

Development Strategy for the Faculty of Arts, Charles University

for the years 2022–2026

Introduction

The Faculty of Arts of Charles University is a multidisciplinary institution promoting interdisciplinary dialogue and knowledge in broader contexts. It is these strengths that foster our potential for research cooperation and the high employability of our graduates, and we have repeatedly acknowledged them even in times of crisis.

At the same time, CU FA also suffers from systemic issues and is slow in addressing them.

Within the faculty as a whole, there is a lack of agreement on the future development of the quality of teaching, research, and the faculty's public engagement role. Without a collective vision and a consensus on its fulfilment we are merely reacting to situations that arise, rather than foreseeing and resolving them.

Tools for effective and transparent functioning and management of the faculty have failed to be introduced, including a system of distributing finances to the departments, regulations for career development of academic staff, long-term project management strategy or a consistent digitisation of administration.

The faculty lags behind in the area of staff wellbeing, in the creation of decent working and financial conditions as well as other forms of incentives. If CU FA still holds together as an institution, it is thanks to the willpower of its dedicated employees within various positions. While this is certainly admirable, it is clearly not right.

This situation limits our development and contributes to the long-term underfinancing of the faculty. There are in fact multiple causes for this: unclear priorities, poor-quality input data, inability to reach compromises and, as a result, to achieve our goals.

The task of the future CU FA management is to solve these long-term systemic problems. Without these changes, we shall continue to tread water and our frustration will grow while other institutions evolve and develop. Without these changes, our assets will be gradually squandered, and the faculty will cease to make sense in the 21st century.

I believe that CU FA is not merely a set of autonomous departments with separate interests and goals. I believe that we are one institution, which is capable of sharing its priorities and realising them. Together with my team, we are open to a debate about our proposed solutions and offer our abilities to implement them.

Eva Lehečková

1 Challenges for the Forthcoming Term of Office¹

In the forthcoming term of office, the faculty is facing changes (in part introduced university-wide) which will significantly affect its future functioning and can visibly contribute to its development. We will propose implementation methods that will be the most beneficial to the faculty on both the organisational and financial levels, and will negotiate them within the university. Our aim will be to ensure that the individual changes are introduced at the faculty in concert with each other and with minimum administrative workload.

Principal challenges for the faculty in the coming years include:

1. **Introducing internal faculty processes in accordance with new regulations and developments at CU**

- *we will introduce a career development system and academic and scientific staff evaluation*

The faculty attempted to introduce regulations for academic staff career development without success already between 2015 and 2017. We agree that such a system is necessary at CU FA. The benefit of its introduction will be the establishment of transparent conditions for career growth for all relevant parties: individual members of academic and scientific staff, department heads and faculty management. We will advocate a coherent specification of the forthcoming university regulation at faculty level, so that equal conditions for all academic staff are secured and, at the same time, disciplinary and individual specificities of career growth are taken into account. We will ensure that the whole system is as advantageous for the faculty as possible and is at the same time as uncomplicated as possible. The system will be supplemented by support services that will create conditions for the successful realisation of career development plans.

- *we will introduce a system of continuous quality assessment of study programme accreditations*

In the transition period of the previous years, a necessity for reaccreditation of all study programmes emerged due to changes to the Higher Education Act. Understandably, the faculty then partly withdrew from the system of evaluating upcoming accreditations, which had been introduced by Dean Stehlík. However, this type of evaluation enables the gathering and sharing of information on good practice across different types of programmes. The reaccreditation process is now complete, and the original practice can therefore be revived. CU is currently developing a system of mandatory assessment of study programme accreditations approved by the Internal Evaluation Board. We will ensure that the evaluation process is transparent and remains a useful tool for support and innovation of CU FA study programmes. We will focus on ensuring that the evaluation of study programmes does not result in additional administrative workload.

