

**EVALUATION REPORT FOR EVALUATION OF RESEARCH
ORGANIZATION IN THE SEGMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS IN YEAR 2025**

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION NAME: University of Ostrava

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN): 61988987

THE LIST OF EVALUATION UNITS IN MODULE 3:

Institute for Research and Applications of Fuzzy Modelling; Faculty of Science; Faculty of Medicine; Faculty of Social Studies; Faculty of Arts; Faculty of Education; Faculty of Fine Arts and Music

CHAIRPERSON OF INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION PANEL

Name and surname:

Dr Rajendra Chitnis



LIST OF INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION PANEL MEMBERS

Name and surname	Position in IEP	Current position
Professor Iris Barshack	Focus on Faculty of Medicine	Professor at Institute of Pathology, Tel-HaShomer and Sheba Medical Center, Israel
Dr Rajendra Chitnis	Focus on Faculties of Arts and Fine Arts and Music	Associate Professor of Czech and Slovak, University of Oxford, UK
Professor Fatima Cvrčková	Focus on Faculty of Science	Professor at the Department of Experimental Plant Biology, Charles University, Czechia
Professor Lluís Godo Lacasa	Focus on IRAFM	Research Professor at the Artificial Intelligence Research Institute, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain
Professor Piotr Migoń	Focus on Faculty of Science	Professor at the Institute of Geography and Regional Development, University of Wrocław, Poland

Professor Enid J. Schatz	Focus on Faculty of Social Studies	Professor at College of Health Sciences, University of Missouri, USA
Professor Klára Šed'ová	Focus on Faculty of Education	Professor at the Department of Educational Sciences, Masaryk University, Czechia
Professor Thomas Wunsch	Focus on Faculties of Arts and Fine Arts and Music	Professor at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Passau, Germany

PROVIDERS METHODOLOGIST

Name and surname: Tereza Vengřínová



Date of on-site visit of higher education institution: May 20th-21st 2025

In __Oxford__ date __August 5th 2025__ Signature *R.A. Chitnis*
 (IEP chairperson)

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: IRAFM

FORD: 1 - Natural sciences

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary:

IRAFM is a relatively small research unit of the UO, although its size, both in personnel (a balanced mixture of mathematicians and computer scientists) and in budget, has significantly increased in the recent past. Although IRAFM was created with a main focus on theoretical research, in the last five years the focus has shifted somewhat to more applied research. This change has been reflected in the structure of the unit where basic research teams and (applied) research labs coexist. IRAFM's current contribution to RDI has also a relevant social impact through its involvement in education (supervision of PhD students), in applied research and in the development of applications for companies that are potentially useful for society as well.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]: 4

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:¹

IRAFM has positioned itself as a recognised institute in the European research frame within computational intelligence due to several achievements. The unit has achieved a significant number of international awards in scientific events. Several staff members are area editors or board members of different prestigious international scientific journals, and one member staff member has been president of a European association and another vice-president of another international society. Also, some staff members have been delivering invited lectures (about 50) in international scientific events in a quite regular basis. All in all, the unit has a remarkable presence in the international community in this section.

Recommendations: Increase, or at least keep, being very active in international events and journals.

¹ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]: 5

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The unit has a significant number of research projects, mainly from national or regional public funds, with moderate economic support for most of them except for the two first projects in Table 3.3.1 (during four years and two years respectively). Good balance between high-quality basic research theoretical-oriented projects (GACR) and more applied-oriented projects (OP PIK projects and contract research) with an application potential.

On the other hand, regarding proportionality, given the size and profile of the unit (32-37 FTEs, 60% mathematicians, 40% computer scientists) and the number of projects and the high paper production (90 Q1/Q2), the R&D&I capacity of the unit is remarkable.

The degree of scientific interdisciplinarity (mathematics, computer science, engineering, economics, social sciences) is satisfactory and the unit also has collaborations with the Faculty of Science and Arts. Finally, the projects' topics align well with the declared mission and vision of the unit.

I would say IRAFM's profile shows a balanced integration of basic science, application potential and institutional cooperation.

Recommendations:

The unit has tried hard to be involved in more EU research projects following the recommendation of the previous IEP. This recommendation remains valid, so keep trying.

The recent boost of generative Artificial Intelligence should be felt as an opportunity for the unit to increase its basic and applied research, both by increasing the collaboration of the unit with other faculties and also taking into account the driving force the UO plays at regional level.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]: 5

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The unit presents seven different research results that have been obtained both in the context of public research projects (3) and of research contracts (4) that are applied or intended to be applied (e.g. government and social inclusion tools, industrial automation, security solutions). They are in a good proportion with respect to the unit's RDI capacities. These applied results perfectly align with the aim of the unit of being a bridge between foundational research and social impact, and shows a very high level of social-economic impact of the unit's results.

Gender dimension is explicitly taken into account in EVKA, other results consider different sustainability issues (social, operational and institutional).

Recommendations:

The recommendation in the last section regarding a possible increase of AI-based projects can also be an opportunity to increase the social impact of the unit's research results.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]: 5

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The unit has developed a reasonable strategy for Knowledge & Technology Transfer, leveraging the performance of three applied-oriented labs of the unit, and leading to several collaborations and joint projects with a number of companies.

The users of the R&D&I results are basically academic sector (educational programs, research consortia) public institutions (Immigration office, NGOs, Ministry) and industrial partners (automotive, manufacturing, construction, defense). Some regional companies and public institutions are direct beneficiaries. This aligns well with the mission of IRAFM.

There has been a steady increasing of commercialisations during the evaluation period as well as in securing non-public funding.

Summarising, the R&D&I transfer strategy has been quite successful.

Recommendations:

Having commercialised results is a very good indicator of impact of the research done, but the priority has to keep producing high quality (basic and applied) research results. A good balance of basic, applied and transferred results is always the best path to follow.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]: 4

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The unit has shown itself rather active in science popularization and public communication activities in different formats (events, media, platforms), and it has engaged with communities both at a local and national level.

Recommendations: Again, the current high impact on the society of new AI tools can also be an opportunity to increase communication activities to the general public.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]: 4

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The unit has followed in general the recommendations made in the previous evaluation and improved several indicators, for instance:

- shift of its research focus towards more application-oriented research (image processing, machine learning, data analysis)
- Increase in applied results and tools
- Increase in commercial partners (5 to 11), projects with companies (1 to 5), commercial contracts (6 to 15), software licenses (1 to 3)

In particular, the efforts put in these three points are really admirable..

Recommendations: Do not give up and keep trying to increase the involvement of the unit in EU projects and international collaborations.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

NOT RATED

3.2 Recognition by the research community

4 - Very good

3.3 Research projects

5 - Outstanding

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

5 - Outstanding

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

5 - Outstanding

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

4 - Very good

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module

4 - Very good

Average rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Grade [A–D]:

A

Summary assessment:

Given its size and incomes, the unit IRAFM has done an incredible job since the last evaluation, improving in almost all aspects in relation to the promotion, management and most importantly production of research results.

Summary recommendations:

The unit has tried hard to be involved in more EU research projects following the recommendation of the previous IEP, keep trying it.

Take advantage of the boom of generative Artificial Intelligence and its potential applicability to a wide variety of problems to increase applied research, specially, in social impact applications and industrial applications at a regional level.

Keep being active to produce high quality (basic and applied) research results. A good balance of basic, applied and transfer results is an optimal path to follow.

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Science

FORD: 1 - Natural sciences

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary:

Faculty of Sciences (FSci) comprises seven departments (6 in FORD1 and 1 in FORD5), each one being active in the field of academic teaching and research, with considerable potential to deliver outcomes of social benefit. The FSci is focused on basic research, with only the FORD5 Department of Human Geography and Regional Development (KSGRR) indicating a balance between basic and applied research (see Table 3.1.6). These departments vary substantially in size (whatsoever metric is employed to estimate the “R&D&I capacities”), and it is obvious that the greatest contribution to any research-related indicators should be expected from the Biology and Ecology department (KBE), followed by KSGRR, Chemistry, (KCH), Physical Geography and Geoecology (KFGG), and the three smaller department of Informatics and Computers (KIP), Physics (KFY) and Mathematics (KMA).

This focus on basic research is to be expected, since primary goals of a higher education institution of the university type should be basic research and education, and the quality of research outputs and performance in teaching (including promotional activities to attract new students) are the main indicators of success. In addition, all these activities are time-consuming; expecting academic staff to be equally efficient and successful in everything is simply unrealistic. Therefore, in our view the Module 3 evaluation of the Faculty of Science should be based predominantly on indicators 3.2, 3.3 and 3.6. However, if there are academic staff members who strongly focus on applications and transfer of knowledge, they should be particularly looked after and supported.

As of 2023, the FSci employed 218 people (Table 3.1.3), including 119 people at positions of Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Assistants. R&D personnel comprised 46 people and Technical and economic staff – 53 people. Among research and teaching positions the proportions are: Professors – 9%, Associate Professors – 26%, Assistant Professors – 64%, Assistants – 1%. In comparison with 2019 and the previous evaluation period the number of staff increased (from 200 in 2019), including a significant rise in the number of Assistant Professors (now 76, in 2019 – 60). The number of Professors increased from 8 to 11. For the latter category, notable is the change of age structure: in 2019 7 out of 8 Professors were in the 60-69 years old age group, in 2023 there were 3 people under 50 and 1 person in the 50-59 age group. The number of Assistant Professors in the 30-39 years age group increased from 27 to 35. This looks like a good age structure, with more balanced age-position distribution, with no immediate threat of serious problems with

staffing due to retirements, migrations and unexpected circumstances. However, data do not show how these numbers are distributed at the departmental level and hence, it is impossible to comment at the department level. It would have been also interesting to know how many international researchers are among the staff, and how their participation varied over the evaluation period, but the report format does not provide space for this.

