higher education, including the preparation of students for active citizenship, the supporting of their employability and personal development, the existence of a broad base of advanced knowledge and an environment that encourages research and innovation; (2) a framework of social and political objectives that are in line with the Bologna principles, and tools such as study permeability, mobility, recognition, social inclusion or transparency; and (3) to ensure that Charles University's profile is imprinted both in everyday teaching and in learning outcomes. At the same time, the University will also focus on how its profiling as a research university translates into everyday educational practice.

2.2 OBJECTIVES, CONCEPT AND FRAMEWORK OF EDUCATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In order to achieve these goals, the University uses **decision-making mechanisms** based on the **interdependence between University management and the faculties** (decision-making and management) and administrative support (activities and decision-making). Charles University is built on a long tradition and a high degree of democracy. University management realises that appeal to tradition often masks rigidity and unwillingness to change. **However, changes in these areas cannot be made from the top** as they require the approval and active cooperation of the faculties and their workplaces. As revolutionary changes of managerial nature could jeopardise

the whole system of teaching and research, the management of the University endeavours to hold dialogue with the faculties and introduce changes gradually. The careful division of responsibilities between the University, its central institutions and faculties brings a desired **balance between centralisation and decentralisation** and **ensures organisational unity while respecting and promoting field-specific diversity** (unity in diversity).

2.3 INTEGRATION OF DEGREE PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

2.4 INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

In order to enable the University to meet the objectives related to the provision, evaluation and development of educational activities, **a modification of the decision-making procedures and bodies responsible for conceptual planning and control and/or the assessment and evaluation of degree programmes was introduced**. At university level (the Rector and the Collegium) in particular, the conceptual planning of educational activities to determine the direction that should be taken by the University is underway. This is continued by the Board for Internal Evaluation which, through the granting of institutional accreditation, has started to approve degree programme proposals since 2018 and will provide degree programme evaluations from 2020 on-

wards. Bodies and faculties of the University are supported by the **Department of Quality of Education and Accreditations**, which was established in January 2018. Its task is to provide not only **methodological and organisational support** connected with other administrative and control activities, but also **conceptual support**, consisting in the monitoring of current trends and their introducing to University bodies so that selected elements are reflected in the University's own quality assurance system. This division of roles ensures effective quality assurance in the phases of conceptual planning, preparation and development of degree programmes (*ex ante* quality assurance), as well as in the implementation and evaluation of the results of already implemented degree programmes (*ex post* quality assurance).

3. TEACHING AND STUDY

3.1 CONTRIBUTION OF EXTERNAL PARTNERS TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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

When designing and, above all, implementing high-quality teaching, the University utilises not only its own academic staff and international experts, but also **involves professionals**. This applies in particular to those degree programmes that prepare graduates for regulated professions. A greater degree of their involvement is typical, for example, for the **training of future teachers, doctors and non-medical staff** (general nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, etc.). This trend has met with a favourable response from students, and the University will continue the practice.
An example can be mentioned from the Faculty of Education, where the preparation of new degree programmes included a review of existing curricula, i.e. primarily analysis at the level of the degree programme guarantor, students and academic staff who were to participate in its implementation. **However, an integral part of this was communication with the professional community**, as well as **with graduates**. In 2019, **representatives of the relevant professions were invited to take part in new accreditations through a seminar**. The participants in this meeting, i.e. former students, primary and secondary schools teachers, representatives of professional associations and representatives of the Ministry of Education, provided feedback on the intentions for new accreditation as presented by faculty management. Suggestions for further modifications in the curricula could be submitted in writing or through individual personal meetings with representatives of the individual programmes. **Based on their suggestions, some key pillars of accreditations** in the training of future teachers were consolidated, in particular **increased reviews of practical work experience, specialised didactic subjects and specific involvement of professionals in some practical seminars**. The goal of these measures is to change curricula in accordance with current requirements.

3.2 FEEDBACK ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

10. That steps are taken to review the student feedback process to ensure greater consistency in questionnaire design and that wider thought be given to how this might link with other approaches to a holistic concept of programme assessment. Such a review might also give some thought to the problem of "questionnaire fatigue" amongst students, something that was raised during a number of meetings with the team.

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

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

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

3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS AND INTRODUCTION OF MODERN TEACHING METHODS

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

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

3.3.1 Development of teachers' pedagogical skills

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

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

3.3.2 Pædagogium – Centre for Pedagogical Skills

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

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

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

3.3.3 Training of academic staff in e-learning

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

To this end, and in order to use digital means, in 2017 the University established the **Centre for the Support of E-learning** which offers a central installation of LMS Moodle, as well as a tool for Adobe Connect webinars and tools for storing Stream server video recordings. Qualification

courses, academic literature and anti-plagiarism checks utilise the **Turnitin system**. The basic pillar of the Centre's work is the **high-quality staffing of the workplace**.

Academic staff and students find in the Centre stable, everyday support for their work (several hundred academic staff turn to it every year). It also runs a guidance and referral portal and organises regular training sessions and training for groups of academic staff on requested topics. Training sessions are oriented both towards technology (software functionality) and didactics (modern didactics with the application of technology). Both the transfer of experience and communication with faculties is secured through a **network of faculty e-learning coordinators and a network of faculty coordinators for the implementation of the Turnitin system**. The University has also recently tried to support MOOC courses.

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

4. RESEARCH

4.1 EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF RESEARCH WORK

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

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

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

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

Despite this setting, Charles University has succeeded in finding and developing **a system of research support programmes** that is unique in the Czech Republic and that **contributes to the long-term priorities of the University as a whole**, i.e. **interdisciplinary and inter-faculty cooperation** aimed at **interdisciplinary research** and **overcoming the** historical **fragmentation of fields and workplaces** (PROGRES), **the activities of outstanding research groups** that bring

together experienced researchers, postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students (UNCE), **establishing new groups by talented international researchers, or junior scholars returning after** long-term stay abroad with the aim of receiving a prestigious international grant (PRIMUS), and the **award for outstanding researcher workers** (Donatio Universitatis Carolinæ).

Prospectively, because the **national evaluation system is undergoing a fundamental change** that should bring it closer to a comprehensive evaluation, as envisaged by the principles of e.g. the Leiden Manifesto, which the University considers inspiring. This new national system aims to break the aforementioned mechanical link between individual results and institutional support for the university. The result of evaluation will now be the inclusion of institutions in a grading scale based on aspects including not only bibliometry and peer review, but also an assessment of the institution's facilities. **Charles University will thus be faced with a decision on how to use the institutional funds that will be allocated to it as an institution**. **This is what the internal evaluation system is intended to assist it with**.

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

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

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

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

The first evaluation cycle started on 1 March 2019 and will run until the end of 2020. The chosen **benchmark universities** are Universität Heidelberg, Københavns Universitet, Università degli Studi di Milano, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Universiteit Leiden and Universität Wien. The first four of these are partners of Charles University within the 4EU+ alliance, and the remaining three are partners with whom the University is engaged in long-term cooperation. **The Creative Activities Evaluation Board, which is the supreme body of evaluation, is composed exclusively of outstanding foreign academics and researchers**; it was set up as an independent body and on the basis of recommendations of the International Advisory Board and nominations from the aforementioned partner universities. The Expert Panels

will be set up in a similar manner. While the Board is responsible for the course and results of the evaluation as a whole (i.e. assessment of the research quality of relevant constituent parts), the **Panels** oversee the peer review and assessment of individual fields and research areas.

