

# **CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

## *EVALUATION REPORT*

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# 1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of Charles University. The evaluation took place from 9-10 September and 4-8 November 2024.

## *1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme*

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The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (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).

The distinctive features of IEP are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support for improvement

The focus of IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

All aspects of the evaluation are guided by four key questions, which are based on a “fitness for (and of) purpose” approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does the institution know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

## *1.2 Charles University’s profile*

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Charles University (CU) is a premier institution in the Czech Republic and holds a prominent position as a leading centre of higher education, research, and innovation. Founded in 1348, it is one of the oldest universities in Europe and the largest in the Czech Republic, comprising 17 faculties across multiple locations. Its academic reach spans disciplines including medicine, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and theology, offering a broad range of bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral

programmes. CU is a key contributor to the Czech higher education landscape, recognised for its strong employability outcomes and low unemployment rates among its graduates.

Nationally, CU plays a vital role in the development and dissemination of knowledge, partnering with governmental bodies, public institutions, and industries to address societal challenges. It is an integral part of the Czech Republic's research and development ecosystem, with active participation in national initiatives and strategic alignment with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. CU's revenues reflect its substantial scale, exceeding EUR 600 million annually, with significant funding sourced from public grants and external collaborations. Its impact extends beyond education and research, as the university actively engages with regional and national development efforts, contributing to policy-making, innovation, and community advancement.

### *1.3 The evaluation process*

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The self-evaluation process was undertaken by ten members of the self-evaluation group and was focused on the fulfilment of the strategic plan of CU for the period 2021- 2025. The draft of the self-evaluation report was created in the first half of 2024 and was subsequently discussed by the university's bodies. The self-evaluation report is divided into five chapters that correspond to five key areas of the strategic plan. Each chapter is a self-reflection on what CU has achieved so far, which goals it expects to meet at the end of 2025, where it changed its priorities, and where it didn't succeed as planned.

CU's self-evaluation report, together with the appendices, was sent to the evaluation team on 28 June 2024. The visit of the evaluation team to CU took place from 9-10 September (online meetings) and 4-8 November 2024 (site visit). In between the online meetings and the site visit, CU provided the evaluation team with some additional documentation.

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

- Tatjana Volkova, Professor and Chair of Studies Quality Commission, BA School of Business and Finance/Academic Information Centre/Council of Higher Education Latvia, team chair
- Misko Djidrov, Vice-Rector, Goce Delcev University, Stip, North Macedonia
- Tommaso Di Mambro, student, PhD candidate, University of Ferrara, Italy
- Carmen Stanciu, Assistant Professor, National University of Performing Arts and Film "I.L. Caragiale" (UNATC), Bucharest, Romania
- Ronny Heintze, Deputy Director for International Development, AQAS e.V., Cologne, Germany, team coordinator

The team thanks the rector, Prof. Milena Králíčková, and her team, Věra Šťastná, Head of Department of Analyses and Strategies, Josef Fontana, Vice-Rector for Strategy and Development, and Filip Machart, Department of Analyses and Strategies, for a visit that was excellently organised.

## 2. Governance and institutional decision-making

The governance of CU reflects its rich history and complex institutional makeup. Comprising 17 semi-autonomous faculties, CU operates under a federated model that grants significant independence to its constituent units. This decentralisation allows faculties to tailor their operations to specific disciplinary needs. However, it also means fragmentation and inefficiencies in policy implementation and administrative coordination. At the central level, the governance framework is led by the rector, who collaborates with the Rector's Collegium, the Academic Senate, the Research Board, the Internal Evaluation Board, and the Board of Trustees. These bodies serve as key decision-making and advisory entities, ensuring the alignment of faculty-level initiatives with the university's overarching purpose. Currently, however, CU does not feature a clearly defined overarching mission at the central institutional level that would align with, incorporate or contextualise the different statements in separate "partial visions". Different versions of mission statements are articulated across various levels and documents, leading to a fragmented understanding of the university's core purpose. For instance, a vision and mission are outlined in the "Sustainable Development Strategy of Charles University: Towards Sustainability 2030," but these are not reflected in the university's primary strategic plan for 2021–2025 or prominently featured on its website. To a certain extent these partial strategies can be explained by the drafting of different documents at different times. However, it leaves open the question how these documents relate, connect and come together. Also, this indicates that the mission statements in such documents might have been specifically tailored for a particular agenda, for example, the sustainable development agenda. Similarly, other strategic documents and faculties often include mission statements tailored to their specific contexts, but there is no cohesive vision and mission that unify these diverse elements under a single institutional identity. CU needs an integrated and transparently communicated overarching mission that aligns all levels of the university and provides a clear direction for both internal and external stakeholders.

Despite CU's obvious structural strengths, there is room for significant improvement. Findings indicate that the absence of a unified vision hinders coherence across faculties. While CU has made strides in developing a new branding identity and operational improvements, the disparities in governance practices among faculties remain a persistent issue. Moreover, the system's reliance on historically entrenched practices has often resisted modernisation efforts, delaying critical reforms.

CU has demonstrated commendable efforts in strategic planning and achieved initial successes in implementing its Strategic Plan for 2021–2025. CU's current strategic plan (2021–2025) emphasises themes such as sustainability, internationalisation, and digital transformation. However, a new approach to strategic planning is required to enhance its effectiveness and alignment with best practices. The current structure of the plan lacks clearly defined strategic goals; instead, it lists activities and indicators, often without quantifiable measures or clear objectives. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) without corresponding strategic goals create challenges in performance measurement and accountability. Typically, activities are designed to follow strategic goals, not replace them, underscoring the need to rethink the structure of strategic planning. As universities face increasing pressure for performance measurement and accountability, CU must reconsider its existing practices to develop a strategic framework that sets measurable goals, establishes a coherent link between objectives and activities, and enables systematic evaluation of progress. While these

priorities are well-conceived, the lack of integration among various strategies—including sustainability, regional impact, and digital transformation—has diluted their potential impact. Additionally, KPIs are inconsistently applied, and the absence of systematic monitoring mechanisms limits the ability to assess progress effectively.

To address these gaps, CU should prioritise developing a shared vision that articulates its long-term aspirations and elaborate its overarching mission. This vision and mission should integrate diverse strategies (e.g., internationalisation strategy, communication strategy, marketing strategy, among others) into a cohesive framework that ensures alignment between institutional goals and faculty-level operations. Moreover, strategic ambitions should be translated into measurable and actionable objectives. Employing SMART principles for setting strategic and operational goals and robust performance indicators will allow CU to monitor and evaluate its progress towards achieving them more effectively.