The number of study programmes offered varied between 55 and over 60. It decreased to 53 as of 2023, mostly among undergraduate (Bachelor) and Master programmes (28 in 2019, 20 in 2023). Such changes are not uncommon, and may originate from the natural development of the accreditation cycle, where newly accredited programs must co-exist for some time with their thematically closely related, or even identical, but formally distinct, predecessors (there was a major country-wide change in the study programs organization following a 2016 amendment of the Higher Education Act, necessitating re-accreditation of all study programs). There may be additional contributing factors, such as offer versus demand and economic constraints, but it is important that the actual number of undergraduate students remained fairly stable throughout the evaluated period, with slight increase overall, and some fluctuations. The number of master students (and study programs) is on the rise, whereas the number of doctoral students slightly declined but the decline is not alarming and, considering current trends in many institutions and countries, is likely to be mainly related to financial matters beyond the control of the faculty (competition from industry, especially strong in informatics but also elsewhere; limited resources to fund doctoral students).

There is one “professional”, i.e. practically rather than academically, oriented doctoral study program listed in Table 3.1.5; this is, however, a formal error of the report that has been corrected following the site visit – this program should have been listed as English language, not Professional. The contribution of study programmes in English is still not large – only 3 among 53 in total as of 2023. This is a small number for a university which wants to be present at an international arena. However, reasons why the number is so low may be complex. The number itself is meaningless without information on the actual extent of international student enrolment, for which the report format provides no space, since even the Czech study programs, especially graduate ones, may provide most of the teaching in the English language with only the administration being done in Czech.

Overall, the data in 3.1. indicate a healthy institution of higher education, with ambitions possibly of regional, rather than European/worldwide, character.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:²

Given the relatively modest size of the institution, the unit cannot be expected to fill all ten allocated slots for each parameter. In some cases, it may have been better to list fewer

² Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

achievements rather than including items of questionable relevance, such as prizes awarded internally by the evaluated institution itself.

While the description also mentions awards from before the evaluation period (for M. Eliáš), Table 3.2.1 is correct and includes two respectable national awards to KBE members (Czech Science Foundation Chairman's award to M. Eliáš and Neuron award to M. Šimíček, who, however, is not a full-time member of the unit). Besides, it also lists a membership in the Executive Committee of the Council of Scientific Societies of the Czech Republic – a registered society associated with the Czech Academy of Sciences, whose main focus of activity is networking among scientists, organization of congresses, publishing and outreach (see <https://www.avcr.cz/en/academic-public/Scientific-Societies/index.html>), and an adjunct professorship given to the late Professor Olga Rossi by the University of Melbourne. Without denying the importance of these activities and achievements as signs of recognition by the wider (scientific) community, neither can be considered a “prestigious R&D&I award”.

As far as participation of academic staff in editorial boards of international scientific journals is concerned, Table 3.2.2 lists 10 researchers involved in editorial boards of a total of 14 journals. Some of these journals are, in a sense, domestic (even though listed in JCR and WoS and having international editorial boards), i.e. published by Czech academic institutions (AUC Geographica, Photosynthetica, Czech J. Int. Rel.), and others, though international, are small journals published by independent publishers outside Czechia (J. Insect Biodiv., Odonatologica). However, the list also includes several journals published by large publishers (Springer Nature, Elsevier, Wiley) – J. Innov. Enterpr., J. Photochem. Photobiol., BMC Genomics, BMC Genomic Data, Cur.Res. Parasitol., Exp. Parasitol., Earth Surf. Proc. Landforms, and two major interdisciplinary journals (Scientific Reports and PLoS One). In the latter two groups of journals, which would collectively be considered prestigious (though mostly not top tier), the units engaged are three large departments (KBE, KFGG, KSGRR) and one of the smaller ones (KFY).

Most of the invited lectures reported in Table 3.2.3. were given during institutional visits and European, regional or national scale conferences rather than at large international congresses of major scientific associations, with a notable exception of a Gordon Research Conference (with a KFY representative). In case of incoming invited lectures (3.2.4), departments visited are, unfortunately, not listed, although they can mostly be inferred from the listed topics. Most of the listed activities related to research project evaluation (research councils, grant agencies – Table 3.2.5) are within Czechia with a single exception (DFG).

An interpretation of the apparent under-representations listed above is however not simple. It has to be noted that with an increasing number of scientists, the competition for any of the listed forms of „recognition“ is quite high, as the number of positions is limited. Moreover, the current focus on various kinds of balances (nationality, continent, gender, age, career stage) means that for some people to receive such recognition may be more difficult than for others. Except for awards, these are also all extra time-consuming activities and people may be reluctant to take these extra jobs, often unpaid. Declining this kind of activities is not uncommon.

In summary, international impact of at least European level is documented for five departments, namely KBE, KSGRR, KFGG, KFY and KMA, with KBE and KSGRR most prominent. It is, however, somewhat concerning that KCH appears to be underrepresented in this part of the report, disproportionate to its capacity share.

Unfortunately, the format of the report does not allow including information on the probably most relevant indicator of recognition by the international scientific community, namely the ability to engage in productive informal collaboration with international researches (resulting, e.g., in shared publications without formal project support), although some relevant data can be found in part 3.3 (supporting again a very strong position of KBE).

Recommendations:

While the indicators listed in 3.2. should be considered as “surrogate markers” of recognition by the scientific community rather than desired outcomes, they do indicate a certain disproportion between department size (“R&D&I capacities”) and international visibility. The institution should take measures to improve the standing of weaker departments e.g. by facilitating the establishment of new research groups led by newly appointed group leaders. Discussions with faculty representatives during the site visit and subsequent communication with the University indicate that such development is already taking place, and that, for example, a total of three new research groups have been, or are being, established with support from the Global Experts scheme, one of them (continuing productive work after departure of its head, Sonja Zulfiquar) at KCH.

Since nominations for (local or regional) awards in the field of natural sciences (e.g. Werner von Siemens award, L’Oreal Women in Science award, “Česká hlava”, Otto Wichterle Award, Martina Roeselova Memorial Stipend) typically require activity of the prospective nominees and/or their institution, Fac.Sci. should invest targeted effort into identifying prospective nominees and providing any necessary support to their nominations. Likewise, since some measures of international recognition such as involvement in editorial activities are simultaneously a distinction and extra work, there should be incentives available for people considering being involved (such as reduction in teaching load). Please note that wherever the phrase “incentive” is used, it does not mean direct financial reward but the whole spectrum of measures.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

Among the 10 most important projects described, there are two large strategic projects from the EU OP Just Transition with University-wide or even broader coverage (LERCO and REFRESH). These are projects in progress that have only begun and it is not yet possible to evaluate their results.

The remaining eight items with detailed descriptions seem to have a fair degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration involved, and include 2 publicly funded basic research projects linked to KBE, 3 applied projects of KSGRR (in one of them the OU was not the main partner), 1 applied project of KIP, and one Open Society Fund-funded applied project with

KFGG involvement, with major societal impact. For some of these, however, the descriptions were relatively laconic regarding results and applications. For example, the description for Centre for Research of Pathogenicity and Virulence of Parasites is only 100 words long (could be 300) and the statement “The Centre consistently generates excellent outputs in renowned journals and receives national and international grants” is rather unsatisfactory. It is, however, true – this project (CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/16_019/0000759) has, among other outputs, produced research articles in Nature (<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-05584-2>) and a lead author one in Current Biology (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2023.04.060>), which indeed are excellent outputs (one cannot get much higher in biological sciences). Although panel members should not have to play detective, the Faculty must not be penalized for being a bit too modest, or too brief, in the self-evaluation report - or for assuming that the panel members will have full access to the materials involved in M1 and M2.

Given the competition to receive research projects, the dossier seems satisfactory overall – besides of the 10 projects presented in detail, there are more than 30 other projects (plus nearly 30 where FSci is a partner) listed in Table 3.3.1. For just over 100 people of academic staff, this means a very good proportion at the Faculty level and as revealed during the on-site visit, this is a fair reflection of the cumulative capacity of the faculty. There is evidence of consistent success of securing external funding especially for KBE (over half of the projects listed), as well as for KFY, KFGG, KSGRR, all listing multiple projects (as clarified following the on-site visit). The remaining three departments present one project each, again suggesting underrepresentation of the Dept. of Chemistry.

Most contract research activities listed in Table 3.3.2 are small, and it is difficult to determine which units participated in individual projects. Several of the larger ones can be linked to KBE and appear to be bona fide research initiatives with respectable international partners (Harvard Medical School, Université de Paris) that are formally administered as inter-institutional contracts, and that can be understood as additional evidence of international recognition of KBE researchers (see also 3.2).

Recommendations:

Overall, the steps taken at the Faculty level in order to mitigate inter-department differences in performance, as revealed during the on-site visit and follow-up discussions, are reasonable, especially the focus on supporting intra-University collaborations and the budgetary tools (though not much information could be provided on the later, giving the limited space). It is important to use the budgetary tools transparently and in a manner that would provide a “buffer” for fluctuations in financing rather than a mere redistribution of funds from the more productive/successful units to those deemed in need.

It needs to be realized that preparing applications for research projects is a time-consuming task, frustrated by the overall low success rates. These circumstances, coupled with the ordinary workload, may result in a limited willingness to invest time in project preparation. Therefore, it might be desirable to establish a system of incentives to motivate staff to apply for external projects, tailored to the situation of each department in order to best address any imbalance that may be present now or in the future.

The strategic use of LERCO program funds to support re-focusing the Dept. of Chemistry orientation towards applied research is welcome, but care should be taken to maintain also an active basic/exploratory research program even in the field of chemistry. After all, this is what distinguishes a university from a technologically focused higher education institution.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

As already stated in the introductory information section (part 3.1), most departments within the Faculty of Science focus mainly or exclusively on basic research, where societally relevant impact may be expected on a rather long-term scale, and in any case, the Faculty of Science cannot be expected to take responsibility for ensuring subsequent implementation. The only unit described in 3.1. as being significantly involved in applied research, KSGRR, indeed demonstrates multiple productive applied projects (including research contracts with governmental bodies) that resulted in outputs providing a solid evidence-based ground predominantly for action of state and local authorities.