Charles University is the first university in the Czech Republic to undertake such a complex and internationally driven research evaluation; a similar evaluation has taken place only at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. At the same time, the University is aware of a number of **pitfalls** that can undermine the intended purposes and objectives of the evaluation. These include, for example, the **need to link university and national assessments** in order to avoid the duplication of requirements for faculties and institutes, which could bring a shift towards formality. Another not inconsiderable problem is **finding a significant number of peer reviewers**, as the university develops a number of disciplines in which bibliometric analysis does not provide a basis for assessing their standard. The outcome of the evaluation will depend heavily **on the personal involvement of actors at all levels**. This means primarily the sufficient involvement of burdened members of the Board and panels in the evaluation so that qualified conclusions are reached for both the University and faculties, institutes and academic and research staff. For all of the mentioned internal actors, this is something new that must succeed, as otherwise there is a risk that it will crumble and shall not continue. Once the evaluation has been carried out, it will be essential to find agreement **within the university on how to deal with conclusions and recommendations**, i.e. how to further conceptually develop and fund research. The University will have to find e.g. a balance between planned research and research deriving from the professional interests of academic and research staff and students. However, the University's existing science management system already leaves significant scope for faculties and university institutes and their staff to identify research topics themselves. The University came to this conclusion in the course of the self-assessment that was carried out in connection with the preparation of the documents for the HR Award (see 1.2).

4.2 DOCTORAL STUDIES

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

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

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

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

Emphasis on the consistency of doctoral studies and the setting of common standards led to the **establishment of ten Doctoral Study Programmes Coordination Boards in individual fields**

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

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

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

4.2.2 Improving efficiency in the administration of doctoral studies

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

4.2.3 Enhancing the support for doctoral students

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

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

At the university level, further support aimed at the development of doctoral research activities and mobility is realised through the **Grant Agency of Charles University** and **competitions for specific university research**. These support students in their fledgling scientific work so that

they are then able to process and realise a scientific project with other grant agencies. However, this is not "try-out research", as a student can receive funding of around € 10,000 (typically for a period of three years). Because of the considerable interest among students in research projects, only around a third of projects receive support. Students may also obtain funds for foreign mobility required by doctoral studies from the Mobility Fund.

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

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

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

4.2.4 Supporting the development of transversal skills for doctoral students

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

5. SOCIAL ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

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

5.1 KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER SYSTEM

The most significant recent change in the area of knowledge and technology transfer and cooperation with external partners is the **establishment of a subsidiary of Charles University, known as Charles University Innovations Prague s.r.o.** (June 2018), which synergistically complements the activities of the **Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer**. The purpose of the company is to represent Charles University in the ownership structure of emerging spin-off companies and to manage its industrial property portfolio at more advanced stages of the commercialisation process. The company focuses chiefly on **providing advisory and management services in setting up commercial companies** for the purpose of applying the results of the Uni-

versity's scientific and research activities or other intellectual property rights (spin-off companies), facilitating external capital involvement for these companies, negotiating license, transfer or similar arrangements between the University and third parties for the exploitation of intellectual property rights, for direct access to spin-off companies, for the commercial exploitation of the University's intellectual property, and for any other negotiations necessary to commercialise intellectual property rights that the University is authorised to dispose of. Although some divestments have already been made, the University perceives the subsidiary as a **long-term investment, the benefits of which will be felt over several years**.

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

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

5.2 COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

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

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

5.3 INNOVATION NETWORK

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

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

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

6.1 STRATEGIC FOCUS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

International relations and collaboration with universities around the world have been established practice at Charles University for years, leading to a gradual expansion of bilateral contacts. However, over the past two years, these relationships have taken on a **new qualitative dimension**, supported by the IEP team's conclusions and recommendations of 2017. The University thus **orientated itself more towards cooperation with leading universities** and focused on high-quality research that, at the same time, contributes to reinforcing teaching and education, including the introduction of innovations. The trends of this development were outlined in the new **Internationalisation Strategy of Charles University**, which was adopted in autumn 2018.
In addition to standard relationships, the University has started to focus on some European and non-European universities, cooperation with which offers **more intensive scientific research potential** or **promises high-quality pedagogical development through joint programmes**. Indeed, this focus of the University's orientation opens up new avenues for understanding how to tackle joint research topics that contribute to new issues in research. This makes it possible to

approach the topic in question from different angles according to the focus of the relevant research group at the relevant university; for Charles University, cooperation with a prestigious university has the benefit of further improvement of its activities, allowing it e.g. to utilise "best practices" and "benchmarking". Therefore, the goal is not the number of contractual partners, but the selection of prestigious workplaces with which the University is endeavouring to establish close ties. In addition to bilateral co-operation, these efforts result in close relationships based on the interconnection of several workplaces (universities). This includes contacts in the field of **university alliances**, such as 4EU+, CELSA, or LERU, and the establishment of increasingly intensive co-operation with **strategic partners**. At the same time, emphasis is placed on the linking research and teaching, known as research based education.

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

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

6.2 THE 4EU+ ALLIANCE

A completely new trend in internationalisation was introduced through the integration of Charles University into the 4EU+ alliance, which stimulated very intensive discussions focused on joint scientific and pedagogical activities from the very beginning. The cooperation between six universities (Universität Heidelberg, Københavns Universitet, Università degli Studi di Milano, Sorbonne Université, Uniwersytet Warszawski and Charles University) is a challenge to harmonise research activities utilising four thematic areas, the so-called flagships (*Health and Demographic Change in an Urban Environment*; *Europe in a Changing World: Understanding and Engaging Societies, Economies, Cultures and Languages*; *Transforming Science and Society: Advancing Information, Computation and Communication*; *Biodiversity and Sustainable Development*), and teaching activities, including curricula. Part of this joint strategy is the full integration of mobility as part of individual educational programmes. This will allow for greater flexibility for both students and academics within the alliance, which may lead to an increase in their chances for future employment. In order to realise these goals, Charles University has created financial resources that will not only support its participation as a whole, but will also serve the faculties involved.

In addition to financial support, the University provides faculties with its assistance or project consultation. The faculties have created the first wave of starting projects funded by the university. Although intensive discussions between participating universities are conducted at the level of their leadership, faculty deans are kept informed and, in addition, negotiations are underway with faculty coordinators of the 4EU+ alliance. The European Centre of Charles University participates in the development of these activities and negotiations in close cooperation with other departments of the Rectorate.

Distinguished academics from partner universities are also being involved in the internal evaluation of Charles University's research activities, both in the Creative Activities Evaluation Board (which is fully international, constituted based especially on the suggestions of the 4EU+ alliance leadership together with the proposals submitted by the International Advisory

Board), and Expert Panels as well as reviewers. This will provide the University with an independent perspective on its scientific and research work and will help the partners in the alliance to become more closely acquainted with one another.

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

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

6.3 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

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

In 2018, the **Centre of Strategic Partnerships**, which coordinates all activities focusing on strategic partners, was founded by the Rectorate. A prerequisite for the submission of high-quality projects to a university-wide competition for cooperation with strategic partners was the definition of strict requirements. In addition, an evaluation committee was set up by the University's academic staff to select high-quality projects for financial support. Evaluation is performed using a methodology developed for the purpose, which is based not only on the quality of the project and its investigators, but **takes into account the prospects and duration of future cooperation, as well as the involvement of fledgling researchers, i.e. doctoral or post-doctoral students**. At the same time, the project as a whole includes an end-of-year evaluation (the first of these took place at the end of 2018). Information gathered from the evaluation is discussed within the Rector's Collegium, which can take decisions on the future direction of inter-university cooperation. Evaluation may also take the form of meetings between teams from cooperating universities (cf. e.g. cooperation with Universität Zürich or a joint multidisciplinary meeting between University staff and the Università degli Studi di Padova under the title "Padova meets Prague" in May 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

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

University self-government bodies and mechanisms, as well as external stimuli, including international evaluation, have highlighted the areas in which the University can improve its decision-

making activities and the quality of education and research. The University has already **strengthened its self-governing competencies** by acquiring institutional accreditation. The relatively newly established **Board for Internal Evaluation** contributes to the **conceptual development of educational activities**, with an emphasis on their quality. The management of Charles University also pays special attention to **defining and fulfilling the quality of research activities, personnel development and internal administration**.