The interplay between decentralisation and institutional cohesion has been both a strength and a challenge for CU. Decentralisation fosters innovation and responsiveness within faculties, but it also exacerbates administrative fragmentation. Findings highlight the need for standardised institutional level policies, administrative procedures, and greater harmonisation across faculties and other structural units. The geographic dispersion of campuses further complicates these efforts, contributing to a sense of disconnection among different units. Also, CU's brand cohesion, while improving, still suffers from internal inconsistencies that affect its external representation.

Efforts to streamline administrative processes have shown promise, particularly through the implementation of unified data and information systems. However, these measures require sustained commitment to reduce inefficiencies. Addressing these challenges requires deliberate targeted actions based on common guidelines and principles to harmonise operational practices and foster a shared sense of purpose across faculties.

CU has made notable progress in establishing quality assurance systems, particularly in teaching and learning. Mechanisms such as the Internal Evaluation Board and the Department of Quality of Education and Accreditation play a pivotal role in maintaining academic standards. However, these efforts are heavily concentrated on teaching and learning, leaving areas such as research, use of research results, and societal engagement underdeveloped. Nevertheless, CU has implemented a rather robust internal evaluation system of research with the first cycle finished in 2020. This evaluation is commendable, not least because it systematically includes international perspectives. The missing element is the link to management based on the results of the evaluations. Furthermore, quality assurance processes are implemented differently across faculties, undermining their overall effectiveness. Clearly, CU has managed to design processes that largely respect the diversity of the various faculties, but stakeholders have explained that a broad range of acceptance and interpretation in the application of these processes undermine comparability as well as the trust of students, who often share views of their study experiences.

Inclusivity remains another critical area for improvement. While CU's governance structures are participatory, student involvement in decision-making processes varies widely among faculties.

Findings suggest that a more structured approach to student engagement is necessary to ensure their voices are consistently represented in governance.

Recent evaluations have identified several additional challenges and areas for improvement. First, the instability of financial provisions—exacerbated by dependency on government funding—affects the timely allocation of resources. This issue is compounded by the complexity of budget distribution. On the one hand, the budgeting process is clearly defined, involving internal stakeholders on multiple levels and connecting funding to the strategic plan. On the other, the complexity of the process, combined with insufficiently developed internal communication mechanisms (even though this is not factually supported), has led to a lack of understanding about the process. Some internal stakeholders have perceived this as intransparency. Second, there is a pressing need to enhance the professional development of staff, particularly in leadership roles. Limited opportunities for skill enhancement hinder the institution’s ability to adapt to evolving demands.

Digital transformation has emerged as a critical priority, with the need for faster modernisation of information systems and the integration of data-driven decision-making tools. However, these initiatives face resistance due to entrenched practices and a lack of coordinated implementation. Lastly, geographic separation among campuses perpetuates operational silos, undermining efforts to build an integrated university culture.

To strengthen its governance and decision-making practices, CU should adopt a more integrated and future-focused approach. A comprehensive quality assurance framework that extends beyond teaching and learning to encompass research (as explained above), societal engagement, and administrative processes are essential. A unified approach based on common guidelines and principles for student and faculty engagement will foster inclusivity and collaboration, while harmonised information- and data systems will support evidence-based decision-making.

Financial transparency should be a priority, with budget allocations tied explicitly to strategic objectives. Leadership development programmes should be expanded to equip staff with the skills to navigate complex challenges. Digital transformation efforts should be accelerated, emphasising user-friendly platforms and interactive tools for internal communication and collaboration.

A shared vision and mission will be the cornerstone of these efforts, uniting the faculties under a cohesive institutional identity. This vision and strategic planning should be reinforced through strategic foresight and robust risk management practices..

CU’s governance and institutional decision-making practices reflect its rich history and commitment to excellence. However, the challenges identified during the IEP evaluation highlight the need for a more cohesive and strategic approach. By addressing fragmentation, fostering inclusivity, and aligning strategies with a shared vision, CU can substantially enhance its governance framework. The next strategic cycle represents a critical opportunity to build on these foundations, ensuring that CU continues to thrive in an increasingly complex and competitive global higher education landscape.

CU’s core values, including freedom, humanism, and democracy, are intended to serve as foundational principles. However, as noted in the university’s strategic plan, there is a need for greater clarity in translating values into actionable ideas. For instance, promoting freedom is identified as a priority, yet

its specific meaning within the university's context—whether as academic freedom, freedom of thought, or institutional autonomy—requires elaboration. Similarly, respect as a value could encompass inclusivity and mutual acknowledgment of contributions made within the academic community. Such nuances demand articulation to ensure that values are not perceived as abstract ideals but as actionable and measurable frameworks shaping the university's ethos.

The Strategic Plan 2021–2025 emphasises the fulfilment of societal responsibility beyond research and education, reflecting CU's commitment to service. This includes sustainability initiatives, cultural engagement, and global cooperation. Nevertheless, the conflation of strategic priorities with values can dilute the distinctiveness of these guiding beliefs. Values such as integrity or openness should inform the university's culture and decision-making processes, and the planning and execution of its activities. By clarifying and embedding values into its strategic planning and institutional practices, CU can strengthen its identity and ensure alignment between its mission and societal impact.

Furthermore, CU's emphasis on fostering a quality culture underscores the need for an institution-wide understanding of values as drivers of behaviour and outcomes. The promotion of these values must be complemented by systematic engagement and transparent communication with internal and external stakeholders. Only thus can CU ensure the visibility of these values and their integration within all university functions. Such efforts would also align with recommendations to enhance CU's capacity for long-term societal impact and its strategic ambitions for sustainability and internationalisation.

Based on its strategic plan 2021-2025, CU has made substantial progress in institutional governance, notably in strengthening strategic planning, digital transformation, and faculty coordination. The implementation of internal evaluation mechanisms and the HR Excellence in Research framework have enhanced institutional oversight and career development structures. Financial management has improved through targeted funding initiatives such as the *Cooperatio* programme, though disparities in resource allocation persist due to the decentralised governance model. Digitalisation efforts, including the modernisation of student and administrative information systems, have contributed to operational efficiency, albeit with varying levels of adoption across faculties. While governance harmonisation remains a challenge, advancements in inter-faculty collaboration and policy standardisation have laid the groundwork for greater institutional cohesion.