While other units are predominantly engaged in basic research, which is fully legitimate in a university setting, even these have listed impressive achievements, such as one patent with contribution of KBE, as well as two recently filed patent applications from KCH (filed after the end of the evaluated period but undoubtedly based on results obtained during that period). Several projects (in particular development of a neurorehabilitation system with participation of KIP and insect determination keys with KBE participation) produced software tools usable by wider professional or even general community.

In addition to the above-mentioned software and patents, as well as multiple maps and handbooks, which look like a solid output, there are multiple outputs of the “Certified methodology” or “Research Report” type. Some of them have a clear connection to described governmental contracts and governance activities (such as methodologies for watercourse management) or to a medical application, but it is not immediately obvious whether the “certified methodology” format in all cases provides any additional advantages over a standard publication

Given the nature of research performed at the evaluated unit, it is hard to imagine it as having a gender-related dimension, and it is thus fully understandable that the authors do not comment on this aspect.

Recommendations:

The unit presents a commendable solid record of meaningful societally relevant research. A certain asymmetry amongst departments is natural, given the diversity of research activities taking place at the Faculty of Science. However, it might be useful to open an internal discussion within the Faculty, possibly with experts from outside the academia, whether an increase of research with societal impact evident in short- and medium-term is feasible and if so, to work to an internal system of incentives that would promote this kind of research.

While it is understandable that results of contract research are typically presented in the form of research reports that do not necessarily have to be public, it is not clear whether the

“certified methodology” type outputs reflect a genuine demand for certified methodologies by potential users (typically public bodies), or if they merely respond to a funding body’s requirement for producing a certain number of certified methodologies, regardless of possibly duplicating academic publications. There is a possibility that this may be common for some funding schemes managed by certain Czech public bodies and the University can hardly do anything about it, but efforts should be made to make outputs of publicly funded research publicly accessible.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

This section, in our view, to a large extent overlaps with 3.4. Overall, it is difficult to evaluate this very complex field where the “success” depends not only on the academic institution but also (or predominantly) on users, the existence of a “market” for applicable solutions, as well as the users’ willingness to use the results provided (example: water management authorities, dominated by engineers, are usually reluctant to take any advice from environmental science people, physical geographers, biologists etc.). Moreover, since most departments focus on basic research, technology transfer and commercialization are not expected to play a major role, with exception of KSGRR, whose applied research, however, has predominantly the character of a public service that is not expected to result in financial gain from non-public non-grant sources.

In our view, commercialization cannot be expected to be a major priority of a unit that focuses on basic research (as clearly demonstrated in other parts of the self-evaluation report), and is very good at it, especially in some fields. It is symptomatic that, because the format of the self-evaluation report does not provide space for listing scientific collaborations with research institutions as a separate entry, some of these (from KBE) are listed in this chapter. Consequently, the income from transfer of results into practice and commercial activities are, and probably will remain, modest, raising the question of current and future efficiency of the reported efforts to promote technology transfer and commercialization.

It is not clear to what extent some of the reported economic contracts, especially those with small budgets, represent original applied research as opposed to routine analyses, monitoring etc. Nevertheless, it is clear that the unit can demonstrate a wide range of partners and an increase of applied research and associated revenues in relation to the previous evaluation period.

Recommendations:

As already recommended in the previous evaluation, transfer of results into practice should be coordinated at the university level rather than left to individual faculties. Apparently, this advice has been well taken and the structure seems to work well.

While contract research can be a valuable part of the FacSci portfolio of activities (as documented by the KSGRR development since the last evaluation), it is important to keep the contract activities focused on genuine research rather than, e.g., ad hoc analytical services merely routinely applying established methodology.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The Faculty of Science engages with the general public in multiple programs aimed at promoting scientific literacy and interest in science. Besides of a well-designed system of communicating research results with the general public via multiple channels (WWW, social media, press releases, and, most commendably, an outreach program aimed at schools such as the “University for Schools” lecture series), it is very important that the unit engages in several programs specifically aimed at identification and recruitment of talented high school students especially in the fields of biology and mathematics. Employment of a person with a specific portfolio focused on communication is a good move.

Recommendations:

In this field of activity, the FSci is very active and performs well, especially taking into account that this is something extra in respect to research and teaching. Thus, the basic recommendation is to continue the activities carried out so far. However, to ensure that the system is sustainable, two steps are recommended (if not done yet): (a) to identify people best fulfilling the roles in popularization and adjust their workload in such a way that they perform this role at maximum efficiency; (b) to perform an internal analysis of possible threats and risks jeopardizing the efficiency, so that symptoms of decline are identified in advance and any remedial action can be undertaken before serious problems appear.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Five key recommendations were specifically mentioned in the report, however, two of them were explicitly aiming at the whole University rather than Faculty level.

1) A system for support of knowledge transfer and commercialization has been established at the University level and some of its elements were incorporated into the intra-faculty evaluation. This has already produced good results, including tripling of income from non-public sources.

2) The recommendation to focus on knowledge transfer and expertise, on complex projects with a high impact on society, as well as on more intensive cooperation with end users should be also understood as advice to suppress minor ad hoc commercial activities without a substantial research component. The reported involvement in large projects is for sure a positive development.

3) Several initiatives to recruit talented scientists are described, resulting in the arrival of 12 new staff members; it has been clarified during the long-term visit that some of them succeeded in establishing new research groups/directions with a longer-term perspective.

4) The specific recommendations to strengthen applied research in the fields of physics, chemistry and computer science have been followed and provided tangible results (increasing incomes, patents) and good perspectives for further collaboration, despite some unexpected personal developments that appear to have been handled well.

5) Following a specific recommendation, several projects connecting KSGRR and ERIS have been implemented and are continuing past the end of the evaluated period.

Recommendations:

While it makes sense to take applied research into account in internal evaluations, the focus should stay on identifying, and subsequently awarding, quality research (either basic or applied), and on distinguishing research from non-research commercial activities (such as routine analyses/monitoring), both at faculty and university levels. Balanced development at the faculty level, so that individual departments make their contributions adequate to the staffing and specificity of the discipline, should remain among the priorities. To ensure this occurs in the longer-term perspective, internal discussion (possibly taking advice from experts from outside the university) should be organized on a regular basis, to evaluate the performance and to identify threats and deficiencies in advance.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	4 - Very good
3.3 Research projects	4 - Very good
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	5 - Outstanding
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	4 - Very good

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	5 - Outstanding
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	5 - Outstanding
Average rating [1–5]:	5 - Outstanding
Grade [A–D]:	A
Summary assessment: Given the size of the Faculty of Sciences and thematic diversity within it, some heterogeneity in the performance of individual departments is to be expected. Nevertheless, all evaluated units perform well and the imbalance is much less present than it was during the previous evaluation. Among various activities undertaken within the Faculty, there are many examples of excellence in the field of basic research, an impressive record of popularization aimed at the general public, as well as noteworthy success stories of producing applicable outputs. As far as basic, curiosity-driven science is concerned, the Faculty of Science has established a strong presence at the regional, and in several fields (most notably biological sciences, physics and physical geography) also European/worldwide level, with several teams regularly producing top-ranked publications, repeatedly succeeding in the notoriously tough competition for public funding from within the country, and maintaining active international collaborations. In the field of earth sciences and social geography, there is a commendable record of applied research commissioned mainly by state and regional authorities (and therefore publicly funded). Ability to acquire funding from sources outside the Czech Republic, as well as from non-public sources, appears to be limited, the latter corresponding to a fairly typical situation for a Czech university whose research program is not strictly focused on technology or other commercially attractive applications. There are visible efforts to foster positive change and facilitate formation of new research groups in departments whose current output does not match their overall share of research capacities, or whose reported outcomes from the evaluated period heavily rely on academics no longer active at the OU. The Faculty of Science is commendably active in the field of science communication to the general public, with specific focus on attracting talented prospective students, which is a very good move. We also note successful implementation of many recommendations arising from the previous evaluation and we generally consider the Faculty of Science as a healthy research environment, active in various fields, nurturing skilful teams of researchers with a strong share of early and middle career scientists. In the current shape and structure the Faculty of Science is sustainable and capable of maintaining the high status in the future, perhaps even further improving the performance in specific fields, especially if the general operational framework at the university level is further optimized (continuing the trend since the last evaluation).	
Summary recommendations: As already recommended at the University level, work with the rectorate to encourage and support researchers in applying (and possibly re-applying) for grants from diversified sources, including international ones. Maintain the existing strategy of supporting establishment of new research teams and directions in areas that are currently visible less than would correspond to their size, without compromising excellence in fields that are already internationally competitive. While engaging with non-public funders, prioritize research-focused projects over small contractual activities where the academics merely provide routine services (e.g. analyses, monitoring...) with little if any obvious research contribution. Ongoing monitoring of performance of individual departments to identify threats and deficits in advance, so that remedial action can be undertaken.	

Encourage further collaboration between physical geography and social/human geography, to foster interdisciplinary research of the environment, especially in the context of the region where the University of Ostrava is located and where human-environment interactions have a long history and are a very promising field of research, as well as a theme of high societal relevance.

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Medicine

FORD: 3 - Medical and health sciences

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary:

The evaluation made both by the documents and presentations found progress in national and international engagement.

Overall, the medical school, though relatively new, has shown impressive growth in research in recent years.

The report is written in a clear and transparent manner. The data is supported by tables that effectively present the overall picture.

The Faculty of Medicine demonstrates a significant leap over the past four years, particularly in biomedical research, teaching, and training.

With the development across various fields, including the establishment of national and international collaborations, the recognition of the Faculty is rising both nationally and internationally.

There is a noticeable presence of highly motivated individuals who are strongly committed to advancing the Faculty.