- *we will contribute to the refining of the evaluation system of research areas at CU*

The international evaluation of research areas at CU, which was carried out as a pilot between 2019 and 2021, will be periodically repeated and will impact the distribution of financial contributions for research. We support this evaluation model as it privileges quality over quantity

¹The full text of this development strategy and other related information can be found on the web page <https://evaleheckova.cz>.

and demonstrates the faculty's position within the international context of comparable institutions. However, certain components of the evaluation process in the pilot were not set precisely and transparently enough to allow for a reliable interpretation of results and the formulation of strategic decisions regarding the future development of the individual research areas. In our discussions with the university management and other faculties, we will promote further improvements to the form and course of this evaluation, ensuring a greater applicability of the feedback for our faculty. The finding of the International Evaluation Panel that the faculty, with regard to the quality of its scientific output, is underfunded within the context of the university, also offers an opportunity for negotiating an increase in the financial contribution to our faculty.

- *we will promote a coherent implementation of institutional research support within the Cooperatio programme*

From 2022 onwards, Progres, the current programme of institutional support of research, will be replaced by Cooperatio. We will ensure that the operation of the Cooperatio programme is implemented rationally and that risks are considered (note e.g. the roles and remits of the coordinators and boards of the future interfaculty research areas within the programme, evaluation and relationship of the quality of ongoing outputs to potential impact on individual members of the Cooperatio programme etc.). We will ensure that despite the declared principle of inclusiveness the distribution of finances within CU FA supports and rewards high quality research activities.

We will attempt to harmonise new evaluation systems – especially CU's evaluation at the level of research areas across the faculties, the evaluation of disciplines at CU FA, and the individual evaluation of academic staff – in order to ensure that the individual levels are interconnected and yield relevant information. This information will then also be used in the system of distributing finances to the departments (see below).

2. Stabilisation of the financial situation of CU FA and introduction of a sustainable system of distributing finances to the departments

The faculty periodically finds itself in financial difficulties, currently due to the coronavirus pandemic. Unfortunately, no easy solution is available that would result from a single change and would be reflected year-on-year; the steps to be undertaken must be complex and will only take effect in medium-term at the earliest. The goal of such steps is to stabilise the financial situation of the faculty, increase its reserve funds and financially reward staff for their specific contributions to the development of the faculty. In all these areas, we first want to make available the most complete, up-to-date and interpretable data on the activities of the faculty, which will subsequently form the basis for discussions about their use. These steps will be connected with the evaluation systems mentioned above, thus enabling a systemically improved financial remuneration of the CU FA academic and scientific staff.

Our particular focus will be on the following areas:

- *we will introduce a transparent system of distributing finances to the departments*

We will build on current and regularly updated quantitative data, incorporating into this system the profiles and diversity of the departments and, in dialogue with them, we will specify functional and preferred directions of development for the individual types of departments. The system will be primarily based on teaching and research data, interconnecting quantitative and qualitative data in both of these mainstays. It will be introduced gradually, with a decreasing share of the historical component, to enable the adaptation of the departments to the new conditions. We will establish a system of internal research evaluation at CU FA based on current data and the principles of qualitative comparative evaluation (benchmarking), which will take into account the specificities of each discipline.

- *we will expand the faculty's sources of income*

We will create and employ strategies with the aim to increase the number of ambitious projects with considerable benefit (Horizon Europe, Expro and JuniorStar GA CR, etc.). We will support the activities of research teams in order to improve the quality of research outputs, thus increasing the faculty's income in the area of institutional support of research. We will focus more substantially on the acquisition of projects in applied areas, aimed at social and education innovation in cooperation with external partners. We will increase income from supplementary activities, income from sponsorship and other forms of support through fundraising.

- *we will expand the premises used by CU FA and ensure their effective use*

Based on the results of a space audit, we will create a strategy for the use of premises both owned and rented by CU FA. Our priority will be the implementation of the Opletalova project (see below) as well as ensuring the effective use of the premises in Voršilská following the completion of KREAS, with the aim of supporting project and research activities. We will examine the possibilities of centralised scheduling for large classrooms and attempt to increase space for PhD students. In cooperation with relevant parts of the university administration and external organisations, we will carry out an energy audit in CU FA buildings with a view to reduce operational costs by 10% by 2025; we will consider introducing various elements of circular economy into the operation of the faculty.