### 3. Quality culture

#### Current Framework and Strengths

CU has developed a structured framework to ensure high-quality teaching and learning, leveraging governance mechanisms such as the Internal Evaluation Board and the Department of Quality of Education and Accreditation. These entities are responsible for aligning CU's academic programmes with national and European standards, including the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance. This structured approach has contributed to a consistent evaluation process for academic offerings, ensuring that CU remains competitive in the global higher education landscape.

There are Rules for System of internal evaluation and quality assurance. Internal regulations define the rules for the system of quality assurance of educational, creative, and related activities and the internal evaluation of the quality of these activities. According to these rules, quality means compliance with standards applied by CU to its activities or surpassing the standard practice in accordance with its mission and goals.

At CU, the concept of quality must encompass the needs and expectations of its diverse stakeholders, including students, employers and society at large. While CU currently defines quality as "compliance with standards applied to its activities," (Article 2 of Rules for the System of Internal Evaluation and Quality Assurance of Charles University of January 31, 2017) this approach predominantly emphasises adherence to predefined benchmarks and regulatory frameworks. Such a definition of quality ensures consistency and alignment with institutional goals, as well as national and European standards. However, it risks neglecting the subjective and experiential aspects of quality that stakeholders value, such as the effectiveness of teaching and learning, the relevance of research outcomes, and the broader societal impact of the university's activities.

To achieve a holistic understanding of quality, CU must expand its measurement approaches beyond compliance with standards and the evaluation of internal and external stakeholders' satisfaction. It must move from quality assessment to active quality management at the institutional level. For educational quality, this would go beyond assessing students' satisfaction with their teaching and learning experience, their preparedness for the labour market, and employers' satisfaction with their competencies. Similarly, research quality must account for the societal relevance and interdisciplinary impact of CU's scholarly work, in addition to meeting formal standards. The panel learned that, as part of activities in the current strategic plan, the evaluative dimension of quality assurance has been well developed at CU. This has led to (more or less) direct improvements regarding the evaluated subject. A better management of evaluative dimensions and their integration into its quality management system will enable CU to set more nuanced quality improvement strategic goals and remain responsive to the evolving needs of its community.

One of CU's most prominent achievements is the successful implementation of the HR Excellence in Research Award, which underscores its commitment to supporting academic staff, researchers, and postdocs as well as administrative staff. This initiative has led to a series of advancements, including the establishment of performance evaluation metrics, professional development programmes, and enhanced opportunities for pedagogical training. Moreover, CU has responded to the increasing

demand for student support services by expanding its offerings in academic advising, psychological counselling, and career guidance, ensuring that students are well-supported throughout their academic journey.

The university's engagement with external stakeholders is another notable strength. By involving industry representatives and external experts in curriculum design and evaluation boards, CU has strengthened its connection with societal and labour market needs. Its emphasis on lifelong learning initiatives, including micro-credentials and continuous education programmes, reflects its proactive approach to addressing skills gaps and evolving educational demands.

Despite CU's strengths, the evaluation revealed gaps that should be addressed to develop a more comprehensive quality culture. A critical issue is the rather narrow focus of quality assurance efforts, primarily concentrated on evaluation, while an impactful follow-up connected to quality development and management is yet to be developed. Areas such as research, use of research results, societal engagement, and administrative processes are underrepresented in quality management, leaving opportunities for improvement untapped.

Differences in application and implementation of quality assurance practices across faculties present another significant challenge. While certain faculties have developed robust mechanisms, others lack standardised procedures, creating disparities in the experience of students and staff. This lack of uniformity undermines CU's ability to establish a cohesive institutional identity and presents barriers to achieving systemic excellence.

Student feedback mechanisms also pose challenges. Although CU conducts surveys and evaluations to gather input, low response rates and unclear communication about how feedback influences decision-making might lead to student disengagement. As a result, some students might perceive these mechanisms as ineffectual, reducing their willingness to participate.

The digital transformation of quality assurance processes is incomplete. CU's current systems for data collection and analysis are fragmented, hindering its ability to make informed, evidence-based decisions. A lack of integrated digital platforms further complicates the monitoring and evaluation of quality initiatives, reducing the effectiveness of ongoing improvements.

The team points to additional challenges, including the need for future-proofing of academic programmes. To remain competitive, CU should integrate sustainability, interdisciplinary approaches, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial skills into its curricula. These elements are increasingly essential in preparing students for the complexities of a rapidly evolving global job market. However, existing curriculum development processes often fail to account for long-term societal and market needs, limiting their relevance and impact.

Staff well-being and development have also emerged as areas requiring attention. While CU has introduced professional development opportunities, workload pressures and limited resources for career advancement create dissatisfaction among academic and administrative staff. Addressing these issues is critical to fostering a supportive and engaged staff. Enhancing staff well-being could be a cornerstone of CU's quality culture. Expanding professional development programmes, recognising achievements, and fostering a work-life balance will improve job satisfaction and engagement.

Initiatives such as peer-support networks and platforms for sharing pedagogical innovations can further enrich the academic environment and support continuous improvement.

The geographic dispersion of CU's campuses further complicates efforts to build a cohesive quality culture. Silos between faculties reduce opportunities for collaboration and shared best practices. Efforts to promote institutional integration should address these geographic and operational divides to ensure consistent quality across all units.

To establish a cohesive and future-oriented quality culture, CU must prioritise the development of an overarching quality policy that extends beyond teaching and learning. This policy should encompass research, societal engagement, and administrative processes, providing clear guidelines and performance metrics to unify efforts across faculties, also in line with ESG standard 1.1 Policy on Quality Assurance. Establishing interdisciplinary quality assurance teams can help integrate these processes and promote collaboration between faculties.

Improving student engagement in quality assurance is essential. CU should make feedback mechanisms more transparent by clearly communicating how student input informs decision-making. Employing innovative methods such as real-time digital surveys, focus groups, and interactive forums can increase participation rates and provide richer insights. Demonstrating the tangible impact of student feedback will foster greater trust and involvement in quality assurance initiatives.

Accelerating digital transformation is critical to streamlining quality assurance processes. CU should invest in integrated digital platforms that support data collection, analysis, and reporting. These systems should enable real-time monitoring and provide actionable insights to stakeholders at all levels, ensuring a culture of transparency and accountability.