Clinical teaching meets the challenge of senior clinicians who are demanded now for research as well. This is a complicated situation, however, is very much expected and demonstrate the shift made for applied research.

We recommend further strengthening of internal collaboration between university faculties, particularly among medicine, education, engineering, and basic sciences. Enhanced focus on bioengineering and fundamental sciences is encouraged to optimize the use of intellectual property.

It is suggested to document new project data, such as in the SIMLEX project, and leverage the growing data lake for further research.

Recommendations include expanding research efforts through flagship projects, creating centers of excellence, and increasing support for MD-PhD programs, research grants, and competitions. Greater attention to intellectual property and market alignment is advised, though meaningful progress has already been made.

Community engagement should be increased by involving medical students in projects that serve the local population. While still under-documented, some such initiatives appear to be underway.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:³

The Faculty of Medicine demonstrates clear progress and increasing national and international visibility. This advancement is reflected in the recognition of its experts through rankings such as Forbes, as well as through international grants and teaching appointments. Several experts, such as Prof. Hayek, lead a large number of successful projects, significantly contributing to the Faculty's leadership.

The academic staff shows impressive activity in publishing articles and serving on editorial boards, as well as notable involvement in national and international research activities. The research projects focus on cutting-edge areas of global research, reflecting a precise selection of research priorities.

Key research topics include aging, cell therapy, hemato-oncology and the development of artificial intelligence tools for analysis and diagnostics.

Some of these projects are funded by public sources, and several result in patent applications.

Recommendations:

There are clear efforts to enhance both national and international activity. Following a thorough review of the university's broad range of activities, it is recommended to further deepen internal collaborations across different faculties within the university. That includes education, engineering and basic science.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The Faculty of Medicine's research focus is based mainly on biological sciences, medical engineering, basic medicine and clinical medicine. There are some projects that are relevant to some of the faculties of the university, for example LERCO, in which the faculty has a leading role.

The Dean's activity is very impressive as well in the fields of public health and global medicine. Recent interest is focused on the field of pathology, which gives very interesting options for research.

Recommendations:

³ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

As was mentioned before, it is recommended to further deepen internal collaborations across different faculties within the university.

Focusing on the bioengineering and basic science options will provide better employment of the intelligence properties.

In addition, I would recommend documenting the new data gained in the new projects as SIMLEX in order to study the results.

As I understood there is an expanding data lake which should be used for additional studies.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The university shows adequate concerns for the needs and wellbeing of society. Two of the leading main issues that are discussed are: the healthy population and the oncology-hematology patients. Projects are focused on healthy aging and epidemiological study on the impact of living conditions on healthy population. Other important projects focus on oncology and hematology "the faculty implemented projects with a direct impact on the quality and availability of treatment", which is really impressive.

Some of the projects are focused on the sequences of long-lasting air pollution, taking into account the relevance of this topic to the local population.

The faculty has a wide range of activity involving global medicine which is impressive.

My score (5) reflects the increase in the number and quality of projects for the evaluating years, more than a specific project.

Recommendations:

I recommend expanding this agenda with additional projects. The school should choose a few projects that can transform it into a center of excellence. More programs to encourage research as MD PhD programs, research competitions, grants etc should be added to the present ones.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

All users are extremely important and emphasize the transfer into practice: The Ostrava university hospital, primeCell, Biovendor, Regional hygiene station and TESCO for medical image analysis.

Additional attention should be made for the impact of the results on the population.

An impressive effort is already made towards IP rights and commercialization.

Recommendations:

More efforts should be made to intellectual property and to work on the market needs, however, a major change was already made.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The events made to enlarge the involvement of the population as Night of Science and MedTalks should be encouraged. SIMLEK simulation centre is an excellent example for the involvement of the public.

Recommendations:

Educate the medical students to be more involved in the community. I would suggest establishing more projects in which the students would share activities with the community. Also less documented, my impression was that some are going on.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

A major impact was made during the evaluating time in all fields. The directions are excellent and should improve even more by financial support. Faculty members are extremely dedicated to the vision and mission of the school.

Recommendations:

The school of medicine is new, and organized in this way for only 15 years. By judging the progress that was made during the last few years, I see enormous increase in research activity.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	5 - Outstanding
3.3 Research projects	5 - Outstanding
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	5 - Outstanding
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	5 - Outstanding

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	5 - Outstanding
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	5 - Outstanding
Average rating [1–5]:	5 - Outstanding
Grade [A–D]:	A
Summary assessment: The Faculty of Medicine has made substantial progress over the past four years, particularly in biomedical research, teaching, and training. It has gained increasing national and international recognition, with visible achievements such as expert rankings (e.g., Forbes), international grants, and teaching appointments. Key areas of research include aging, cell therapy, hemato-oncology, and the development of AI tools for diagnostics. Many projects are publicly funded and some lead to patent applications. Faculty members are highly active in publishing, editorial work, and collaborative national and international research. The university demonstrates a strong commitment to societal needs, with significant projects focused on healthy aging, oncology, hematology, and the effects of long-term air pollution. The faculty's involvement in global medicine is particularly noteworthy. Collaboration with external institutions and biotech companies enhances the translation of research into practice. Efforts toward intellectual property and commercialization are already evident. Overall, the Faculty's direction is excellent, and continued financial support will help expand its impact. Faculty members are dedicated and aligned with the institution's mission.	
Summary recommendations: The evaluation made both by the documents and presentations found progress in national and international engagement. We recommend further strengthening of internal collaboration between university faculties, particularly among medicine, education, engineering, and basic sciences. Enhanced focus on bioengineering and fundamental sciences is encouraged to optimize the use of intellectual property. It is suggested to document new project data, such as in the SIMLEX project, and leverage the growing data lake for further research. Recommendations include expanding research efforts through flagship projects, creating centers of excellence, and increasing support for MD-PhD programs, research grants, and competitions. Greater attention to intellectual property and market alignment is advised, though meaningful progress has already been made. Community engagement should be increased by involving medical students in projects that serve the local population. While still under-documented, some such initiatives appear to be underway.	

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Education

FORD: 5 - Social sciences

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary: The Faculty of Education (FE) at the University of Ostrava is one of the largest and most societally engaged units within the university. Its mission is twofold: to educate future professionals in the fields of teaching, education, psychology, and physical activity, and to conduct research that addresses pressing social and educational challenges, particularly in the structurally affected Moravian-Silesian Region.

The faculty offers a wide range of accredited study programs at all levels (bachelor, master, doctoral), including programs in teacher training, pedagogy, special and social pedagogy, psychology, physical education and sport, adapted physical activities, and kinanthropology. Study programs in human movement and physical activity are a distinctive and well-developed part of the faculty's profile, both in terms of student interest and academic output.

Organizationally, the faculty includes departments that reflect its interdisciplinary orientation, combining educational, psychological, and movement sciences. In the area of R&D&I, the faculty has significant capacity in both applied and basic research, particularly in inclusive education, teacher development, mental health and well-being in schools, and the science of human movement and physical activity. Research in kinanthropology, motor development, physical literacy, and adapted physical activity is particularly strong, with impacts extending to the fields of health promotion and prevention.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:⁴ The Faculty of Education is home to several nationally and internationally recognized researchers, especially in the fields of health, well-being, and physical activity. Scholars such as Steriani Elavsky and others are widely cited and well integrated into international research networks. This reflects individual excellence and contributes to the Faculty's academic profile in selected domains. It is also commendable

⁴ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

that some faculty members serve on editorial boards of international journals and contribute to the academic community through peer review and conference participation. However, broader academic recognition across the Faculty remains limited. In core areas such as education, pedagogy, and psychology, international visibility is low and often not supported by long-term strategic efforts. The self-assessment cites only one invited lecture at a foreign institution during the entire evaluation period and does not mention participation in national or international evaluation panels or academic associations. Furthermore, the recognitions listed are mostly internal university awards, with no reference to national or international prizes, fellowships, or other distinctions. Importantly, the self-assessment does not report the existence of a coherent institutional strategy for building international academic presence and fostering exchange. There is limited evidence of structured support for international publishing, networking, or outbound mobility. Similarly, the Faculty does not present a systematic approach to hosting visiting scholars from internationally relevant institutions, which could otherwise enhance mutual exchange and institutional visibility.

Recommendations:

Develop a faculty-wide strategy to support international academic recognition, including targeted mobility, networking, and visibility measures.
Encourage both outbound researcher mobility (e.g., fellowships, short stays at leading institutions) and the hosting of international scholars.
Provide structured support for publishing in high-quality international journals, including mentoring and editorial development.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment: The Faculty of Education has participated in a diverse portfolio of externally funded projects, covering both basic and applied research. Notable examples include:

- *DigiWELL* (OP JAK): promoting digital well-being among vulnerable populations;
- *LERCO*: long-term cooperation in interdisciplinary health research;
- *REFRESH* (Just Transition Fund): supporting regional innovation capacity through university–society cooperation;
- Multiple *TACR* projects focused on inclusion methodologies, parental engagement, and community development.

These projects are frequently interfaculty or even interuniversity in nature, demonstrating the Faculty's ability to work across disciplinary and institutional boundaries. Their common focus on health, digitalization, well-being, and labour market adaptation reflects timely societal priorities and positions the Faculty as a relevant and competent actor in applied social research. Particularly strong is the field of kinanthropology, health research, and well-being, which achieves international visibility and scientific excellence. These areas may serve

as a model for other parts of the Faculty in terms of both research quality and interdisciplinary engagement.

However, the educational dimension—especially the field of formal education—remains less visible in the reported projects. Given that the Faculty educates future teachers and pedagogical professionals, it is important that research more clearly addresses challenges in the education system and contributes to the improvement of school practice, classroom dynamics, and teacher education. A closer alignment between the Faculty’s research agenda and its core educational mission would increase internal coherence and social relevance.

Recommendations:

Continue developing large-scale interdisciplinary projects, and share best practices across departments to foster a research culture throughout the Faculty.