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

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

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

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

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

CHARLES UNIVERSITY FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT

Charles University, Prague

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT

December 2019

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Contents

1. Introduction

This report is the result of a follow-up evaluation of Charles University, Prague. The European University Association's (EUA) Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) originally evaluated Charles University in 2017 with the report submitted to the University in July 2017. The university requested that IEP carry out a follow-up evaluation when it submitted its original registration for the programme in 2016.

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme

IEP is an independent membership service of the EUA that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

In line with the IEP philosophy as a whole, the follow-up process is a supportive one. There is no prescribed procedure, and it is for the institution itself to set the agenda in the light of its experiences since the original evaluation. The institution is expected to submit its own self-evaluation report, which will describe the progress made, possibly indicating barriers to change.

The rationale is that the follow-up evaluation can assist the institution in evaluating the changes that have been made since the original evaluation: What was the impact of the original evaluation? What use has the institution made of the original evaluation report? How far has it been able to address the issues raised in the report? The follow-up evaluation is also an opportunity for the institution to take stock of its strategies for managing change in the context of internal and external constraints and opportunities.

As for the initial evaluation, all aspects of the follow-up process are also guided by four key questions, which are based on a "fitness for (and of) purpose" approach:

1   What is the institution trying to do?
2   How is the institution trying to do it?
3   How does the institution know it works?
4   How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2 Charles University's profile

The broad characteristics of the university's profile have, not surprisingly, remained largely unchanged since the initial IEP evaluation in 2017. Charles University continues to be widely viewed as the pre-eminent university in the Czech Republic while it also actively cultivates its reputation and contacts within the wider European higher education space and beyond.

In terms of key institutional metrics[1], overall student numbers have been consistent in recent years with 2018 showing a total of just below 48,500. The proportion of students at the first, second and third cycles of study are also relatively stable. Staff numbers have increased from 4724 to nearly 4900 in 2018 with this change attributable to an increase in designated research staff. Income has risen from 390 to 438 million euros in the period from 2017 to 2018.

At the time of the initial evaluation visit the university was fully engaged in a significant change relating to institutional academic autonomy through a national accreditation process. Accreditation was achieved in 2018 and a large scale internal quality assurance exercise in programme accreditation followed. Around two thirds of programmes have now completed the rigours of this process.

The leadership of the university has a commitment to reform within the context of the history, philosophy and culture of the university. This reform agenda is strongly informed by an awareness of the challenges of being competitive in the wider European higher education space.

At the time of this follow-up visit the process for introducing a new strategic plan (2021-25) was under way with completion of that strategy expected in the summer of 2020.

1.3 The evaluation process

The self-evaluation process at Charles University was co-ordinated by a team comprising four Vice-Rectors, the Chancellor, the President of the Academic Senate, the Chairman of the Study Committee of the Academic Senate, three members of academic staff, a student and a staff member from the Rectorate. A draft of the self-evaluation document (SED) was considered by staff in faculties and institutes with feedback taken into account before final scrutiny of the document by the Rector's Collegium and the Board for Internal Evaluation (BIE).

The self-evaluation document of the Charles University, together with the appendices, was sent to the IEP evaluation team in September 2019. The visit of the evaluation team to Charles University took place from 29 October to 1 November 2019.

The evaluation team (hereinafter named the team) consisted of:

- Professor Sokratis Katsikas, Rector, Open University of Cyprus, team chair
- Professor Hannele Niemi, Research Director and UNESCO Chair of Educational Ecosystems for Equity and Quality of Learning, University of Helsinki, Finland
- Ms Liv Teresa Muth, PhD student, Ghent University, Belgium
- Dr Raymond Smith, former Registrar, London Metropolitan University, UK, team coordinator

The team thanks the Rector, Professor Tomáš Zima, for his commitment to the IEP process and his kind hospitality throughout this visit.

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[1] Figures are taken from the appendices to the university's Self-Evaluation Document.

The team also thanks the Vice-Rectors and the Chancellor for their involvement in a wide range of meetings and in helping the team to understand the complex workings of the university. In particular, the team thanks Věra Šťastná and her colleagues for the exemplary arrangements that have helped to make the evaluation run smoothly and efficiently.

Finally, the team expresses its sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in this IEP evaluation for their openness and willingness to discuss all issues concerning the university.

2. Governance and institutional decision-making

2.1   At the outset it is perhaps important to highlight the extent to which the team found a well informed and interested staff body engaging with the IEP process[2]. This had been underpinned by a cogently presented self-evaluation document and relevant appendices showing key developmental trends (metrics) for a five-year period. The university's preparations for, and responses to, this evaluation suggests to the team that governance and institutional decision-making processes are well-equipped, and indeed well accustomed, to responding to external scrutiny; and that the university's response is built on a mature and assured approach to critical self-reflection.

2.2   The recommendations delivered during the initial IEP evaluation in 2017 were wide-ranging and challenging. Moreover, many of the recommendations took a medium to long-term view of the university's future development. In some ways this acknowledged the university's then principal pre-occupation relating to the national accreditation process. The team understands from the university's leadership team that a number of the recommendations informed the accreditation process but that, for pragmatic reasons, the fullest consideration of the issues raised by the recommendations, is being integrated into the development and discussion of a new university strategic plan for the period 2021-2025. This also makes sense in terms of the national cycle of higher education planning undertaken by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports which inevitably also needs to inform the future direction of the university.

2.3   In the short-term, the university has decided to focus on the recommendations relating to quality assurance systems, the methodologies relating to the assessment of quality and how these core elements can be provided in a holistic way, given the on-going emphasis within the university on strongly decentralised decision-making within the faculties. The university is also keen for this reflection to be stimulated by a 'bottom-up' approach.

2.4   In terms of organisational structure, the number of faculties remains unchanged since the initial evaluation. From a governance perspective, the Internal Evaluation Board is now seen to be functioning effectively, while in 2018 a new Creative Activities Evaluation Board was established to act as the "supreme body of evaluation" for scientific work (research) and is notable for being composed exclusively of well-recognised foreign academics and researchers. The team also notes that there continues to be a strong representation of students in institutional decision-making bodies.

The team recognises that some changes in governance and organisational structures will be a medium to long term endeavour and notes that the university intends to use the development of the new strategic plan as a mechanism for strengthening its internal integrity and cohesion. In this respect, it is remarked in the SED that "one of the key priorities will be unity in diversity ("in pluribus unitas") i.e. an emphasis on the integrity of the University through common and unifying elements of

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[2] The team found some minor examples of a lack of awareness amongst university staff and students but this did not detract from the team's general view on the level of engagement with, and understanding of, the IEP process.

university governance, while respecting the special aspects and autonomy of the different fields existing at the university".