Future-proofing CU's curricula requires a strategic approach. Task forces should be established to integrate sustainability, interdisciplinarity, and entrepreneurial skills into academic programmes. Collaborations with industry and community stakeholders can ensure that programmes remain relevant to societal and market current and future needs. Regular reviews and updates to curricula should be institutionalised to reflect emerging challenges and opportunities.

CU should also address the geographic and operational divides between its campuses. Investing in virtual collaboration tools and creating platforms for sharing best practices can help bridge these gaps, fostering a unified institutional culture. Encouraging cross-campus initiatives and interdisciplinary projects will further promote cohesion and integration.

CU's quality culture is a critical component of its institutional identity and global reputation. By addressing existing gaps and challenges, CU can cultivate a more inclusive and future-ready quality culture that supports excellence in all areas of its operations. The recommendations outlined here provide a roadmap for a unified, innovative, and impactful quality assurance framework. As CU moves forward, sustained efforts to harmonise practices, embrace digital transformation, and enhance stakeholder engagement will ensure that its quality culture continues to drive institutional success in an increasingly complex and competitive higher education landscape.

CU has made significant advancements in fostering a quality culture by implementing structured evaluation mechanisms, enhancing accreditation processes, and reinforcing pedagogical and research

excellence. The Internal Evaluation Board and faculty quality coordinators have strengthened oversight, ensuring a more data-driven and systematic approach to academic quality. The university-wide system for continuous evaluation of study programmes, introduced in 2022, has improved programme monitoring and adaptation, while the institutionalisation of pedagogical training through the *Paedagogium* platform has enhanced teaching standards. In research, initiatives such as the *Cooperatio* programme, the expansion of Open Science, and strengthened grant support mechanisms have contributed to increased international competitiveness. Student feedback mechanisms and faculty appraisal systems have been expanded, though their impact varies across faculties.

Overall, while CU has successfully implemented the key strategic initiatives to improve quality culture, some disparities in adoption and institutional cohesion remain. The core goals of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 in this area have been substantially achieved, with ongoing efforts needed to ensure full consistency and alignment across the university.

## 4. Teaching and learning

CU has established itself as a leader in higher education, with a strong foundation in providing a diverse and inclusive academic and research environment. The university offers a wide range of study programmes across all three study cycles, reflecting its commitment to interdisciplinarity and academic rigour. Through innovative pedagogical approaches and a focus on quality, CU has created opportunities for students to engage deeply with their subjects while fostering critical thinking and creativity.

One of CU's strengths lies in its emphasis on student-centred learning. Various initiatives aim to make education more accessible and engaging, including blended learning models, problem-based learning, and experiential opportunities such as internships and research placements. The development of micro-credentials further illustrates CU's commitment to lifelong learning, enabling students to acquire specialised skills tailored to evolving labour market demands.

The integration of digital tools and platforms has enhanced the teaching and learning experience at CU. Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Moodle, along with digital libraries and other online resources, provide students with access to high-quality learning materials and flexible study options. Additionally, CU's academic staff are increasingly adopting innovative technologies, including AI-powered tools, to enrich classroom interactions and assessments.

Despite its achievements, CU faces significant challenges in aligning teaching and learning practices with emerging global trends. One notable issue is the fragmentation of the academic portfolio, with an excessively high number of study programmes across faculties. This not only strains resources but also creates redundancies, reducing the overall coherence of the curriculum. Efforts to streamline study programmes have been initiated but require greater coordination and strategic oversight.

The variability in the availability and quality of study courses taught in English poses another challenge. While CU has made progress in internationalising its offerings, the uneven distribution of English-taught programmes across faculties limits opportunities for international students and impacts the university's global competitiveness. Similarly, the unevenness of English proficiency levels among academic staff highlights the need for targeted professional development to ensure consistent quality.

Completion rates and student retention also remain areas of concern. High dropout rates, particularly in bachelor's and doctoral programmes, necessitate a deeper analysis of the underlying factors. Results of evaluations suggest that besides personal reasons, a loss of interest in the field of study or the programme not meeting student's expectations are prime reasons for dropouts. Based on these outcomes, a need for improved public information and improved programme-specific external communication could serve as tools for expectation-management. Further feedback indicates that students often struggle with the transition to university-level study, underscoring the importance of enhanced academic support systems and mentoring programmes.

The team points to the need for greater interdisciplinarity in CU's programmes. While the university has made strides in promoting interdisciplinary research, similar efforts in curriculum design are less evident. Integrating interdisciplinary courses and projects would prepare students to tackle complex, real-world problems that demand cross-sectoral knowledge and collaboration.

Student engagement in teaching and learning processes is another area requiring improvement. Although feedback mechanisms exist, students often feel that their input has limited impact on programme development and teaching methodologies. Enhancing transparency and demonstrating responsiveness to student concerns would strengthen trust and participation.

The ongoing digital transformation presents both opportunities and challenges. While CU has embraced digital tools, disparities in access and usage across faculties hinder their effectiveness. Additionally, the potential of data analytics to personalise learning pathways and improve student outcomes remains largely untapped. Addressing these gaps would ensure that digital initiatives have a broader and more equitable impact.

To enhance teaching and learning at CU, the university should prioritise the rationalisation of its study programmes portfolio. By consolidating similar study programmes and reducing redundancies, CU could better allocate resources and create more cohesive study pathways. These efforts should be guided by clear principles including comprehensive review processes involving faculty and external stakeholders. Indeed, CU itself already identified this need and implemented activities with this goal; however, there are no visible results and the number of study programmes has, instead, increased.

Improving the internationalisation of study programmes is essential. CU should expand its portfolio of English-taught study courses and provide systematic language training for academic staff. Strengthening collaborations with international partners to develop joint and dual-degree study programmes would enhance CU's global appeal.

Efforts to improve student retention should focus on creating a supportive academic environment. Establishing structured mentoring and tutoring programmes, along with targeted interventions for at-risk students, would help reduce dropout rates. Additionally, enhancing orientation programmes and bridging courses could ease the transition for incoming students.

Promoting interdisciplinarity within curricula would enrich the educational experience and prepare students for the complexities of modern careers. CU should encourage the development of interdisciplinary modules and projects that bring together expertise from different faculties. Providing incentives for faculty collaboration in curriculum design would support this objective.

Strengthening student engagement in teaching and learning processes is vital. CU should implement mechanisms to ensure that student feedback directly informs programme improvements and teaching practices. Creating opportunities for students to participate in curriculum committees and teaching innovation projects would enhance their sense of ownership and responsibility.