3. Successful reconstruction of the Opletalova complex

The faculty begins the reconstruction of the buildings in Opletalova street at a time of financial instability and lacking sufficient reserves, while the deadline for the drawing of funds from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport investment programme is firmly fixed. It is clear that the faculty will not be able to provide the necessary financial resources for the completion of the entire project. At the same time, it is essential that the reconstruction of the Opletalova complex is successfully completed as soon as possible, so that the designated departments are able to move there according to the previously agreed plan. In this context, our focus will be on the following priorities:

- we will provide **careful monitoring, ensuring that the construction works take place within the agreed scope and time**, thus reducing as far as possible the amount of extra work and additional expenses
- well in advance, we will **submit an application for the drawing of funds from the university fund for co-financing larger investment projects** and negotiate the approval of the faculty application at university level
- we will pursue a **constructive cooperation between faculty management, the Office of Investments, the relevant departments, the architectural firm and construction contractors** to avoid any undesirable delays in negotiations and realisation

4. Cooperation within the faculty and university

The Faculty of Arts is an organic community of people who share the belief that the humanities and social sciences are key to the healthy development of a free society. We will give priority to ensuring that members of the academic community and other employees share information, communicate and cooperate with each other. Only in this way can the faculty function well and at the same time defend its position as an important and prestigious component of Charles University. In support of this cooperation, we will prioritise the following steps:

- we will focus on **continuously providing information to the academic community about current events, including the upcoming strategic steps** (e.g. in the form of a regular faculty newsletter)
- we will enhance the **close cooperation between faculty management, faculty bodies and other parties** (partnership and communication with the Academic Senate of CU FA, department heads and research area coordinators, active cooperation with faculty committees on the development of respective administrative operations).
- we will promote the proactive **involvement of faculty representatives in strategic steps at university level, the interfaculty exchange of good practice** within relevant branches, and effective and regular cooperation with CU FA representatives at university level
- we will introduce the position of a **Student Staff Support and Teacher Training Coordinator** as a member of the Dean's Advisory Board (see point 3.)

2 Challenges and Priorities for the Development of the Faculty in Individual Areas

A Studies and admission procedure

In the area of studies, we aim to evaluate experiences with distance teaching and learning during the pandemic. This opportunity will be used, together with the new system of accreditation evaluation, for the improvement of the quality of undergraduate programmes to prepare us for the demographic increase in the number of applicants. We will promote discipline diversity as the main asset of CU FA, strengthen the transfer of skills and individualisation of education, as well as create sufficient organisational and technical conditions for these priorities.

Priorities:

- in cooperation with the Study Committee and the Science Committee, we will introduce a **system of evaluation of approved study programme accreditations** in order to identify functional solutions and support the exchange of good practice; in relation to this, we will start a **discussion about the design of MA programmes**, its goals, admission and graduation requirements (identification of the added value in comparison to Bachelor's study, evaluation of the number of credits awarded for, and the difficulty of, the profile courses, support for specialisations, etc.)
- we will take **measures to support a favourable distribution of student numbers at individual levels of study** (e.g. expanding the possibilities for entrance exam waivers, new types of campaigns aimed at applicants, analysis of the decline in student numbers in MA programmes and its causes, etc.)
- we will reinforce **elements of competitive and individualised education in undergraduate studies**, including **student research** and support of student activities focused on social innovation (e.g. in the form of placements, project seminars with research or applied outputs, involvement of students in research teams etc.)

B Research

In the area of research development of students and academics, we will emphasise the soundness of activities arising from institutional research support programmes, accreditation of study programmes and regulations related to the area of research development. We believe that regarding the individual requirements and steps in research development as transparent and meaningful makes them relatable and accomplishable. In all steps of our dialogue with the representatives of study disciplines, we will balance the generally valid requirements for quality scientific output at CU FA within an intergenerational structure and with regard to research and publication specificities of the given discipline. We will support good research within national and international perspectives, since we consider it vital to develop and link both of these aspects.