Strengthen the educational focus of future research by integrating project findings into teaching, school development, and teacher training.

Consider using health literacy as a bridging concept to connect existing research strengths in health and movement science with the pedagogical mission of the Faculty.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The Faculty of Education presents several examples of applied research with societal relevance, including:

- a validated algorithm for monitoring learning progress in mathematics (piloted in regional schools),
- a diagnostic methodology for early detection of reading difficulties (used by counselling centres),
- co-developed inclusive educational tools for classroom use,
- and guidelines for career counselling tailored to Ukrainian refugee students (adopted by school counselling services).

These examples indicate a degree of engagement with schools and public institutions and reflect the Faculty’s commitment to applied research in education and inclusion. However, given the Faculty’s size and disciplinary breadth, the number of documented outcomes is relatively modest. Descriptions of societal impact tend to be general, with limited information on the scale of use, demonstrated effectiveness, or long-term sustainability of these outputs.

Furthermore, the alignment of applied results with the Faculty’s long-term strategy remains unclear. There is no mention of how gender or sustainability considerations are addressed in the design or evaluation of outcomes, despite their increasing importance in the national evaluation framework. According to institutional data, research outputs from the Faculty are rarely submitted under the societal relevance criterion in Module 1, and when they are, they seldom receive high ratings. This suggests that the Faculty may be underutilizing its applied work for national recognition and funding.

Recommendations:

Develop a structured approach to planning, documenting, and evaluating the societal impact of research outputs.

Introduce internal support mechanisms for impact planning and long-term follow-up.

Consider integrating gender and sustainability dimensions into the development and reporting of applied research outcomes.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment: The Faculty of Education presents several examples of research transfer into practice, notably in the areas of health, movement, and technology. These include collaboration with healthcare providers (e.g., implementation of ANUME technologies in SeneCura facilities), innovations in motion diagnostics and impact surface testing, the creation of a university spin-off, and contributions to the innovation of courses in teacher education (e.g., addressing challenging situations in schools). These cases reflect a capacity for interdisciplinary application and the ability to engage with external partners across sectors.

However, the majority of transfer examples stem from fields outside formal education. Little attention is given to the transfer of research results into school practice, pedagogy, or curriculum innovation. This imbalance raises questions about the Faculty's strategic orientation and the extent to which it leverages its research to directly improve teaching and learning in educational institutions.

Descriptions of transfer activities are mostly narrative in nature and provide limited insight into the scale, uptake, or measured effectiveness of the outputs. It is unclear whether the Faculty systematically supports staff in identifying and developing the transfer potential of research results, or whether any institutional infrastructure exists to coordinate and sustain such activities. The absence of a strategy for engaging external stakeholders—especially schools, local authorities, and ministries—limits the scalability and long-term impact of promising research outcomes.

Recommendations:

Develop a Faculty-wide strategy for research transfer, particularly targeting the field of formal education.

Create internal infrastructure or support mechanisms to help researchers plan, develop, and monitor the transfer of research results.

Strengthen long-term partnerships with external stakeholders, including schools, public institutions, and NGOs, to ensure relevance, uptake, and sustainability.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment: The Faculty demonstrates consistent and diverse activity in the field of research popularization and public engagement. Academic staff frequently contribute to public debates on education, appear in the media, and organize events for teachers, parents, and the general public. Research findings are disseminated through lectures, workshops, blogs, and publications aimed at non-academic audiences. Initiatives such as conferences for practitioners, exhibitions of student work, public lectures, and dissemination events for applied research projects help raise awareness of educational and psychological issues. Particular strengths are evident in the areas of inclusive education, mental health, and innovative teaching practices. These activities are well-aligned with the Faculty's mission and contribute to its role as a public-facing academic institution. However, the self-assessment report does not provide specific examples of public engagement beyond university-led platforms and events. There is limited evidence of systematic collaboration with mainstream media, NGOs, or civil society organizations to promote research more broadly and reach more diverse segments of the population. This represents a potential area for growth.

Recommendations:

Expand outreach by developing partnerships with civic organizations, NGOs, and independent media.

Document and evaluate public engagement activities more systematically to understand their reach and impact.

Consider developing a communication strategy that differentiates between various target audiences (e.g., educators, policymakers, parents, youth).

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment: The Faculty of Education has made a visible and structured effort to implement recommendations from the previous evaluation under Module 3. Key progress is evident in four areas:

1. **Scientific activity:** The Faculty has significantly strengthened its scientific focus, particularly through interdisciplinary and socially relevant projects such as REFRESH, HAIE, DigiWELL, and LERCO. Publication activity has increased, including in Scopus and Web of Science indexed journals, with a growing footprint beyond kinanthropology to educational sciences and social studies.
2. **Societal impact and applicability:** A more strategic emphasis on applied and interdisciplinary research has resulted in a range of outputs with clear relevance to practice, including diagnostic tools, methodological materials for vulnerable groups, and technological innovations for elderly care and virtual education environments.
3. **Impact measurement:** The Faculty has improved its ability to monitor and document research impact, using both quantitative metrics (e.g. publication and grant data) and qualitative outcomes (e.g. implementation of methodologies in practice).
4. **Communication:** In response to previous criticism, the Faculty has introduced several initiatives to improve the visibility of its research, including podcasts, public events (e.g. Researchers' Night), targeted media collaboration, and popularisation materials.

These developments indicate genuine and institutionally supported improvement.

Recommendations:

Consolidate and formalize mechanisms for planning, monitoring, and evaluating research impact at faculty level.

Strengthen integration between applied research outcomes and the Faculty's educational mission, especially in teacher education.

Maintain and further develop communication efforts, ensuring they are targeted and inclusive across research domains.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	3 - Average
3.3 Research projects	4 - Very good
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	3 - Average
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	4 - Very good
3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	4 - Very good
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	5 - Outstanding
Average rating [1–5]:	4 - Very good
Grade [A–D]:	B

Summary assessment:

The Faculty of Education of the University of Ostrava demonstrates a clear commitment to addressing regional societal needs through research and public engagement. Its strengths lie particularly in interdisciplinary research on health, well-being, and physical activity, which has achieved international recognition and generated visible societal benefits. Research in these areas is often embedded in collaborative, interfaculty projects and supported by applied outcomes with direct practical use.

However, performance across the Faculty is uneven. While some domains—especially kinanthropology and health-related research—show excellence, others, including core fields such as pedagogy and psychology, lag behind in terms of international visibility, strategic coordination, and impact planning. The same imbalance is evident in the distribution of transfer activities and the orientation of research agendas.

Despite these challenges, the evaluators recognize the Faculty's authentic and sustained effort to improve, even under difficult conditions such as unstable and insufficient funding, as documented in the self-assessment report. The Faculty's societal relevance would benefit from a stronger institutional framework for internationalisation, knowledge transfer, and long-term stakeholder engagement. Systematic support for applied impact, strategic networking, and integration of research into education practice is still underdeveloped. Overall, the Faculty shows considerable potential. If it succeeds in spreading good practice from its strongest domains across the institution, it may significantly enhance both its academic standing and societal contribution in the coming years.

Summary recommendations:

Address the uneven performance across research domains by encouraging internal knowledge sharing and cross-departmental collaboration.

Develop and implement faculty-wide strategies for internationalisation, long-term stakeholder engagement, and knowledge transfer—particularly in areas directly related to formal education.

Strengthen the integration of research with teaching by systematically incorporating applied research findings into teacher education, curriculum development, and school practice.

Increase institutional support for international publication, outbound academic mobility, and participation in global research networks.

Establish internal mechanisms for documenting, evaluating, and communicating the societal impact of research, with explicit attention to gender and sustainability dimensions.

Advocate for improved institutional and national support structures, especially in terms of funding stability, capacity-building, and impact infrastructure, to allow the Faculty to fully realize its societal potential.

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Social Studies

FORD: 5 - Social sciences

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary: The focus of the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) is on social sciences and health-social care. The main disciplinary area is Social Work, which is spread across two departments, one that focuses more on social work and the other that focuses more on policy. Core values and key aims are related to development of strategies and solutions to social issues, including those of the region. Motto is “Shaping the mainstream from the margins.”

The FSS has 30.9 FTE, 720 students in 13 study programs, and a budget of 1.11mil euro. There are 5 inter-related research directions: Social work, service and care in the 21st century (theory), Co-creation with communities (epistemology), reflexivity of identities and spaces (methodology), collaborations to support social innovation and technology (application), and addressing social harm and urban marginality (empirical data).

The faculty grew out of the **Department of Social Work** (est. 2008). This department has 22 full time faculty, 12 research staff, 18 part-time instructors. Degrees include: Bachelor’s in Social Work (full-time or part-distance; 3 year), Master’s in Social Work & Social Entrepreneurship (2 years). Not listed online, but listed in report is a PhD in Social Work (available in English & Czech), and a Master’s specialization in Social Work and Criminology. The newer **Department of Health & Social Studies** has 10 full time faculty, no research staff, 9 part time instructors. This dept offers 2 3-year Bachelor’s degrees – one in Health Care-Social work (in person), and one in Community Development (in person, or combined-form part distance). This department focuses more on issues related to policy.

FSS is also home to the **European Research Institute for Social Work**, a research center with formal cooperative agreements with universities in Finland, France, Germany, Britain, and Slovakia (among others.) This is a primary locus of research and international connections. Future R&D&I capacity/plans include increasing EC grants, as well as continued national and increasing international recognition.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:⁵

FSS is home to the **European Research Institute for Social Work (ERISW)**, a research center with formal cooperative agreements with universities in Finland, France, Germany, Britain, and Slovakia (among others.) ERISW is the primary research arm of the FSS. The main aim of ERISW is to carry out research and publication activities in area of Social Work. A number of faculty serve on research panels of foreign research councils (e.g., Belgium, Finland, Norway), on editorial boards of publishing houses and journals (e.g. European journals focused on social work and homelessness), as well as being home to the ERIS Journal – Czech & Slovak Social Work, and doing other service work for field through peer-review of publications and grants, as well as contributing to disciplinary organizations. Hosted 2 Fulbright Scholars from US (2018-19 & 2022-23). Members of two international networks/projects: SOWOSEC and NEOLAIA.