Investing in digital infrastructure and analytics should remain a priority. CU should expand access to digital tools across faculties and develop platforms for personalised learning experiences. Leveraging data analytics to track student progress and identify areas for improvement would support evidence-based decision-making and enhance learning outcomes.

Teaching and learning at CU are integral to its mission of academic excellence and societal impact. By addressing challenges such as programme fragmentation, language barriers, and retention issues, CU can enhance its educational offerings. The recommendations provided offer a pathway to a more cohesive, interdisciplinary, and student-centred learning environment. Through sustained efforts and

strategic investments, CU can give its students the means to adapt and thrive in an ever-evolving academic and social environment.

Based on its strategic plan 2021-2025, CU has made notable progress in improving teaching and learning quality through structured evaluation processes and pedagogical development initiatives. The university-wide assessment of study programmes has enhanced oversight, and the *Paedagogium* platform has expanded training opportunities for academic staff. Internationalisation efforts have increased the number of English-taught programmes and joint degrees, though their growth remains gradual. Challenges persist in interdisciplinary integration, student completion rates, and consistency of teaching quality across faculties. While the strategic goals for teaching and learning in the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 have been partially achieved, disparities in implementation and the need for further modernisation remain.

## 5. Research

CU is recognised for its significant contributions to research, fostering an environment that combines academic rigour with innovative approaches. Its robust research infrastructure, spanning numerous faculties and disciplines, is designed to encourage collaboration and address pressing global challenges. CU's participation in prestigious international initiatives, such as the 4EU+ European University Alliance, underscores its commitment to maintaining a competitive edge in global research.

The university has established key programmes to support research excellence. The PRIMUS programme, for instance, provides young researchers with funding to develop independent research teams and projects. Additionally, CU's emphasis on open science principles, exemplified by its Open Science Support Centre, reflects its dedication to transparency and accessibility in research. These initiatives, combined with targeted efforts to attract international talent through mechanisms like the HR Excellence in Research Award, demonstrate CU's strategic focus on fostering a dynamic research ecosystem. CU's success in these areas is a testament to its forward-thinking leadership and the dedication of its academic community.

CU has achieved remarkable strides in creating a research environment that values innovation, collaboration, and excellence. One area of growth is enhancing integration and synergy between research activities across faculties. While the decentralised structure enables specialisation, increased cross-faculty collaboration could strengthen CU's capacity to address complex global challenges. Feedback from stakeholders indicates that streamlining administrative processes can support such collaborations more effectively.

Another strength is CU's active participation in project-based funding opportunities, which has enabled groundbreaking research. However, while it relies primarily on short-term funding, CU should also explore mechanisms for sustaining long-term research agendas and supporting continuous researcher engagement. CU's proactive approach in attracting international researchers through programmes like PRIMUS is commendable, although stakeholders note that standardising support structures across faculties could enhance the experiences of these scholars and reinforce CU's reputation for inclusivity.

CU's strides in translating research into societal and economic impact are evident in initiatives like Charles University Innovations Prague (CUIP). These efforts are paving the way for greater knowledge transfer and industry engagement. Expanding applied research initiatives and encouraging entrepreneurship among students and faculty could amplify CU's societal contributions. These achievements reflect CU's dedication to aligning its research priorities with societal current and future needs.

Building on CU's achievements, the university could consider developing a unified research policy that highlights interdisciplinarity and collaborative opportunities. Centralised research clusters focused on global challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, and public health would provide platforms for integrating expertise across faculties and supporting impactful outcomes. These initiatives would build on CU's existing strengths while creating additional opportunities for researchers.



To address the opportunities presented by project-based funding, CU might explore developing bridge funding mechanisms to sustain research activities between grants. Such measures could ensure the continuity of innovative projects and the retention of talented researchers. Complementary to this, CU could continue advocating for long-term funding policies at national and EU levels to support stable research environments.

CU's exemplary efforts to internationalise its research could be further strengthened by enhancing onboarding and support services for international researchers. Standardised processes for language training, administrative assistance, and integration activities across faculties would enrich the experience of international scholars and reaffirm CU's reputation as a global institution.

Adopting more holistic criteria within the research evaluation framework would be a recognition of the diverse contributions of CU's researchers. Expanding metrics to include interdisciplinary work, societal impact, and public engagement would align evaluations with contemporary research priorities and encourage innovation.

Finally, CU might consider broadening the scope of CUIP to strengthen partnerships with industry and public sector stakeholders. Creating dedicated incubators and accelerators for entrepreneurship could support innovation and the commercialisation of research,. Enhancing administrative support for researchers, particularly in grant application and compliance processes, would allow them to focus more on their core academic activities.

Research at CU is a cornerstone of its academic excellence and societal relevance. The university's achievements in fostering a vibrant research ecosystem reflect its unwavering commitment to innovation and collaboration. By continuing to build on its strengths and exploring opportunities for enhancement, CU is well-positioned to further its impact on global research and societal advancement. The recommendations offered here aim to complement CU's strategic goals, ensuring that its research culture remains inclusive, forward-thinking, and responsive to emerging challenges.

## 6. Service to society

CU has demonstrated a strong commitment to serving society, aligning its educational and research missions with broader societal needs. Through partnerships, community engagement, and knowledge transfer, CU actively contributes to addressing pressing social, economic, and cultural challenges. The establishment of Charles University Innovations Prague (CUIP) and the Volunteer Centre of Charles University are exemplary initiatives that underscore CU's dedication to societal impact.

CU's efforts in sustainability reflect its responsiveness to global and local challenges. The development of the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) and the creation of specialised working groups at faculty levels highlight CU's proactive approach to embedding sustainability into its operations and academic endeavours. CU strongly supports the implementation of sustainable development at a strategic level, but the way the SDS relates to the overall strategy of CU remains foggy, as it features its own objectives, indicators and time frame. Operationally, initiatives such as European Sustainability Week participation and sustainability-focused courses further exemplify CU's commitment to a culture of responsibility and action.

The university's partnerships with public, private, and non-profit sectors amplify its reach and impact. Collaborations with organisations such as People in Need and the Czech Chamber of Commerce bolster the application of academic expertise to real-world problems. CU's emphasis on lifelong learning programmes, including up-skilling and re-skilling initiatives, demonstrates its adaptability to evolving societal needs and its role as a catalyst for individual and community growth.