2.5 The team is supportive of this approach, understanding from the senior leadership that various options would be considered in the future to ensure that the university developed in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness. This might include some recasting of the faculty arrangements. For the time being however the focus, in organisational terms, is on "vision and goals, people, data and information and communication". In some ways this is evidenced by the fact that faculty autonomy is seen by the team as remaining strong notwithstanding the move to institutional accreditation and preparations for a new internal university-wide quality processes.

2.6 The SED sets down a number of areas of progress in relation to university-wide approaches people, data and information and communication. The team is pleased to note the examples provided by the university and, in particular, the receipt of the Human Resources Excellence in Research Award at the beginning of 2019[3]. As part of the award the university has agreed to implement an action plan which is represented in a Gant chart that can be found on the university's website. While this focus on research staff progression is, in many ways, admirable, the team regards it as important that the university continue to take the broadest view of how staff across the university are supported and incentivised. It has found that there is a general lack of financial incentives for improved performance across both academic and administrative staff. *The team recommends, therefore, that 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.*

2.7 During its evaluation visit the team has found areas relating to data, information and communication that need some targeted action to address lack of progress or shortcomings. The examples are:

   i   some procedures and practices are still variable across the faculties, e.g. student surveys

   ii   integration of Management Information Systems (MIS) at the university level is a work in progress and consequently quality assurance is not yet fully evidenced based

   iii information does not always reach the targeted recipients e.g. the PRIMUS project, outcomes of evaluations

   iv   a lack of transparency in some cases of decision-making e.g. appointment of faculty departmental heads.

2.8 The team recognises that the university may well be aware of most of these specific issues. Nonetheless, the examples do drive to the heart of the effectiveness of change management, not least in relation to a lack of consistency in faculty practices. The approach to student surveys, for example, was raised in the initial evaluation and the team strongly believes that bringing institutional consistency to this important quality

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[3] In 2005, the European Commission adopted a European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These two documents, addressed to researchers as well as research employers and funders in both the public and private sectors, are key elements in the EU's policy to boost researchers' careers. Institutions that are willing to endorse the Charter and Code can apply for the "HR Excellence in Research Award", which implies a long-term commitment.

feedback mechanism through common core questions (with scope for individual faculty nuances) can and should be resolved without undue delay.

2.9 In relation to data, the team is encouraged by the range of initiatives on institutional information systems. A number of these are described in the SED. This said, the ability of the university to secure and enhance quality assurance in all areas of activity is, according to the SED, highly dependent on accelerated progress in "improving the collection of data and information and networking with faculties and institutes of the University". This is clearly an issue of the consistency and comprehensive capture of data but just as importantly the interoperability of core information systems.

2.10 Charles University is a large institution with significant student and staff constituencies. The team was advised that the main artery for information and communication was the university's website and that important decision-making documents such as the reports of the Rector's Board are published on the website as a matter of routine. In the view of the team it would not be surprising, however, for there to be some weaknesses in information flow and communication of decision-making. The examples noted by the team do, however, encompass some important matters and there may be some issues that need to be considered by the university in reinforcing messages that appear on the website, particularly in the faculty context. Equally, for information particular to individual faculties, perhaps Deans should investigate if there are any barriers to the way that this is communicated to all staff.

2.11 The team, therefore, *recommends that, in relation to the strands of data management, information and communication, the university:*

   i)   *redoubles it 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 developed to allow for interoperability.*

   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.*

2.12 Immediately prior to the follow-up visit, the team received an early draft of the university's new strategic plan. In discussion with the senior leadership it became clear that this was very much a first draft, prepared by the Rector's office, which had been based on early feedback from faculties about what they regarded as the three most important priorities for the university, and scrutiny of strategic plans published by other comparable universities. In addition, the SED indicates that in the preparation of its new strategic plan the university is taking into account the recommendations arising from the initial IEP evaluation in 2017. The intention is, therefore, to engage the whole university community in public discussion of the next draft and then establish a document that can be scrutinised by the Senate, Scientific Board and Board of Trustees. This finalised document would include timelines and metrics together with an implementation plan to be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis. The current draft strategic plan has five key areas: people, excellence in research, the transformative nature of education, internationalisation and the encouragement of diversity within a thriving university environment. The team is confident in the processes associated with the development

of the new strategic plan, and the five key areas highlighted in the first draft show consistency with the ambitions and likely future direction of the university. In this sense the first draft of new strategic plan, in the view of the team, provides a sound platform for a final plan that can be approved in the summer of 2020. As this process continues *the team recommends that particular attention is paid to the highlighting of key priorities, SMART goals and KPIs.*

3. Quality Culture

3.1   As is noted earlier in this report, the transition, in the period 2017-2019, from an external nationally-based system of programme accreditation to an institutional system that allows for this process to be wholly within the control of the internal quality mechanisms of the university is a very considerable milestone in the development of the university's core quality culture. In some respects, of course, some of the key disciplines in programme accreditation remain the same. However, the measures of responsibility and accountability are fundamentally different and require a different mind-set for all involved in these processes. Just as importantly, the achievement of institutional accreditation allows for a large degree of self-defined creativity in the overall development of the university's programme portfolio and the ways in which synergies in subject areas can be better achieved with a progressive focus on inter-disciplinarity.

3.2   At the time of the initial evaluation a newly formed Board for Internal Evaluation (BIE) had been established to help steer the university through the national accreditation process. It was clear at the time that this forum was more than a pragmatic response to an immediate external requirement. The team has been able to establish for itself that the BIE is now an integral element of governance and institutional-decision-making for the university. It has been the clear central driving force behind the internal accreditation of over 600 study programmes – at the time of this evaluation two-thirds completed – and the involvement of six members of the BIE in the university self-evaluation team for this follow-up evaluation (see 1.3 above) is seen by the team as a testimony to the embedded role it now plays in the quality processes of the university. The achievement of institutional accreditation might be regarded as one of its first successes.

3.3   The team also notes that, while the BIE has been concentrating on programme accreditation, a recently established Department of Quality of Education and Accreditations, based in the Rectorate, is looking to finalise the details of an internal evaluation system. During discussion with   staff in this new department the team was provided with a draft diagrammatic representation of this evaluation system and this appears to offer a robust approach to the evaluation process with an important constituent element of external scrutiny through a peer report. The team commends the inclusion of external reporting in the evaluation process and wishes to reinforce a view from the initial IEP evaluation that external business and industry-based stakeholders have an appropriate say in the on-going development of the curriculum. The draft narrative accompanying the diagram also emphasises the connection between faculty self-reflection on programmes and the ability of the institution to make properly informed strategic decisions.