Several faculty with internal awards (Rector's Award for Scientific Research), a number on journal editorial boards, or who have given lectures externally. A number of same faculty show up multiple times within and across categories; thus, one area for improvement is to expand these opportunities and awards to a greater number/percentage of faculty across FSS.

Given relative newness of ERISW – founded in 2007, so not yet 20 years old, breadth, depth, and internationalization of work, particularly given limited departments from which to draw academic staff is impressive.

Funding is coming from Czech Science Foundation, Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, and contracts, and have received national recognition for making substantive contributions in FORD 50403 Social Topics (Women's & Gender Studies, Social Issues, Family Studies, Social Work).

Habitation and professor appointment procedures (only 1 of 2 programs in CZ that can award professorship in Social Work) is another sign of regard by research community on the strength of the research program.

Recommendations:

Expand teaching/research presentations across European partner institutions (even online) – in both directions to increase access to new ideas at Ostrava, but also to get faculty from Ostrava additional exposure, maybe particularly more junior professors and those with fewer current research projects to expand their networks.

Continue to expand international networks (e.g., hosting additional Fulbright Scholars, build on past Fulbright and other international connections to connect departments).

Develop a 5-year plan for FSS & ERISW with reachable and stretch goals for expanding current awards (internal and external), applications to ERC and other EU grants, faculty members serving on editorial board & grant review panels, faculty members doing external lectures, increasing seminars/lectures by outside academics. For each of these – think about % and/or number of junior faculty, % and/or number of faculty not currently contributing to these metrics, etc.

⁵ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]: (no real comparison, but I think between 3-4)

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

Has strengthened position since previous review – success rate at GACR and TACR is 10-17%; in more recent period have over 3x as many active/funded projects (13 now compared to 3 in previous review period). Also, importantly have been responsive to current events and needs in region, e.g., COVID and war in Ukraine.

Highlight 10 projects, majority were multi-year projects (usually 2 yr); majority ended in 2022 or prior, so period as a whole looks good, but really had a peak in 2022 and decline in overall funding since then due to grant cycles.

Interdisciplinary research teams are addressing social issues (e.g., homelessness, social inclusion, children and domestic violence, social housing) and involving doctoral students in these studies. Majority of faculty and 90% of students are female; 50% graduation rate (this is among the highest at Ostrava, and quite good nationally). Very high-quality PhD students who are onboarded well at the beginning of PhD studies, and who are linked to research projects and provided with opportunities for conducting research, collecting primary data, engaging with communities, and contributing to presentations, publications, and grant writing.

Topics around social-health and social care issues are interdisciplinary – homelessness, domestic violence, child custody hearings, family dynamics and relationships, informal carers for persons with stroke, social inclusion. Clear also contributing to projects of others on topics of social relevance but not led by FSS researchers. A number of interdisciplinary connections with other faculties at Ostrava (e.g. with Applied Maths to create software for response evaluation of community work; Geographers in Faculty of Science, Architecture & Urbanism at Technical University).

Research clearly aligns with the vision and mission of the FSS, as most projects directly contribute to addressing social issues of region.

Recommendations:

Make use of supports provided Ostrava to facilitate grant applications, open access journal submissions, etc. E.g., Get support from central administration to resubmit recent unfunded external grants (Horizon, etc.); request support to partner with successful ERC recipients for mentorship in writing these particular grants; continue to apply for higher profile/top-tier international projects and external grants either as CIs or eventually PIs, by building on existing projects and collaborative networks.

Continue to attempt to expand and diversify sources of funding (majority of projects funded by domestic grant sources – Czech Funding Agency & Technology Agency of the Czech Republic).

Develop additional professional development opportunities for more of the faculty (or expand reach of current opportunities), so that impressive opportunities are spread more evenly across faculty and to faculty in both depts.

Request training for current staff to provide scientific infrastructure needed to manage ERC and other substantial external grants, so have infrastructure in place when these types of grants are funded.

Given breadth of work and number of projects (currently funded and planned expansion) – need to recruit, hire, train, and internationalize additional research faculty, particularly focusing on internationally experienced early career faculty. Particularly important given way budgetary structuring has disadvantaged FSS and provided them with a relatively small budget given level of research productivity, limited number of faculty, and comparatively large number of students.

Incentivize early career faculty (and high quality PhD students) staying in Ostrava; seek university support to reduce overload of diverse duties, especially for junior, potentially high achieving faculty – need to provide the resources to submit grants, not just reward after awarded.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

5 – Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Given area of expertise in Social Work and social policy, nearly all research the FSS is applied (10 of 13 projects), and can be considered as transferring knowledge to the communities, and as having an impact on society. The key populations of focus include those who are socially disadvantaged, disadvantaged in health, and those individuals and groups living in poverty, experiencing social exclusion, or social challenges (e.g., immigrants and refugees). The report and presentation exhibited a deep and real connections with communities. A number of the projects either address social harm or urban marginality in ways that engage with and make the communities in which the research is taking place real partners in the work. FSS has had long term engagement with communities across the period – even attracting students from these communities into the degree programs, and then they continue to work in their communities as researchers and practitioners using their new skills.

Recommendations:

While much of the research seems to make use of ideas that are linked to Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), this was not explicitly talked about as a method or epistemology employed by the department. Bringing in international experts to speak on this topic, or lead a workshop in these methods may further enhance this work.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Again, because of the types of topics and applied focus of the research, the majority of the research projects have very real transferability into practice. Issues around homelessness,

child custody, as well as responses to Ukraine War related to immigration and refugees are all topics and issues that are being addressed directly. These projects have practical implications and knowledge accumulated from the project findings are able to positively impact the lives of individuals in the region and beyond. The FSS has a solid role in the knowledge and technology transfer landscape.

FSS has contributed both methodological and substantive knowledge that is being used by Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs and other government and social service institutions.

Recommendations:

As new issues/areas emerge as politically and socially relevant to the region and municipality, continue to engage with these and seek funding to conduct applied projects that result in continued transfer of findings into practice.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Involved in a number of university-wise, as well as national events that communicate value of science as well as the work being done in the unit. Advisory groups to Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, and other city wide governmental and non-governmental entities.

Expanded use of IT for teaching and popularization of science and dissemination of research since COVID.

List a large number of events (national and local) where sharing out evidence-based information on immigrants/refugees, homelessness, child wellbeing, prisoners, etc., that both educate and contribute to the public good/wellbeing of these populations (which is part of mission of FSS). Participate in public science, e.g., through public events like Colors of Ostrava. These presentations are not just by faculty or ‘experts’ from FSS but also engage individuals with lived experience from the communities in which FSS works so that these events include this perspective as well.

They have some social media presence and do other public works and exhibitions to share what their research/mission is (e.g., I AM A SOCIAL WORKER & PROUD social media postings). Brand of the FSS is well known.

Recommendations:

No recommendations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

5 – Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Largely responsive to recommendations where had sufficient resources (human and otherwise) to address them.

Recommended increasing EU-funding, both competing for and obtaining research contracts. Had some success; applied for several, some success in obtaining.

Recommended expand projects to other groups at risk. They did this by working on current political and social issues like COVID and responding to resettlement of refugees from Ukraine War.

Recommended expanding non-academic partners. They addressed this through more government and public agency involvement, more public facing work.

Recommendation to disseminate work using technology. Due in part to COVID, they were forced to increased online teaching and dissemination.

Recommendations:

Very responsive, no recommendations.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	4 - Very good
3.3 Research projects	4 - Very good
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	5 - Outstanding
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	5 - Outstanding
3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	5 - Outstanding
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	5 - Outstanding
Average rating [1–5]:	5 - Outstanding
Grade [A–D]:	A

Summary assessment:

Given this is the smallest faculty at Ostrava, and they are at a budgetary disadvantage, the productivity of staff, the student quality and graduation rate, the internationalization, and impact on society are all at very high levels.

Summary recommendations:

Main limitation is size of unit compared to the number of students it serves and projects and grants expected. FSS needs to be able to hire more researchers, which will then facilitate greater ability to compete for grants as well as greater internationalization (e.g., networks, visibility, and dissemination of findings) and social impact.

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Arts

FORD: 6 - Humanities and the arts

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary:

The Faculty has a clear understanding of its mission and the nature and importance of its contribution in a region which has traditionally had a more technical and industrial self-understanding. It recognizes and substantially fulfils the need to examine the identity of this region through times that include not only industrial phenomena, but also real multicultural representation. The existing departments and centres show that they can manage this task. The development of Digital Humanities in recent years will prove a vital help, and it must be of further benefit to inter-faculty interdisciplinary collaborations that the Faculty, unusually, includes Psychology and Sociology. The again unusual dominance of languages and literatures (apparently accounting for 50 per cent of research) no doubt enhances the Faculty's international outlook and its ambition to locate its region-centred research in international contexts. Staff numbers and grades look stable and appropriate for the period. The sustained number of students since 2019 (which should not be taken for granted given the typical decline after Corona-times!) shows that the work done in this Faculty is appreciated by the wider community.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:⁶

Evidence of esteem in the research community is notable because it is spread well around the Faculty, in a wide range of fields. The Faculty is especially well represented in collaborations with institutions in four neighbouring countries (Poland, Slovakia, Austria and Germany), but recognition extends further. The awards and participation in editorial boards show that the Faculty is also present in France, Spain/Latin America and the UK, while invited lectures additionally take in China, USA and Columbia. Visiting lecturers, typically drawn from the same locations, heighten awareness of the international field and can raise the ambitions of the local research environment. The data reflects that while relationships with

⁶ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

neighbouring institutions in Central Europe are understandably easier to grow, the Faculty is successfully looking beyond. Senior colleagues serve in a wide range of research areas for grant-awarding bodies not only in the Czech Republic, but notably also Slovakia. The development of joint postgraduate programmes with partners in Poland and Slovakia, and plans for another with a German partner, reflect the Faculty's status. In our judgement the Faculty is fulfilling its mission, with potential for further development. These results are nationally competitive and make a very significant regional contribution.