CU's achievements in societal engagement are commendable and form a solid foundation for future growth. However, the IEP evaluation team believes there are further opportunities for strategic alignment and effectiveness. While many initiatives are impactful, their integration into a cohesive framework could amplify their reach and visibility. For instance, the activities related to sustainability, lifelong learning, and third-mission engagement could benefit from more structured coordination to avoid fragmentation.

The university's approach to knowledge transfer, though promising, has untapped potential. Expanding initiatives like CUIP to include broader collaborations with industry and public sector partners could enhance the practical application of research. Feedback from stakeholders suggests that CU could strengthen its focus on applied research and entrepreneurial activities, creating pathways for innovation and societal benefit.

While CU has made progress in engaging with diverse communities, there is room to deepen its connection with underrepresented groups. Enhanced outreach efforts could ensure that the benefits of CU's societal contributions are equitably distributed across different segments of society. Additionally, stakeholders have noted the need for more systematic evaluation of CU's societal impact to inform strategic planning and resource allocation.

Building on its strengths, CU should consider developing a unified policy for societal engagement that aligns with its overarching vision and mission. This policy could integrate sustainability, lifelong learning, and third-mission activities into a cohesive framework, fostering synergies between initiatives and enhancing their overall impact.

Expanding the scope of CUIP and similar initiatives could further enhance knowledge transfer and innovation. Encouraging interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships with industry and government stakeholders would create additional opportunities for applied research and entrepreneurship. Providing faculty and students with dedicated resources and support for translating research into practical solutions would strengthen CU's role as a driver of societal progress.

Enhancing outreach to underrepresented groups should remain a priority. CU could explore partnerships with community organisations and local governments to identify and address barriers to access. Tailored programmes that target specific community needs, such as digital literacy workshops or vocational training, would broaden CU's societal impact and promote inclusivity.

Developing robust mechanisms for evaluating societal impact would support evidence-based decision-making and strategic planning. CU could establish strategic goals, metrics and tools to assess the effectiveness of its initiatives, ensuring that resources are allocated to activities with the greatest potential for positive change. Sharing these findings with stakeholders would demonstrate CU's accountability and commitment to continuous improvement.

Service to society is an integral part of CU's identity and mission. By leveraging its strengths and addressing areas for growth, CU can enhance its societal contributions and solidify its role as a leader in community engagement and innovation. The recommendations outlined here are intended to complement CU's existing efforts. Through sustained commitment and strategic action, CU can continue to develop a more integrated, inclusive, and impactful approach to societal service.

## 7. Internationalisation

Internationalisation is a cornerstone of CU's mission and strategic plan 2021-2025, reflecting its commitment to global engagement and excellence. Initially internationalisation was subject to an additional and independently standing "Internationalization Strategy 2018-2021" available on CU's website. However, the topic was integrated into the current strategic plan, highlighting its relevance for the university. CU's active participation in international networks, such as the 4EU+ European University Alliance, highlights its role as a leading institution in fostering cross-border collaboration in education and research. This alliance has put forward joint educational and research initiatives, student mobility programmes, and shared best practices among partner institutions.

CU's success in attracting international students and staff is another testament to its robust internationalisation framework. With more than 200 fully accredited study programmes in foreign languages, CU offers various opportunities for international learners. The university's International Staff Welcome Centre provides comprehensive support for onboarding and integrating international academics into the CU community. Moreover, CU's emphasis on multilingualism, including efforts to improve English (and other world languages) proficiency among faculty and staff, demonstrates its commitment to creating an inclusive and globally oriented environment.

The university's dedication to international research collaboration is evident in its participation in major European research projects and its growing success in securing Horizon Europe funding. These initiatives not only enhance CU's research capacity but also strengthen its global reputation as a hub for innovative and impactful scholarship.

While CU's achievements in internationalisation are notable, the IEP review team suggests opportunities for improvement. One key area is the uneven distribution of internationalisation efforts across faculties. While some faculties excel in offering English-taught programmes and hosting international researchers, others face challenges in aligning with CU's broader internationalisation goals. Addressing these disparities would ensure a more cohesive and equitable approach.

The experience of international students, though generally positive, varies depending on the faculty and programme. Feedback indicates that improved communication, streamlined administrative processes, and expanded support services would enhance the overall student experience. Additionally, while CU has made strides in promoting international mobility, barriers such as problems with visa processes and limited financial support for mobility programmes persist.

CU's global partnerships are a strength but could be leveraged more effectively. Expanding the scope of existing collaborations and exploring new strategic partnerships in underrepresented regions, such as the Balkans, Africa, South America and Asia, would diversify CU's international engagement and open new avenues for academic and research cooperation.

To build on its strengths, CU should continue to harmonise internationalisation efforts across faculties based on an Internationalisation Policy. Developing faculty-specific internationalisation plans that align with CU's overarching goals would foster greater coherence and ensure that all units benefit from global engagement opportunities. Encouraging cross-faculty collaboration on international projects and programmes would enhance integration and impact.

Enhancing the experience of international students and staff should remain a priority. Expanding the services provided by the International Staff Welcome Centre and establishing a parallel support office for international students would address many of their needs. Tailored orientation programmes, cultural integration workshops, and peer mentoring initiatives could help develop a more inclusive community. Addressing administrative barriers, such as simplifying visa processes and improving access to financial support for mobility, would also contribute to a smoother experience.

Expanding and diversifying CU's global partnerships would strengthen its international presence. CU should identify strategic priorities for partnership development, such as thematic research areas or geographic regions. It should engage with underrepresented regions, particularly through capacity-building projects and academic exchanges.

To enhance international research collaboration, CU should leverage its successes in Horizon Europe and similar programmes to attract additional funding and partnerships. Establishing dedicated research support teams to assist faculty in navigating international grant applications and compliance requirements would boost participation and success rates. Promoting interdisciplinary and cross-border research clusters within the 4EU+ Alliance and beyond would also amplify CU's research impact.

Finally, strengthening multilingualism and intercultural competencies among CU's community would support its internationalisation goals. Providing language training for staff and faculty, incorporating intercultural communication modules into academic programmes, and celebrating cultural diversity through events and initiatives will enrich the university's global outlook.

Internationalisation is integral to CU's identity and success. By building on its achievements and addressing areas for improvement, CU can enhance its global impact and reputation. The recommendations outlined here aim to support CU in fostering a more integrated, inclusive, and forward-thinking approach to internationalisation. Through sustained commitment and strategic action, CU can continue to lead in global higher education.