Priorities:

- we will constitute the **CU FA Research Board** on the basis of two main criteria: a) its members see their position on the board as a **privilege**, which implies the continuous obligation to contribute to the cultivation of the research environment at the faculty; b) the membership is based on **scientific brilliance** as well as **commitment to this mandate**, i.e. the board is comprised of high-performing researchers and engaged educators
- in the internal debate within the CU FA Research Board and Science Committee, we will create a **methodology for associate professorship (habilitation) and professorship procedures**, where evaluation processes will be transparent, consistent as well as legally and politically sound

- we will support **foreign-language publications by academic staff and doctoral students** in major journals within their relevant fields as well as with major publishers (support of academic writing skills development and identification of suitable publication platforms); we will **support faculty journals included in prominent databases** (introduction of editorial processes, financial support for editorial work and review activities)

C **Project management**

In the long run, CU FA needs to work systematically on a more balanced project portfolio which would include a larger share of prestigious European Commission projects. To achieve this goal, we will introduce a comprehensive project preparation system, which will take into account (in respect of financial compensation as well as skill) time demands and a relatively high risk of failure due to strong competition for the most prestigious grant schemes. The faculty needs to introduce mechanisms that will facilitate the cooperation between academic teams and administrative workers during the preparation and implementation of projects. Since 2018, we have accumulated valuable experience relevant to this goal within the KREAS project, but CU FA has the potential to build stable and truly prestigious research centres at the European level beyond this single project.

Priorities:

- we will develop a **strategy for CU FA project activities**, which will motivate high-risk/high-gain research and preserve the traditional disciplinary division, but which will at the same time offer a simple opportunity for flexible creation of interdisciplinary teams and enable the involvement of active researchers across the institutional hierarchy, including doctoral students
- we will **investigate suitable calls for projects** (preparation of structural projects, involvement in new schemes responding to challenges within the humanities and social sciences posed by the coronavirus pandemic, MSCA and European Commission programmes that include the so-called “widening countries”, etc.)
- we will increase the efficiency of **project preparation support**, which will motivate project submission (support for departments and research teams at the stage of project preparation; introduction of a good-practice system in the area of recurring strategic calls, including content feedback on application drafts; retention of the KREAS administrative team for strategic activities within CU FA, support of central co-financing for strategic projects)

D **Internationalisation**

Staff mobility abroad must be closely coordinated with research development and project activities of the faculty. It should have a positive effect on the quality of research and teaching, facilitate the identification of new grant opportunities, promote the key areas cultivated at the faculty and increase its prestige both at home and abroad. Student mobility abroad provides an opportunity to acquire theoretical knowledge and practical experience, and therefore contributes to personal growth and employability at an international level. The strategic development of the faculty’s internationalisation must be carried out in close cooperation with

other faculty administration offices, especially with those in charge of promotion and project management. The faculty must also reflect the transformations in international partnerships caused by the coronavirus pandemic and react flexibly to them.

Priorities:

- we will **increase** undergraduate students' **awareness about mobility options and schemes, maintain the wide range of mobility offers and support their relevance for domestic studies**
- we will support the **introduction of foreign-language study programmes** (including joint-degree) in prestigious and strategic specialisations at Master and Doctoral levels
- we will **increase the internationalisation of doctoral studies**, including a greater involvement of foreign supervisors, consultants and members of subject-area boards
- we will support **mobility related to the activities of the existing disciplinary and interdisciplinary research groups**, especially those with the potential to foster research, educational and project cooperation; we will facilitate the **creation of international teams**
- we will simplify the **integration of virtual mobility** into both studies and academic practice
- we will develop **a new strategy of promoting CU FA abroad**

E External relations and public engagement

The humanities can only compete with the natural sciences if it succeeds in offering holistic analyses of social phenomena to both colleagues from other faculties and the public. CU FA has excellent foundations for this: we view the faculty as an institution replete with outstanding ideas, publications and outputs. Our great advantage is that thousands of individuals who have passed through our faculty identify with its profile and often find positions in relevant partner institutions and within state administration. Our priority is therefore to support the internal network of dedicated people within the faculty, their public promotion and cross-institutional collaboration. On the basis of this continuously updated network, we will formulate strategies of presentation and cooperation aimed at different target groups: applicants, alumni, donors, academic and non-academic institutions and media. We will continuously consult the CU FA Public Relations Office regarding all strategic steps.