Recommendations:

We encourage the Faculty to continue in all the directions evidenced here. Where recognition depends primarily on the work of an individual or small group of researchers, these researchers need sufficient, sustained space in their workload, at appropriate points throughout their careers, to build their profile by disseminating their work internationally, spending extended time at partner institutions and develop deeper relationships with international colleagues that might lead to major international grants etc. We heard about the burden that programme accreditations place on staff in terms of teaching hours and institutional presence that will not be comparable with research-only or international institutions with a genuinely outstanding level of recognition. The Faculty is working very hard to attain this level and any help the institution can provide to alleviate non-research-related burdens would be welcome.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

In the evaluation period, the Faculty has secured a high number of publicly funded projects, including not only 17 successes with GAČR, but also awards from ministries, regional funders and TAČR that reflect the frequently collaborative, interdisciplinary nature of the projects. Since 2020 income has been impressively stable. As well as working with other faculties, projects with social impact typically feature non-academic partners. These projects are well shared out between different disciplines. In our judgement this is a very good result in proportion to the R&D&I capacities of this Faculty and the increasingly challenging funding context facing arts and humanities.

Recommendations:

We congratulate the Faculty on its successes and especially its ingenuity in showing how arts and humanities can contribute seriously and substantially in interdisciplinary projects well beyond the traditional contexts of arts and humanities research. The Faculty is in a position, given its well-spread know-how and experience in securing public funding, and the apparent stability in terms of staffing and external research income, to encourage individuals and teams to feel confident about taking the lead in developing ambitious projects and bidding regularly for substantial grants. We heard about central university support for those preparing projects and applications and encourage research leaders in the university to ensure that all staff are aware of this support and that departmental managers are able to facilitate access to it.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The impact on society is evident in a varied range of projects: psychological, educational, historical (including public history), linguistic, literary and others. The Ministry's defines impact as research that has a positive effect and brings about change beyond the narrow academic field, in a wide range of possible contexts and ways. In some cases in the evaluation report, the distinction between impact and public engagement – where research results are presented in non-academic contexts and in creative ways, but any effect or change arising from encounters with this research is not measured – is blurred, but all the case studies presented retain the potential to have impact in future. Public engagement is almost always the basis for social impact in arts and humanities. We were impressed, however, by the number of case studies which unquestionably went beyond public engagement and had a direct impact on society e.g. Interactive Visual Metaphors, The Great Historical Atlas of Czech Silesia, Digital Womanist E-learning, The Literary Image of the Region 1918-2018" or Living Encyclopedia. Just as faculties of arts do not always find it easy to embrace this understanding of impact in the way that Ostrava has, we especially note its willingness to embrace digital humanities and the university's technical resources in achieving impact.

Recommendations:

We encourage the Faculty to sustain and build on its relationships with national and regional authorities and institutions to advance further its success in direct impact. The Faculty could also improve its approach to recording impact. The report suggests opportunities were missed to record more precisely the impact of materials, exhibitions etc. on teachers, learners and the wider public, for example through related workshops with non-academic stakeholders, questionnaires, interviews, or more long-term following of developments in, for example, teaching practice or students' learning after interacting with faculty research.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

In keeping with its stated mission, the Faculty has had an impressive variety of non-academic users and collaborators in the period being evaluated, in most cases with great potential to take these further. The transfer into practice extends to the regional government, professional organisations (e.g. the Czech Confederation of Commerce and Tourism), to numerous private sector companies, media (esp. Czech Television and Czech Radio), as well

as to cultural and memory institutions (mainly libraries and museums). Revenues have now returned almost the level of pre-Corona-times, which must be considered a great success.

Recommendations:

Given the record presented and the great difficulty that traditional arts and humanities face in commercializing their research and attracting non-public income, we can only encourage the Faculty to continue in its innovative efforts and to share examples of success and best practice around its departments and beyond.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Faculty staff display great energy and creativity in this area, where again they live out the Faculty's stated sense of responsibility to the region and its wider population. The most important activities in the field of popularisation take the form of workshops, festivals, competitions, TV and radio features, cultural days and also special offers for schools and adult education. The resonance of these activities increases further even if we take into account that many of them are regular. The disciplinary focus includes literature, psychology, science, history, didactics – and frequently a combination of several disciplines.

Recommendations:

We again encourage the Faculty to continue to develop this range of public engagement as imaginatively as in the period of evaluation. We hope in particular that departments, the Faculty and University give proper recognition to staff who commit their time to these activities, often in the evenings or over weekends or in the school holidays, which will encourage them to continue to make this part of their work.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Implementation of recommendations in the period concentrated on strengthening of the international context (notably increasing the number of publications in English), developing Digital Humanities, increasing income from non-public sources and contract research, as well as measuring non-academic impact. In all cases, the Faculty can point to substantive, measurable progress in all these areas, including evidence of investment, resourcefulness and imagination. The positive response to the last panel's recommendations reflects the distinct 'can-do' attitude of the Faculty.

Recommendations:

We note above that we saw further opportunities to transform public engagement into impact. The definition of impact and the culture of how to record it has taken several decades

to embed itself in the UK, where it may have been invented, and the Faculty is very well placed to embed impact further in the coming period.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	4 - Very good
3.3 Research projects	4 - Very good
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	5 - Outstanding
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	5 - Outstanding
3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	5 - Outstanding
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	5 - Outstanding
Average rating [1–5]:	5 - Outstanding
Grade [A–D]:	A

Summary assessment:

The Faculty of Arts at Ostrava presents as very healthy, energetic and positive, with impressive, concrete and measurable progress in all areas since the last period of evaluation, when it was already performing very well. We note above all:

- the strong sense of responsibility to the city and region, its past, present and future, which permeates everything from research to public engagement and impact to funding applications.
- The way that research excellence is not only present but well spread around the Faculty.
- The exceptional extent of interdisciplinary projects, especially collaboration with faculties of medicine, science and IT and the embrace of digital technologies.

Summary recommendations:

- Fundamentally, we encourage the Faculty to continue in the way that it has, in all the directions evidenced here.
- We encourage the institution to examine aspects of staff workload that might be reduced to create more space for research-active staff to build their profile, develop collaborations and prepare major funding bids. It sounded in particular like the burden of accreditation, in terms of teaching hours, presence at the institution and administrative work, weighs heaviest on departments in this Faculty.
- The Faculty should draw great confidence from its record in this period of evaluation, and build on that record to develop even more ambitious projects and make more regular ambitious funding bids. A single major grant success would be transformative, and this Faculty is ready.
- Research leaders in the university should ensure that all staff are aware of the internal financial support available when they are preparing grant bids and that departmental managers are able to facilitate access to it.
- The Faculty should sustain and build on its relationships with national and regional authorities and institutions to advance further its success in direct impact.
- The Faculty should continue to make progress in recording impact and identifying opportunities to transform public engagement into measurable impact.

- In relation to attracting non-public and commercial income, but also more broadly, we encourage the Faculty to ensure that examples of success and best practice are shared around its departments and beyond.
- We encourage Faculty departments and University to give proper recognition to staff who commit their time to time-consuming popularising activities, alongside their normal workload and often in the evenings or over weekends or in the school holidays, so that they continue to make this part of their work and see its connection to potential impact and even grant funding.

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: FINE ARTS AND MUSIC

FORD: 6 - Humanities and the arts

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary:

The evaluation period caught this Faculty at a time of expansion or enhancing of potential, including a rise in research-active staff, notably professors, and the opening of a new building with concert hall and exhibition space. At this stage, it still characterizes itself as more a co-investigator than a principal investigator, and we should expect this to change in the next period of evaluation. The Faculty is a vital regional institution, conducting theoretical and practical research while contributing to local socio-cultural life, notably through cooperation with neighbouring cultural institutions. In this context, its sense of mission and vision could be less timidly stated. The Faculty distinctively brings together theorists and practitioners – the presenter noted that he would be a very different musicologist without this interaction. There is evidence to support its claim to have a presence throughout the Czech Republic and additionally strong engagement in Poland (primarily Katowice). Against the trend, student numbers have not declined but in fact increased since the pandemic, which reflects the importance and recognition of the Faculty's role in the region.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:⁷

There is evidence of excellence and of striving towards greater internationalization here, though it is notable that the names of perhaps half a dozen individuals recur across the indicators for prestigious rewards, editorial boards and professional associations and invited lectures. These cover Poland, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Lithuania and Japan, while editorial board membership seems to be restricted to the Czech and Slovak Republics and there is only one research evaluation role beyond the Czech Republic. Incoming specialists come predominantly from Poland, also Austria and Russia.

Recommendations:

⁷ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

We encourage the Faculty to continue to raise and expand the international profile of its research and researchers and to ensure a wider range of colleagues at all stages seek opportunities to contribute and gain experience in international contexts. Where links have been established, it would be good to see these develop beyond repeat-invitations into more substantial collaborations. We also encourage the Faculty to broaden the range of countries from which international scholars are invited to Ostrava, not least as a way of building connections that might lead to more opportunities for its own staff.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The list centres on numerous attractive, typically regionally-centred and/or small-scale projects that, we agree, do much to fulfil the university's local mission. What impresses most about the funding obtained is the range of funders approached, which indicates not only the variety of the projects, but also the willingness of colleagues to cast their nets widely. The report is a little vague about the precise nature and extent of the Faculty's involvement in the University's larger projects.