## 8. Connecting the Dots

### *New approaches to strategic planning*

As CU embarks on its next strategic cycle, it is essential to establish comprehensive strategic directions of development encompassing vision, mission, strategic priorities, and measurable strategic goals aligned with the SMARTER principles (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound, Evaluated, and Revisited). In elaborating strategic directions of development for the next period, incorporating tools such as the Balanced Scorecard for setting strategic goals would offer a robust framework for monitoring progress and align faculty and department-level initiatives, translating strategic goals into actionable objectives. To ensure coherence and a unified institutional approach, the central level should develop foundational policies in key domains such as teaching and learning, research, use of research results, quality assurance, internationalisation, sustainable development, human resources, and emerging areas like artificial intelligence, among others. These central policies could serve as overarching guidelines for faculties and other structural units, allowing them to develop strategic, tactical and operational plans with clearly delineated activities, deadlines, and accountability structures. By harmonising these elements, CU could galvanise institutional synergy and better navigate the complexities of modern higher education governance and management. Bench learning could be used as an important strategic planning tool for collaborative learning opportunities together with strategic partners to help improve strategic management practice.

### *The central role of shared IT solutions*

Integrated IT systems will be pivotal in addressing the insights and needs articulated across the key dimensions of CU's strategic plan 2021-2025. From teaching to internationalisation, IT infrastructure serves as the backbone enabling quality, innovation, accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness. In teaching and learning, tools like Moodle and digital libraries have already proven invaluable for delivering flexible learning experiences, aligning with findings that emphasise the need for personalised support mechanisms and adaptive educational approaches. The development of advanced data analytics could address student retention challenges by providing tailored interventions, as highlighted in discussions on teaching and learning.

For research, the fragmentation of administrative processes was a recurring theme. Unified IT systems can directly mitigate this issue by streamlining grant applications, reducing administrative loads, and fostering collaboration through shared data platforms. Such solutions align with the recommendation to sustain long-term research agendas and enhance interdisciplinary initiatives by lowering barriers to integration, as well as to ensure data online access and visualisations to justify decision-making.

In societal service, IT platforms can centralise and optimise the management of lifelong learning programmes and public engagement activities. By aligning these functions with strategic goals and creating monitoring tools, CU can amplify its societal impact—a priority noted in discussions on service to society. Similarly, in internationalisation, centralised IT systems are essential for simplifying student mobility, virtual collaborations, and international partnerships, directly addressing challenges related to administrative inefficiencies and inclusivity in global engagements.

Consequently, CU has to make stronger efforts to implement a comprehensive and integrated IT infrastructure to harmonise academic, research, and administrative operations. Such systems must prioritise ease of access and adaptability to meet diverse user needs. Training programmes for staff and students should emphasise the effective use of digital tools and platforms, enhancing their utility across teaching, research, and administrative functions.

#### *The need for improved communication*

Communication emerged as a vital element across all strategic areas, in both its internal and external dimensions. Internally, communication addresses the need for cohesion and shared understanding across faculties, particularly in relation to fragmented initiatives in research and teaching and learning. Strengthened communication frameworks, including internal newsletters, faculty forums, and interactive platforms, can ensure that faculties align with institutional priorities, and promote the dissemination of best practices. These tools are critical for fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation.

Externally, robust communication enhances CU's visibility and engagement with stakeholders. Findings from internationalisation and service to society highlight the importance of tailored outreach strategies to build trust with diverse audiences, including international students, industry partners, and the local community. Streamlined and multilingual communication channels can reinforce CU's commitment to inclusivity and its global reputation.

Feedback mechanisms play a particularly important role. For teaching, ensuring students understand how their feedback informs programme improvements fosters trust and participation. In research, communicating the societal impact of CU's projects enhances the university's accountability and strengthens its role as a driver of innovation. These practices ensure stakeholders remain engaged and invested in CU's strategic vision.

Consequently, transparency in both internal updates and external communications should be prioritised. Regularly sharing strategic progress and achievements will align stakeholders and maintain trust. Furthermore, tailored communication strategies should address specific audience needs, from international students to local partners, ensuring messaging that is both inclusive and relevant.

Integrated IT solutions and robust communication frameworks are not only operational necessities but strategic enablers for CU. Synthesising insights from teaching, research, societal service, and internationalisation, it is clear that these elements are foundational for addressing current challenges and achieving CU's long-term vision. Enhancing these systems will allow CU to heighten collaboration, transparency, and inclusivity.

## 9. Conclusion

Charles University (CU) operates within a highly dynamic and competitive global academic landscape, requiring adaptability and innovation. The institution has made notable progress in areas such as research, teaching and learning, societal service, sustainable development, and internationalisation; hence, to a large extent CU has successfully implemented its strategic aims based on the strategic plan 2021-2025.

CU's strengths are manifold. Its commitment to excellence in teaching is evident through its diverse academic offerings and emphasis on student-centred approaches, including blended learning and innovative pedagogies. In research, the institution is recognised for its contributions to interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge production, supported by initiatives like PRIMUS and the Open Science Support Centre. CU's societal engagement has demonstrated impact through initiatives like Charles University Innovations Prague (CUIP) and sustainability projects, reflecting its alignment with global challenges. Internationalisation is a clear strength, as CU has established itself as a hub for international students and researchers, leveraging alliances like 4EU+ to expand its European reach.

Despite these achievements, CU has opportunities to strengthen its strategic alignment and operational coherence. The fragmented implementation of IT systems and the variability in faculty-level engagement highlight the need for a unified approach. Communication—both internal and external—has been identified as a critical lever for collaboration, transparency, and trust. Addressing administrative inefficiencies in research management and enhancing the experience of international students and staff are further areas for growth.

Additionally, challenges remain, particularly in developing shared vision and mission, integrating fragmented management systems and adopting cohesive communication approaches.