3.4   While the BIE has had to concentrate on its role as gatekeeper of study programme accreditation, the team noted that it has also been able to start developing its own sense of quality culture e.g. reflecting on underpinning principles and how these can be embedded in processes. The SED lays down a clear set of standards and measures of quality for the preparation and development of individual degree programmes. These are articulated under a series of headings – profiling, curriculum, staffing and

research. The team was impressed by the university's commitment to significantly strengthening the international context in relation to programme development by drawing on best practice from abroad, not least through the 4EU+ Alliance[4]. In terms of the evaluation system, the university states in the SED that it intends to reflect further on the three cornerstones of quality orientation highlighted in the initial evaluation. This is to start as a discussion between faculties and degree programme guarantors (the academic member of staff overseeing the running of the programme) with a view to translating this into a common understanding across the university. In the view of the team this focus on faculty ownership of quality culture is important and the team notes the strong evidence that, to date, this had not been inhibited by institutional accreditation. Deans that the team met were generally supportive of the transition to internally and centrally guided quality systems although some commented that it was rather early to take a considered view on these arrangements. Nevertheless the university needs more than the *status quo* to take advantage of the freedoms offered by institutional accreditation. *The team therefore recommends that 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.*

3.5   Alongside this, *active student engagement with a quality culture needs to be encouraged, supported and developed.* It has been noted earlier in this report that the university has provided for significant levels of student representation on the key institutional and faculty decision-making bodies. Students that the team met during the course of the visit were generally informed and interested in the quality of their study programmes. This was true for students at all levels of study. It is notable, however, that these students often appear not to see their involvement and engagement with formal consultative mechanisms as a way of driving change in the quality of their programmes or their wider learning experience. The team heard from the senior leadership team that efforts were being made to encourage greater student participation in the deliberative forums of the university but that this is a slow process, possibly made more difficult by an historic suspicion of centrally directed initiatives. This, it was suggested, was not simply a matter of student passivity but a wider societal problem that needed addressing. Notwithstanding such issues, the team is of the view that the university, at both central and faculty levels, needs to play a full role in encouraging and welcoming students as equal contributors to the operation of quality systems and mechanisms. This might be aided by demonstrating that such engagement is not simply a bureaucratic chore, a box-ticking exercise or part of a prescribed central directive but one that values and takes note of their contribution and can, subsequently, lead to the enhancement of their learning experience and environment. As the demands of programme accreditation dissipate, *the team recommends that 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.*

3.6   The team was interested to explore two other areas of activity relating to quality culture – the management of quality in research and the approaches to quality in professional, non-teaching areas. It is noteworthy that the university has spent

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[4] An alliance of universities (Universität Heidelberg, University of Copenhagen, Università delgi Studi di Milano, Sorbonne Université, University of Warsaw and Charles University) looking to share developments in pedagogy and research, funded under the European Commission's European Universities Initiative.

some considerable time and energy since the initial evaluation in preparing a system for evaluating the quality of research work. The SED describes the goal of this work as finding "a tool to help the university to ensure the conceptual development of the disciplines…to ensure that they meet international standards and to strengthen the position of Charles University as an important research institution in the long term". Through intensive activity, the university believes that it has developed a system of evaluation that, while complex, provides a platform for delivering the key research strategies of the university. The evaluation process is multi-faceted and draws on a self-evaluation report for the constituency, research indicators, bibliometric analysis, peer review and an on-site visit. The team notes that the evaluation cycle started in March 2019 and the intention is to cover all areas of research activity by the end of 2020. There is a key section in the SED that points to some of the potential pitfalls in this approach to evaluating research including the need to link university and national assessments, the need to find a significant number of external peer reviewers and the crucial importance of a committed staff engagement at all levels of research activity. Given the early stage of the evaluation process the team is not in a position to make judgements on its effectiveness or the extent to which these pitfalls of such a complex system were being avoided. However, the team is largely supportive of the university's conceptual framework for the evaluation of research and recognises the senior leadership drive to put this in place in a relatively short time period; and in particular it commends the focus on international benchmarking and the desire to follow international best practice in evaluating research.

3.7   During the visit the team arranged to meet a range of professional service (non-teaching) staff from centrally based departments. In those meetings staff presented a consistent picture of professionalism and commitment to the mission of the university. Working relationships with faculty-based staff were said to be largely positive, although embedding new systems and securing university-wide buy in following institutional accreditation is clearly a challenge. However, as far as the team can determine, there is no process currently in place for the wider evaluation of quality in these professional service areas. There are, of course, opportunities for individual professional development but this does not extend into a broader infrastructure for quality assessment. Given the current priorities relating to the evaluation of both education and research the team understands that there are capacity issues in taking this forward. Nevertheless the output of these departments is clearly important both in their own terms and in relation to their interaction with other aspects of quality evaluation across the university. *The team therefore encourages the university to consider the development of arrangements for the measurement and enhancement of quality in professional service areas.*

4. Teaching and Learning

4.1   Institutional accreditation sets a high bar for the university's responsibility for continuously improving and enhancing the student learning experience. Clearly, much thought has been, and continues to be, given to the new internal systems for accrediting and evaluating study programmes at all levels. In terms of curriculum development the SED states that "a new typology has been implemented to allow greater flexibility in study and support different types of innovation". In addition other curriculum content requirements such as research training courses are being prepared. The success, or otherwise, of these arrangements will be played out in the coming months and years. The university rightly notes in the SED that the annual evaluation of degree programmes by internal experts and independent reviewers will provide that platform for continuous improvement in pedagogy. Indeed the team was able to scrutinise an early example of such external scrutiny by way of a specially faculty commissioned report on the five year law and jurisprudence (Mgr) programme. The benefits to the team of seeing this document were not with needing to understand the strengths and weaknesses of this particular subject programme but with the broader approach and the ways in which this can help deliver an enhancement benefit. The team agreed that this example offered many encouraging signs of how the new evaluation system could work across the university and the benefit that this could offer to students in their programme learning experience. The conclusions were challenging but offered on the basis of "a critical friend" and with international comparability of the programme firmly in mind.

4.2   This look into a future enhancement agenda, however, is very much dependent on the core building blocks for evaluation being in place and, of course, a willingness to close the loop. Recommendations for change need to be followed through in a systematic fashion and their impact monitored. The section on programme feedback in the SED is perhaps illustrative of some of these issues, particularly given the very large numbers of programmes currently being delivered by the university. In the context of one of the recommendations from the initial IEP evaluation it is stated that "in the case of student evaluation of teaching, the University has not made any progress, agreement on a common core has not been reached and the organisation of teaching and student surveys continue to differ from faculty to faculty"[5]. It is clear to the team that efforts continue to be made by the university to bring a more consistent and reliable approach to this type of student feedback and, in principle, there appears to be no great disagreement on how this might be achieved. A Tracking module has been developed by the university which should, when operational, support the systematic monitoring and evaluation of degree programmes. This, however, is predicated on fully functioning and inter-operable information systems. The team has commented earlier in this report on the importance of well-developed and inter-operable information systems and it reinforces that point in the context of the enhancement of learning and teaching across all programmes.

4.3   While Charles University has significant student and staff populations, it is generally agreed that, going forward, the number of study programmes is too large to be

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[5] The team found this to be an issue that existed *within* faculties as well as *across* faculties.

sustained as a sensible strategic objective. The process for consolidating the educational portfolio, however, is at an early stage and, as might be expected, there remain a mixture of views in faculties on how far this should be taken. Smaller niche programmes often attract small numbers of students and are highly resource intensive as a result; but, inevitably, there are often arguments made for maintaining such programmes linked to local or national imperatives or the particular expertise of an individual academic staff member. The university's senior leadership believes that there is scope for a reduction of 20-25% in the programmes currently being offered without damaging the balance between mainstream and more specialist programmes. Some of this might be achieved by a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary programmes and the team understands this to be a key ambition for the university. At the same time faculties have been asked to analyse where there is overlap in provision and bring programmes together; and there are some examples of faculties consolidating their portfolios in this way. The team is supportive of the university leadership's view that the number of programmes being offered needs to be reduced and it is encouraged to note that in the final phase of programme accreditation, taking place in 2020, that the BIE will be challenging faculties and programme guarantors, in a positive and constructive spirit, to be more innovative in the revisions and updating of their programmes and to take advantage of the opportunities for interdisciplinary synergies both within and across faculties.