Priorities:

- we will introduce new **methods to promote CU FA** and its research, pedagogical, and applied outputs in **cooperation with new partners** (podcasts, educational and outreach videos, educational games, an e-zine promoting humanities, expansion of our cooperation with secondary schools, patronage of secondary school competitions, outreach events aimed at new applicants etc.)
- we will expand the **portfolio of cooperating institutions, including non-academic ones**, and set guidelines for such cooperation; we will increase the faculty's activity in the fundraising area, especially for specific support of particular outreach and application projects

- we will support **student and academic project activity in terms of research output applications** and social and educational innovation; we will establish a cooperation between the university science centre and Kampus Hybernská
- we will expand the **offer of lifelong learning courses** for different target groups, including distance learning and **teacher training courses**; we will simplify and digitise the administrative procedure associated with these courses

F Infrastructure and information resources

In the next term of office, we should focus on improving the quality of both physical and virtual work environments. Use of space is detailed in Part 1 (Sections 2 and 3). In the area of information resources, we will focus on both simple and more complex changes leading to the digitisation of administrative processes. Infrastructure in the broader sense also includes the fundamental contribution of the CU FA administrative and technical staff to the smooth operation of the faculty and its administration. Our main goals in this area are to secure adequate numbers of administrative staff in key roles for the development of the faculty, and to support the development of language skills of the administrative staff (see also Student and Staff Support).

Priorities:

- we will carry out a **workload audit of technical-economic administrative staff** in the individual offices, identify insufficient staff levels to cover the needs of the faculty and adjust the distribution of administrative staff; we will encourage the development of English-language skills of the administrative staff
- we will focus on consistent **digitisation and simplification of administrative procedures** (e.g. avoiding repeated entering of data into systems, reduction of documents requiring a physical signature and their circulation, digitisation of travel statements, merit scholarship calculator, etc.); we will ensure **strategic and personnel development of the Information Systems Office** in order to accelerate the digitisation of routine faculty processes
- we will secure **equipment facilitating online events** (interactive classrooms equipped for hybrid teaching and online conferences, rooms suitable for participation in online teaching, etc.)
- we will further enhance the **development of library facilities** respecting the needs of different groups of key users (simplicity and accessibility of library services, equipment of central study rooms, digital acquisitions and digitisation of print resources, preservation of the multifunctionality of departmental libraries)
- we will expand the use of **tools supporting open science** (e.g. open access publishing and data sharing)

G Student and Staff Support

In addition to financial stability, to which the measures outlined above will contribute, other aspects also add to job satisfaction, particularly various forms of staff support and the improvement of the psycho-social work environment. The strengthening of these aspects does not necessarily need to be costly, but it can accelerate and simplify the work itself or contribute to a better work-life balance. In accordance with available domestic research, we will focus – to a greater extent than has been customary at the faculty – on support in the area of occupational health (support in coping with heavy workload, work-related stress and burnout syndrome) and reconciling family and work life, as well as on increasing the quality of guidance, especially for younger academics, i.e. on (post)doctoral level.