To address these challenges and capitalise on its strengths, CU should focus on the following specific recommendations:

- 1. Develop and implement a university-wide strategic framework** that defines a cohesive vision, mission, strategic priorities and strategic goals, supported by overarching policies in key domains (e.g., teaching and learning, research, use of research results, quality, sustainable development, AI, etc.). Utilise tools such as the Balanced Scorecard to align faculty-level and institutional strategic goals with SMARTER principles, ensuring clear operational plans with measurable goals, deadlines, and responsibilities.
- 2. Integrate IT systems:** Develop and implement a unified IT infrastructure that harmonises operations across teaching, research, societal service, and internationalisation and support services. Such systems should facilitate efficient data sharing, personalised learning analytics, and seamless administrative processes, reducing barriers to collaboration and innovation.
- 3. Enhance communication culture:** Foster a culture of clear, transparent, and inclusive communication. Internally, this includes creating platforms for faculty collaboration, disseminating best practices, and ensuring alignment with strategic goals. Externally, tailored outreach campaigns



should engage diverse audiences, including industry partners, local communities, and global stakeholders.

4. **Support research sustainability:** Expand bridge funding mechanisms to address the reliance on short-term project grants. This will sustain long-term research agendas and attract top talent. Revising research evaluation metrics to prioritise interdisciplinary and societal impact will enhance CU's reputation as a global leader in research.

5. Make **internationalisation inclusive:** Build on the successes of programmes like the International Staff Welcome Centre by standardising support services across faculties. Expanding multilingual resources and cultural orientation programmes will strengthen the experience of international students and staff, ensuring CU remains an attractive destination for global talent.

6. Use **strategic monitoring and adaptation:** Establish robust monitoring tools to evaluate the effectiveness of strategic management, IT systems and communication strategies. Regularly revisiting and adapting these frameworks based on stakeholder feedback will ensure CU's agility in responding to emerging challenges and opportunities.

CU has made substantial progress in implementing the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, achieving key milestones in institutional governance, quality culture, teaching and learning, and research. Governance structures have been strengthened through internal evaluation mechanisms and policy harmonisation, though faculty autonomy continues to pose challenges for full institutional cohesion. The university has significantly improved quality assurance, particularly in teaching and learning, with structured study programme evaluations and enhanced pedagogical training. In research, targeted funding schemes such as *Cooperatio* and Open Science initiatives have increased research output and international visibility, yet disparities in performance and external grant success persist. Digital transformation has modernised administrative and academic processes, though the full integration of systems remains ongoing. While CU has largely met its strategic objectives, certain areas—such as financial transparency, interdisciplinary cooperation, and completion rates—still require further attention. Overall, the university has successfully advanced its strategic priorities, positioning itself as a more competitive and internationally engaged institution, though continued refinements are needed to fully realise the plan's long-term vision.

Based on the impressive progress during the implementation of its strategic plan 2021-2025, the panel is convinced that CU is well-positioned to navigate new threats and opportunities. Its demonstrated capacity for innovation and strategic thinking, as evidenced by its proactive initiatives in sustainability, international partnerships, and digital transformation, underscores its readiness to adapt. By addressing its identified weaknesses and leveraging its strengths, CU can enhance its impact as a globally engaged institution, sustainably advancing education, research, and societal progress..

The team believes that the findings and recommendations highlighted above will help CU to reconsider strategic planning practices and deliver management innovations for further development.

## *Summary of the recommendations*

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Besides these above-mentioned overarching recommendations, in line with the different evaluation standards, the following recommendations are given to CU.

### **Governance and Institutional Decision-Making**

#### 1. Develop a shared vision and mission

CU should prioritise articulating a unified vision and mission that reflects its long-term aspirations and provides clear direction across all faculties. This will foster greater cohesion and alignment in institutional decision-making.

#### 2. Harmonise administrative practices across faculties

CU must address the challenges of fragmentation by implementing standardised policies and administrative procedures to streamline operations and ensure consistent practices across its decentralised faculties.

#### 3. Enhance communication on financial transparency and strategic alignment

Resource allocation should be explicitly tied to strategic objectives, supported by transparent budget processes that align with institutional priorities and effectively use financial resources. These processes should be straightforward enough to be understood by those affected by it.

### **Quality Culture**

#### 1. Establish a comprehensive quality assurance framework

Expand quality assurance efforts beyond teaching and learning to include research, societal engagement, and administrative processes, ensuring a more integrated approach to quality culture.

#### 2. Enhance stakeholder engagement in quality processes

Improve student and staff involvement in quality assurance by transparent feedback mechanisms, clearly demonstrating how their input informs decisions and improvements.

#### 3. Accelerate digital transformation for quality monitoring

Invest in integrated digital platforms to streamline data collection, analysis, and reporting, enabling evidence-based decision-making and improving the overall effectiveness of quality assurance initiatives.

### **Teaching and Learning**

#### 1. Rationalise and streamline study programmes

Make stronger efforts to consolidate and reduce the number of study programmes to optimise resources, improve coherence, and create more structured learning pathways for students.

#### 2. Promote interdisciplinary learning and flexibility

Enhance cross-faculty collaboration in curriculum design to foster interdisciplinarity and provide students with opportunities to include courses from different faculties in their study plans.

### 3. Address retention and completion rates

Develop structured mentoring, tutoring programmes, and targeted support mechanisms to improve student retention and reduce high dropout rates, especially in bachelor's and doctoral programmes.

## **Research**

### 1. Promote interdisciplinary research clusters

Establish centralised research clusters addressing global challenges to foster collaboration across faculties and leverage CU's strengths in interdisciplinary research.

### 2. Implement bridge funding mechanisms

Develop mechanisms to sustain research activities between project grants, ensuring continuity of innovative projects and retention of talented researchers.

### 3. Enhance international research collaboration

Standardise onboarding processes and support for international researchers to strengthen CU's reputation as a global institution and attract top research talent.

## **Service to Society**

### 1. Integrate societal engagement into strategic planning

Develop a unified strategy for societal engagement that aligns with CU's vision, integrating sustainability, lifelong learning, and third-mission activities into a cohesive framework.

### 2. Expand knowledge transfer and applied research

Broaden initiatives like Charles University Innovations Prague (CUIP) to include collaborations with diverse industry and public sector stakeholders, enhancing the practical application of research.

### 3. Strengthen outreach to underrepresented groups

Enhance efforts to engage underrepresented communities by creating tailored programmes, ensuring equitable access to CU's resources and opportunities.

## **Internationalisation**

### 1. Address disparities in internationalisation across faculties

Ensure consistent implementation of internationalisation goals by balancing the availability of English-taught programmes and international research opportunities across all faculties.

### 2. Develop joint and dual-degree programmes

Expand collaborations with international partners to offer innovative joint and dual-degree programmes, enhancing CU's global appeal.

### 3. Strengthen multilingual support services

Invest in bilingual communication across the university to improve integration and service quality for international students and staff.