4.4   This accrediting/re-accrediting process can therefore draw academic colleagues together to consider the relevance and position of their programmes within the wider university portfolio and how far those programmes reflect a quality and currency that can be measured positively against wider international benchmarks for similar programmes. Equally this process can start to play a role in embedding greater variety in approaches to teaching, learning and assessment and the consistent articulation of learning outcomes for courses and programmes. The initial IEP evaluation in 2017 recommended a general updating in learning concepts and the team notes that some faculties are now delivering actions relating to "teach the teacher" e.g. by arranging pedagogical support. Such support is also being made available at the university level and the Centre for Pedagogical Skills (the Paedagogium) has been established as a "coordinating platform for systematic support in this area". These initiatives appear to be having some traction as the SED notes that "following repeated requests from academic staff, the Paedagogium will further extend its range of services to include, for example, peer observations in teaching, with follow-up reviews, networking of people interested in pedagogical innovations, lectures by foreign experts". The university sees these developments, together with support for e-learning skills amongst staff, as providing an enabling framework for academic staff to reflect on their teaching practice and take advantage of examples of best practice both from within the university and through international networks such as the 4EU+ alliance.

4.5   The team received evidence from students and staff that some gradual improvement is taking place in relation to the teaching and learning experience. In its meeting with Senate representatives the team was told by student representatives that there appeared to be a new focus on improving the quality of learning. Deans are seen as an important driving force in this change of mind-set. However, it was also commented during that meeting that, at a national level, there is a lack of interest in the evaluation of teaching and little financial encouragement for changing this at the institutional level. And while there are some small indications that the Ministry

of Education is now becoming more pro-active in this sphere, the pace of change is still very slow.

4.6   From the student perspective, the team came across a mixed spectrum of views on the quality of the teaching and learning experience. These views seemed to be determined, in some measure, by the programme being studied and, more often, the faculty setting. In some faculties very large class sizes are the norm with teacher centred approaches largely dominant and this often leads students to feel that they are passive learners with little sense of interaction with their teachers. On the other hand, students from smaller faculties did not, in general, experience this problem and they commented favourably on their relationships with professors. The team was interested to hear, within this range of student opinion, a view that some academic staff would teach in the same manner whether facing 500 or 50 students. This type of approach meant that little or no attempt is made to engage with the student body ("chalk and talk"), formal feedback and its discussion is limited and, when provided, is often delayed meaning that any formative benefit is limited, learning platforms such as Moodle are rarely used and assessment approaches are built around oral examinations. Many of these themes are picked up in the external peer programme review of law and jurisprudence that has been undertaken in the Faculty of Law (see 4.1 above). And, as was noted in that review, some of these issues can be tackled by a change of mind-set within the academic community and an acceptance that change is often positive and should not be feared or shied away from.

4.7   As had been the case with the initial IEP evaluation, the team is struck by the metrics relating to drop-out rates at all levels of study. These continue to sit at a level above 50% for bachelor's students and even for doctoral students are as high as 46% in 2018. During discussion with senior leaders, academic staff and students, a number of factors were said to be at play in relation to these statistics. The team was advised that, in terms of Czech higher education, these levels of student drop-out are fairly typical and that Charles University is better placed than most in this respect. However, there is a growing awareness at a national level that, in a wider European context, drop-out levels on this scale suggest systemic problems with the quality of teaching and learning at Czech universities. One particular problem at bachelor's level revolves around students joining two programmes at the start of their academic studies and then dropping out of the one that they do not see as fulfilling their career ambitions. This suggests to the team that the headline drop-out rate is perhaps not a true reflection of what is happening in practice, particularly as this practice cannot be regarded as a transfer under the national legislation.

4.8   The university acknowledges in the SED that it has not been able to start a comprehensive analysis of premature termination of studies because (a) it needs to complete its system for conducting surveys between different target groups and (b) it needs the outputs from the newly established evaluation of degree programmes to provide both quantitative and qualitative data. The team is in no doubt that the issue of drop-out rates is multi-faceted and it notes that some actions relating to academic staff training and learning modalities are already in place to try and tackle some of the potential underlying causes. These efforts need to be consolidated and built upon and in the view of the team have to be properly informed by a thorough going analysis of all aspects of the problem. In the light of the national context, the university might find it helpful to work with other Czech universities in this analysis. Given the potential reputational damage, resource inefficiency and wastage of

student and staff time and energy that flow from high drop-out rates the team *recommends that the university takes forward this 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.*

4.9 It is clear that the university is very aware of the many challenges it faces in relation to teaching and learning. The issues raised by the team in this chapter of the report are part of that wider picture. *In the view of the team the change agenda in relation to teaching and learning requires significant commitment from all parts of the university and it recommends that the response to this challenge should be driven at the institutional level by the appropriate Vice-Rectors.*

5. Research

5.1 It is noted earlier in this report (see 3.6 above) that, alongside institutional accreditation, some of the most significant progress made since the initial IEP evaluation has been in the area of research management and the adoption and operationalisation of a new system for evaluating the quality of research. This has been set within a clearly articulated medium to long-term strategy for research management (Strategy for Creative Activity Evaluation) initiated at the senior management level, and adopted following extensive discussion across the university.

5.2 The starting point for this change in approach to research is a clear desire to look beyond national boundaries for the benchmarking of all aspects of research activity being delivered at Charles University. In some ways this approach has been adopted to challenge a degree of internal complacency that, perhaps unsurprisingly, emanates from the historic pre-eminence of the university in national terms. From the senior leadership perspective, however, the national horizon will not necessarily help the university to maintain and improve on research excellence as it moves through the 21st century. In the same vein, the university is keen to challenge the lack of mobility and dynamism in the way research activity operates at the university, including the lack of wider research experience from outside the pool of Charles University graduates.

5.3 The SED is clear about the other main driver behind this step-change in approach to research. The national evaluation system is in the process of change, moving from a mechanical link between individual results and institutional support to a comprehensive evaluation of the research performance of the institution. The accompanying aspect of this new national system will be the allocation of funds to the university as a whole. This national resource allocation model therefore requires the institution to consider what mechanisms it needs to have in place to evaluate the quality of its research activity and how, in a strategic sense, it wishes to prioritise those activities going forward. As the university notes, it will need to find a balance between planned research and research deriving from the professional interests of academic and research staff and students. The senior leadership does not underestimate how much of a balancing act this will be given the historic sense of primacy in relation to individual research and governance arrangements that involve 17 faculties each with a significant sense of their own autonomy in scientific matters.

5.4 In many senses – culturally, organisationally, financially - the university is making a significant investment in these new arrangements for evaluating research. The team, while recognising the complexity and potential pitfalls of the exercise, believes that it is based on sound principles[6], provides for an extremely important and determining international dimension and is an ambitious response to the recommendations made in the initial IEP report in 2017. In particular, the results of the evaluation are to be used "to find a consensus" on the university's research flagship domains. In the meantime, the team notes that the university has come to

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[6] In the SED mention is made of the Leiden Manifesto as a valuable resource in developing the university's position. The Leiden Manifesto can be found at http://www.leidenmanifesto.org/

a decision, following discussion with faculties, "to integrate existing flagships into broader units that are more transparent for both strategic partners and the public".

5.5   Underpinning these overarching arrangements the team notes that, since the initial IEP evaluation, the university had been able to take forward various initiatives in support of the research domain. These include PRIMUS and an increase to the value of the basic doctoral scholarship. The team views the PRIMUS initiative as being of particular importance given that it is designed to support younger researchers with international experience establish new research groups and laboratories – thus increasing the diversity of research backgrounds at work in the university – and also stimulate the longer term ambition to attract major international grants through the European Research Council (ERC). Since the launch of the first PRIMUS projects in 2017 the team was told that the number of ERC grants had doubled from four to eight.