Priorities:

- we will create a new position of a **Coordinator of Student Staff Support and Teacher Training** (see below): a part of this role will cover regular job satisfaction surveys and the identification of specific priorities of staff and students
- we will support **occupational health and the quality of the psycho-social work environment of CU FA staff and students**: this includes individual social and psychological counselling for students and staff (including identification of suitable project calls and support in writing applications), and organising courses and project seminars for students and staff focused on: a) **professional growth**, b) **career counselling**, c) **mental health** in the work/studies context (e.g. prevention of and coping with heavy workload, work-related stress and burnout syndrome, work-life and study-life harmonisation), d) **managerial skills for department heads and team leaders**, since the quality of leadership is integral to the quality of the institution, performance and job satisfaction of academic and non-academic staff
- we will improve **information accessibility** (information brochures for new members of staff, grant researchers, heads of departments, non-native academics and doctoral students; regular faculty newsletter)
- we will offer support to **academics with children**: advertising projects for academic staff returning after **family leave**, support of the **kids corner**, introduction of **individualised babysitting service**, survey of supply and demand of **kindergarten** places secured for CU FA employees' children as an alternative to the faculty kindergarten, identifying project funds for such external cooperation
- we will expand **employee benefits** (personal development, mental and physical health, cheap mobile tariffs for employees, dining discounts and discounts for cultural events etc.)

3 Faculty Management

In our view, the chief task of the Dean, the Vice-Deans and the Faculty Bursar is to regard the faculty as a unified whole despite its plurality and to promote this principle within the entire academic community, to reflect on the current situation of the faculty in relation to mid- and

long-term goals, and to create conditions for its development in the desired direction in accordance with its importance and role. We will work to obtain quality data for the analysis of the faculty's current state, focus on promoting information sharing, support and dissemination of good practice, identification of weak points, proposing possible solutions to these and their adaptation on the basis of discussion. Such partnership-based management with a shared vision would allow the team to successfully fulfil its role towards other parties (e.g., towards university management and relevant ministries), i.e., to effectively defend the interests of the faculty externally.

To reach this goal, we propose to adapt the structure of the management. CU FA is the largest faculty of our university, yet the number of its Vice-Deans is lower compared to comparable faculties. Under these circumstances and due to the increasing number of administrative operations and tasks it is difficult to effectively regulate its management.

The remit of the **Vice-Dean for Research** (Science Board and qualification growth, doctoral studies and publishing activities of the faculty) will remain unchanged.

A new position of the **Vice-Dean for Accreditations and Quality Assessment** will be created; in addition to the actual accreditation process, this person will be in charge of ongoing evaluation of accreditation implementation, but also of setting up evaluation in other areas (for the upcoming term of office particularly in the area of career development regulations and the implementation of the system of distributing finances to the departments); these areas will be addressed in strategic cooperation with relevant Vice-Deans, especially Vice-Deans for Research and Study Affairs.

The **Vice-Dean for Study Affairs** will no longer hold primary responsibility for the accreditation process but will focus on the oversight of studies. For this reason, we would also like to put the Vice-Dean for Studies in charge of the activities of the student admissions office (as was the case in the past); a single Vice-Dean would thus be in charge of students from application and admission into undergraduate studies to graduation.

The remit of the **Vice-Dean for Public Relations and Outreach** will cover the promotion of the faculty's activities (including outreach work aimed at applicants) and other aspects of the public engagement role (application and transfer activities in the area of humanities, social sciences and fine arts, including project calls focused on outreach, cooperation with the university project HYB4City and Kampus Hybernská).

The roles of the other Vice-Deans (**Vice-Dean for International Relations, Vice-Dean for Information Resources, and Vice-Dean for Infrastructure Development**) will remain unchanged.

The management will also include the new position of the **Student Staff Support and Teacher Training Coordinator**, whose role will include CU FA student and staff support, and the Coordinator for Teaching, a position previously introduced by Dean Pullman for the development of teaching, coordination of CU FA teacher training platforms and the development of cooperation with secondary schools.

At the same time, we would like to establish a **closer collaboration with the coordinators**

of the future Cooperatio programmes, or CU FA representatives in interfaculty boards for these programmes. The form and content of this cooperation will be specified depending on how the whole system is implemented within Charles University and at the Faculty of Arts.

I am gradually publishing the names of colleagues with whom I would cooperate on the positions of Vice-Deans should I be elected Candidate for Dean on the following web pages: <https://evaleheckova.cz>.