5.6   The SED provides a detailed account of the current standing of doctoral studies in the university; and while there are some positive features in the prevailing landscape the university accepts that transforming the quality of doctoral studies is a long term project. It has already been noted earlier in this report (see 4.7 above) that the level of drop-outs from doctoral studies is extremely high and this trend has shown no sign of change in recent years. Equally, the team notes that the completion times for doctoral candidates are significantly above the regulatory norm (three year doctoral programmes were taking on average an extra three years to complete and four year doctoral programmes were taking on average an extra two years to complete). These are concerning indicators and it was therefore important for the team to read in the SED that the university has commissioned "an extensive, university-wide analysis focusing mainly on [the] socio-economic standing of doctoral students and factors contributing to the timely and successful completion of studies, but also comparing the organisation of doctoral studies with leading Czech…and international universities[7]…". While the outcome of this analysis was not available to the team at the time of its visit, the team believes that this benchmarking of the organisation and quality of doctoral studies against high ranking domestic and European universities offers a first step towards the greater integration of doctoral studies and allows scope for the establishment of a doctoral school if that is seen as a future strategic goal of the university. It is stated in the SED that the results obtained from this critical analysis will be evaluated and reflected in the modification of research and incorporated in the new strategic plan. The team *recommends that as part of this process the results of the analysis 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.* In addition, *the team recommends that, 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.* In the very short term, the team sees the limit now being placed on the number of students that can be supervised by an individual supervisor as a first step towards improving standards of doctoral supervision.

5.7   From its various discussions with all levels of the university's research community, the team witnessed a high level of consensus that the university needs to be more agile and dynamic to progress its reputation in a highly competitive international research environment. *The key challenges for the university in research continue to*

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[7] Masaryk University, Palacky University, Universität Heidelberg, Sorbonne Université, University of Warsaw.

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 community 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.

6. Service to society

6.1   The team discussed the university's wider relationship with its local, regional and national partners – service to society - with a range of internal and external stakeholders. The focus of these discussions was largely on developments in knowledge and technology transfer together with the internal mechanisms that had been introduced to support progress in this area. In part this reflected the fact that one of the recommendations from the initial evaluation in 2017 stressed the need for the university to provide "a more coherent approach and demand sensitive…approach to external organisations seeking expert help and support". Perhaps another significant factor in this focus is the way in which knowledge and technology transfer relates to the university's research strategy. As is noted in chapter 5 of this report, the university is seeking to transform its approach to research and that includes the exploitation of research outputs. Thus both demand and supply sides of knowledge and technology transfer can be accommodated. And this might provide an impetus to improving the status of applied research in the university and setting this within the broader research strategy.

6.2   Since the initial IEP evaluation the most significant change in the area of knowledge and technology transfer has been the establishment of Charles University Innovations Prague s.r.o.. The purpose of the company, as described in the SED, "is to represent Charles University in the ownership structure of emerging spin-off companies and to manage its industrial property portfolio at more advanced stages of the commercialisation process". The team is encouraged by the establishment of this company but it is also aware that, in the wider European higher education space, such companies have been a feature of university structures for some time. Thus while the university perceives the benefits of the company to be realisable over "several years", there is already a large degree of "catching-up" that the university needs to achieve.

6.3   The team was told by external stakeholders that there are some signs that Charles University Innovations Prague is making a difference to external commercial relationships, not least in overcoming some of the legal bottlenecks that were commonplace prior to its creation. Alongside this, there is also evidence of improvements in communication and work has been completed on an online catalogue of services offered by the university. The Commercialisation Board is becoming more effective as a result of improvements in the infrastructure for technology transfer. In these respects the university is regarded as being more business-like. Furthermore, the SED outlines a number of initiatives taking place at both university and faculty levels to stimulate the understanding of how commercial innovation might be taken forward and exploited. These include the Via Carolina Innovation Fair and the beginnings of knowledge transfer projects in the social sciences and the humanities[8].

6.4   External partners, however, stated that too many barriers still exist to allow for a real step change in exploiting opportunities in this area. In short, the university is not viewed as a natural partner for the exploitation of commercial activity and a

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[8] One notable example of knowledge transfer in the humanities that impressed the team relates to a gaming product that draws on historical data and brings together historians and IT experts. Over 6000 copies have been sold through a spin-off company.

rigidity in approach in many subject areas results in those looking for a more business orientation to pursue their ideas elsewhere. One external partner suggested that exposure to the core elements of commercialisation should be a formal aspect of career development for academic staff. The team understands only too well the difficulty in transforming this particular landscape and many universities struggle to manage this aspect of their activity in a dynamic and productive way. At this moment in time this needs to be considered a medium to long-term project for Charles University and planned for accordingly. *The team recommends, therefore, that 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.*

6.5   In the shorter term, faculties indicated to the team, perhaps unsurprisingly, that they needed the central knowledge transfer infrastructure (Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer) to operate more efficiently. Within the university, innovation scouts[9] are viewed as useful addition to knowledge transfer mechanisms and provide a much needed support for faculty activities. However, external partners felt that there was a large element of inconsistency in the way that the innovation scout system worked and that while some faculties took the role and purpose seriously others were less engaged with the project. A strong argument was made from this external perspective for there to be KPIs on commercialisation, including a more clearly defined and measured role for the innovation scouts. Indeed, measures of performance in commercialisation are becoming more important as government strategy is starting to focus increasingly on the way research and development can help transform the economy in the decade to 2030.

6.6   In taking forward this knowledge and technology agenda the university must not lose sight of the wider context of service to society. It is clear to the team that the university has wide-ranging connections to local and national governments, business, industry and the professions and that its standing in the city of Prague and more widely in the country is well-recognised and respected. The Charles University magazine *Forum* offers good insights into the work of the university and, in many cases, is able to show how this work interacts with society and seeks to make a positive difference to the lives of those outside the confines of the university. During its visit, the team was able to note how this work can be manifested within one faculty – the Law Faculty - through the operation of legal clinics and a focus on the position of refugees entering Europe and how this relates to human rights. *The team views this wider sense of service to society as an area for fuller consideration in the university's future development and recommends that this is taken forward as part of the discussion around the content and goals to be agreed in the new Strategic Plan.*

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[9] Innovation scouts are employed partly by the faculties and partly by the Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer. The role is designed to support the interplay between faculties and central university areas.

7. Internationalisation

7.1   The team is pleased to note the publication in 2018 of an internationalisation strategy for the university. This fills an important gap in the university's wider strategic development. In introducing this strategy the university has paid particular attention to the qualitative dimension of the selection and development of its external partnerships. The university has selected 15 "strategic partners" and provides development funds, determined on a competitive basis, for mutually beneficial projects with those partners. This reflects one of the conclusions arising from the initial IEP evaluation. In terms of organisational infrastructure, the recently formed Centre for Strategic Partnerships, based in the Rectorate, supports the prioritisation of international partnerships and, importantly, plays a part in the information gathering for the end of year evaluation of these strategic partnership projects. The Rector's Collegium is then tasked with considering these outputs and agreeing any changes to the future direction of inter-university cooperation. The team regards this as good practice in terms of overseeing the quality of international partnerships while continuing to stimulate interest in faculties and amongst individual researchers, particularly "fledgling" researchers, in the opportunities offered by cooperation with European partners.

7.2   One of the most striking developments in internationalisation at Charles University is its involvement in the 4EU+ Alliance (see 3.5 above). As the SED notes this provides a focus for joint scientific and pedagogical activities. In particular, the Alliance looks to harmonise work across four thematic flagship areas. These are: Health and Demographic Change in an Urban Environment; Europe in a Changing World: Understanding and Engaging Societies, Economies, Cultures and Languages; Transforming Science and Society: Advancing Computation and Communication; Biodiversity and Sustainable Development. In terms of teaching activities this includes harmonisation of curricula. The team regards this as an ambitious enterprise with implications not just for education and research but quality assurance and governance. One of the key underlying principles for this initiative is stated in the SED as follows, "participation in the 4EU+ Alliance…means that Charles University must learn to cooperate with partner universities more closely than it had done previously". However, the university also acknowledges that this arrangement is not without its significant challenges, including "reconciling differences between partner universities, such as educational curricula, conditions for ensuring permeability and mobility, or cooperation in the area of governance". The team shares this view of the challenges that sit in the way of making the Alliance a measurable success and there are clearly dangers associated with disenchantment setting in if the barriers to cooperation are not overcome. It also presents a level of complexity that might place a considerable burden on institutional leaders and managers, particularly when new governance and management systems for quality and research have only recently been established and are in process of bedding in. *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.*

7.3   It is also the case that if the university is to live up to its international strategy and, indeed, the priorities being set out in the new Strategic Plan, further action will need to be taken in relation to its current staff profile. For example, the team does not believe that the percentage of international staff working at the institution is commensurate with the standing of a university such as Charles University, and while some initiatives such as "extraordinary professors" have been introduced in an attempt to change the staff make-up the team *recommends that the university explores all avenues in its attempts to break down the barriers relating to international staff recruitment.* In addition, *the team recommends that 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.*

8. Conclusion

8.1 The Charles University SED is a mature reflection on the university's current work, the successes and challenges of the last two years and an articulation of its broad strategic direction over the next five years. Through its narrative it has, in many ways, presented an honest and persuasive SWOT analysis. And while the university community exudes a pride and confidence in its many activities it is also increasingly aware of how it needs to position itself not simply in a national context but alongside the leading universities of Europe and beyond. It is quite clear to the team that the senior leadership of the university is determined to challenge complacency in its ranks and accelerate a change agenda that will lead it to greater competitiveness in relation to its European peers.

8.2 At the same time the university is, by its own admission, seeking to change its culture to embrace greater cooperation and collaboration with European partners. It is also noteworthy that the university is determined to use the freedoms offered by institutional accreditation to press ahead internally with greater faculty interaction across both education and research. This is especially the case with the development of the programme portfolio and a move towards greater interdisciplinarity. The team regards this as an important opportunity to reduce the number of programmes being offered by the university and to innovate in a range of areas relating to programme design and delivery. It believes that there is a growing acceptance in the university that this provides the platform for the enhancement of quality in education. It is also an ideal opportunity to engage/re-engage students in the future development of their university – not just for the benefit of the current cohorts but also for those that will be joining the university in future years.

8.3 The senior leadership is very conscious of the legal and historic aspects to the governance and organisation of the university and the team is confident that it is capable of navigating an appropriate path that respects those traditions while at the same time promoting change and innovation in the critical areas of university activity. There are many indications of this mood of change, not least in research and the growing internationalisation of the university. In addition, the university is planning to invest significantly in its future along interdisciplinary lines. A project involving the building of contemporary and sustainable buildings to house two new inter-faculty research centres – the Biocenter and the Globcenter – within the Albertov Campus has recently gone through a successful architectural competition. The project involves the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics and the First Faculty of Medicine and the university hopes that "first rate research will attract scientists and students from around the globe" and that the campus "facilitates interaction between researchers and students". This is obviously a project that, all things being equal, will be delivered over a number of years but in many ways it encapsulates the type of change and innovation that the team believes is crucial to the future direction of the university and its ability to compete in an increasingly challenging external environment.

Governance and Institutional Decision-Making

- 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.

- In relation to the strands of data management, information and communication, the university:
  i)   redoubles it 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.

- 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.

Quality Culture

- 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.

- Active student engagement with a quality culture needs to be encouraged, supported and developed.

- 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.

- The university considers the development of arrangements for the measurement and enhancement of quality in professional service areas.

Teaching and Learning

- 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.

- 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.

Research

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

Service to Society

- 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.

- 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.

Internationalisation

- 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.

- The university explores all avenues in its attempts to break down the barriers relating to international staff recruitment.

- 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.

ANNEX: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNAL EVALUATION BOARD

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNAL EVALUATION BOARD

The Internal Evaluation Board is an academic self-governing body whose activities support and develop the provision and internal evaluation of the quality of the University's educational, research and related activities. Its scope is stipulated by the Higher Education Act, the Statute and the internal regulations of the university, in particular by the Code of Procedure for the Internal Evaluation Board, the Accreditation Code and the Rules for the System of Internal Evaluation and Quality Assurance.

The Internal Evaluation Board of Charles University currently consists of 27 members. During 2019, one member of the Board stepped down. The vacant position was subsequently filled based on a nomination submitted by the Research Board of Charles University.

In the course of 2019, a total of 13 plenary sessions of the Board took place, with the agenda, resolutions and minutes of each meeting being published on the public section of the University's website. In addition, a number of Panel meetings took place, usually at least once between plenary sessions of the Board. Following expert assessment, draft resolutions on degree programme proposals were prepared and discussed at these meetings. The Working Groups dealt mainly with the conclusions of the EUA-IEP international evaluation of Charles University and the emerging research evaluation system.

The most comprehensive task of the Board in 2019 was the assessment of degree programme proposals and the granting of authorisations to implement degree programmes. At the beginning of 2019, the Board assessed the 2018 accreditation agenda, i.e. it slightly revised some requirements and criteria for the assessment of degree programmes and some internal regulations, further specified requirements for degree programmes, and also adjusted the requirements for the submission of a degree programme proposal. Overall, a more transparent environment for the submission and assessment of degree programmes was prepared. To this end, the Board set up a Working Group.

The Board adopted a resolution on a total of 224 degree programmes, granting 166 authorisations for 10 years and 52 authorisations for 5 years. When granting authorisation, the Board also utilised the option to request an inspection report (82 cases) or remedial measure (27 cases). The impetus for requesting an inspection report was in most cases minor shortcomings in the staffing of a degree programme or in the scope of the research activity of the teachers or workplaces guaranteeing the relevant programme. Remedial measures were required particularly in situations that necessitated the addressing of shortcomings in staffing, or that necessitated specific adjustments in the study plan. A total of 10 Consultants (experts who are not members of the Board) were invited for the expert assessment of the proposals.

As part of the accreditation agenda, the Board intends to complete the "re-accreditation" of all degree programmes in 2020 so that only newly accredited (i.e. according to the rules set by the 2016 amendment to the Higher Education Act) degree programmes are opened for the 2021/22 academic year.

In addition to the accreditation agenda, the Board addressed the extensive agenda of degree programme evaluation, which represents another pillar of the quality assurance system at Charles University. In this case, too, the Board set up a Working Group which, with the help of the Department for the Quality of Education and Accreditation, worked on the specification of evaluation parameters. The Working Group further elaborated subsidiary procedural and content aspects of the evaluation, such as the self-evaluation report prepared by the guarantor of the degree programme, involvement of external evaluators and other participants, etc. In 2019, the evaluation system, from technical parameters to the formulation of evaluation principles and processes, was prepared for a pilot cycle, which will take place in 2020.

In 2019, the Board also contributed to the EUA-IEP follow-up evaluation of the University through participation in the preparation of CU's self-evaluation report and, above all, in discussions with the team.