Recommendations:

In the report and in our meeting, the Faculty articulated well the obstacles in their fields and at Ostrava to performing large-scale research as a principal investigator that would score highly in evaluations like this, but seemed less sure about how it might overcome them. Yet it seems the energy, imagination and expertise, not to mention the new facilities, are there for the Faculty to be more self-confident in its ambitions. The GameLab project is an example where the Faculty seems to have identified how skill-sets can be applied effectively beyond their conventional context. Another answer that emerged from our meeting was the need to advance the model of interdisciplinary collaboration with other faculties and collaboration between theorists and practitioners, so that practice might more easily be communicated as research. We heard that 'fine artists tend to talk to other fine artists', so the Faculty should find ways to diversify their interlocutors. We recommend that the Faculty should look at at least somewhat comparable faculties or operations that are succeeding in securing larger research grants, and might invite speakers from these settings to deepen exchange of practice and models of working.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The number of projects involving public engagement, engagement with non-academic stakeholders and with the potential for research impact is predictable high. The projects show the presence of the Faculty in the city, in private and public art spaces, in the region and – where virtual exhibitions and media performances are concerned – even beyond. Its readiness to participate in local cultural politics is noteworthy. The Faculty needs to do more to articulate precisely the impact of its research. Statements of ‘impact’ are made very generally, with few concrete examples of the change/positive effects that are necessary to constitute genuine research impact. In some cases we were concerned that the Faculty’s involvement, for example, in regional strategies was simply a presence. It is clear that the activities recorded have considerable potential for impact, in the period of evaluation and in future, but the Faculty needs to devise methods to record that impact substantively.

Recommendations:

The Faculty needs to develop how it follows, records and presents the societal impact of its research and more coherently link research to public engagement to impact, understood as change effected. It could, for example, organize the sharing of best practice from other faculties in this area. It needs also to ensure that staff involved in public engagement have both the skills and the time to convert that engagement into impact, which may, for example, involve activities/interviews/workshops in advance and after events, or the documenting of where Faculty recommendations have led to changes in decisions made by partner bodies or institutions about cultural policy, public spaces, public art etc.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

In the evaluation period, there is only one instance where income was secured from a project (the audiovisual trailer for the Health Institute in Ostrava); we might ask why this proved to be only a one-off and the Faculty did not seek to develop this line of operation. The Faculty is, however, in other ways extremely good at attracting what might be described as new users to its results, starting with the Virtual Gallery and including musical, game and other art performances. Finding ways of recording these successes more precisely might fall into our comments about recording impact.

Recommendations:

The Faculty’s work has a very clear and visible value to the region and a wide variety of non-academic stakeholders there, though it may not always be easily quantified in financial terms. We encourage the Faculty to explore actively opportunities to generate income, but we also commend the University for the support it has shown the Faculty most demonstrably through the new building and urge the University to continue that support for the Faculty’s work, which is central to the University’s stated mission.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

This is an area where the Faculty can make its presence felt, thanks to the very wide field of fine arts and music research it represents and the natural public interest in this field. On the whole, these activities are quite traditional forms of popularization, though the Faculty confidently operates in less traditional spaces like rock festivals, and ventures like the Virtual Gallery Project signal ambitions in digital humanities.

Recommendations:

We hope first that the work of colleagues who contribute to these often time-consuming and challenging activities is properly recognized in the Faculty and University, and that these colleagues are given time and training to see how such activities are not an end in themselves, but can form the basis of research impact and even new research directions. We also encourage the Faculty to continue to explore new avenues to disseminate their research in popular contexts in creative ways, notably in virtual spaces.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The Faculty has made progress in all the areas identified, especially in terms of expanding its cooperation with regional bodies and institutions with the aim of strengthening social impact and popularization. The Digital Technology Centre is a promising innovation that may bear more concrete outcomes in the next cycle. Internationalization could still go much further.

Recommendations:

We encourage a strategic approach to international interactions that gives the Faculty not only potential partners, but also models of practice that might inspire great grant success. We also encourage a focus on interdisciplinary collaborative projects, building on what has been achieved in this period.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	3 - Average
3.3 Research projects	3 - Average

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	4 - Very good
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	4 - Very good
3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	4 - Very good
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	4 - Very good
Average rating [1–5]:	4 - Very good
Grade [A–D]:	B
Summary assessment: This Faculty plays a critical role in fulfilling the University's stated mission with regard to the region, both through interactions with local government and cultural institutions and through lively creative activities that disseminate its work. Its presence allows the historical tradition of manufacture to be expressed through creative arts practice, performance and exhibition, which can have significant economic effects, as well as their importance for community, quality of life and mental health. It does not quite express its own sense of mission and vision nor respond to evaluations of this kind as confidently as it could. Its current activities have immense potential for impact that is not always adequately measured and its emerging work in collaboration with digital technology signal the wider potential for interdisciplinary projects on a larger scale than achieved in this period.	
Summary recommendations: • The Faculty should continue to raise and expand the international profile of its research and researchers and to ensure a wider range of colleagues at all stages can access opportunities to contribute and gain experience in international contexts. • The Faculty should seek to deepen connections with promising international partners, especially those who offer a potential model for future research development and success. A more expansive range of invited lectures is one route to achieving this, but we would also encourage support for longer research visits to Ostrava and by Ostrava colleagues to international workplaces. • The Faculty should be bolder in its research ambitions and connect more effectively research, public engagement and impact, recognising that these can happen in various orders. • It should continue to advance the model of interdisciplinary collaboration with other faculties and collaboration between theorists and practitioners. • The Faculty needs to develop how it follows, records and presents the societal impact of its research and more coherently link research to public engagement to impact, understood as change effected. • It needs to ensure that staff involved in public engagement have both the skills and the time to convert that engagement into impact. • We commend and urge the University's continuing support for the Faculty's work, which is central to the University's stated mission.	

SUMMARY RATING IN MODULE 3

MODULE 3 – SUMMARY RATING

After evaluating the individual units, please provide a summary evaluation of social relevance in Module 3 for the HEI as a whole. Please assess the balance of the evaluated units, how they contribute to the mission and vision of the HEI and describe the strengths and weaknesses of the HEI assessed in Module 3.

The summary rating is determined in accordance with the rules of the Methodology HEI2025+ as the average of the grades of the individual units, weighted by their size in terms of FTE staff.

EVALUATED UNIT	Grade [A–D]
Faculty of Science	A
IRAFM	A
Faculty of Medicine	A
Faculty of Education	B
Faculty of Social Studies	A
Faculty of Arts	A
Faculty of Fine Arts and Music	B
Summary grade	A

Summary quality assessment:

In all cases we observed substantial progress since the last evaluation, not only in implementing recommendations made by the last panel, but also in identifying opportunities and ways to develop. Given their different sizes, capacities and opportunities, all units in different ways contribute visibly to the fulfilment of the university's mission to make a deep and complex impact on society especially in its own region (which extends beyond the borders of the Czech Republic). We noted that current major projects and partnerships encourage interdisciplinary collaboration between the different units and are generating new spaces and contexts for this collaboration to grow.

Summary recommendation:

A common thread in our recommendations is a focus on internationalization and creating the working conditions that allow staff to be internationally active and ambitious. Internationalization of course includes more frequent application for major international funding and recycling of promising applications, but also deepening and expanding beyond existing excellent international partnerships, collaborations and consortia initiatives, encouraging and creating time for meaningful staff mobility and exchange, and increasing international publication and dissemination in some areas. We encourage the university to build on the impressive existing models of interdisciplinary collaboration between units. We also encourage more systematic sharing of internal examples of best practice and models of success to reduce unevenness of achievement between and even within given units.

EVALUATION REPORT FOR MODULES 4 & 5

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION NAME: UNIVERSITY OF OSTRAVA

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN): 61988987

MODULE 4 – VIABILITY

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF R&D&I

4.1 Organisation and management of R&D&I

Evaluate the organizational structure and setup of the R&D&I management system in relation to the size and type of the university and its mission and vision. Also consider comparisons with foreign universities of similar size and focus.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:¹

The University of Ostrava (UO) has developed a clear and coherent system of research governance. The organizational structure of UO looks appropriate (6 faculties and 1 research institute IRAFM). The R&D&I management structure is well adapted to the university's size and regional mission, with strategic units and faculty-level research committees operating in synergy to foster and develop interdisciplinary, applied, and socially responsible science.

UO evidently thinks hard about how other, institution-specific groupings can assist its R&D&I mission, either by facilitating interdisciplinary cooperation or highlighting specific research areas of excellence and importance. The relatively high number of research-oriented institutes and centres on intra-faculty (and sometimes even intra-department) level, often established with external project funding, is a positive sign.

Over time, however, this approach can generate multiple formal and hierarchical levels of organization (in case of some units up to 4 below faculty level, as estimated from the University web pages – e.g. University of Ostrava – Faculty of Medicine – Institute of Laboratory Medicine – Institute of Laboratory Hematology and Transfusion Medicine – Clinical Hematological Department – Blood imaging section). The effect is that the organizational structure may become quite complex, with the level of autonomy of individual units not entirely clear. This complexity is challenging from a management point of view, may risk compromising flexibility (esp. by introducing unnecessarily long chains of approval for purchases etc.) and lead to an increase of bureaucratic burden to the researchers. This said, we did not at any point observe or hear about any restriction on autonomy of local research operations, but on the contrary noted a dominant language of encouragement, facilitation and cooperation.

At present UO seeks ultimately to harmonize and oversee this proliferation in research entities through the Vice-Rector's office. During the site visit, we witnessed authentically familiar and harmonious relationships between the Vice-Rector and research leaders in the different parts of the university; colleagues appeared used to working together, to be aware of each other's work and achievements and what they could do for each other. To some extent this may depend on the

¹ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

workload, competence and even personality of the vice-rector appointed, and as institutional hierarchies expand, these connections can grow more distant and irregular.

Recommendations:

- We encourage UO to prioritise in its internal structural organisation of R&D&I the integration of research strategy with the goals of internationalization and international competitiveness. This may not always mean the creation of further administrative units.
- This may be a moment to review the current structure, notably at sub-departmental level, with a view to reducing any excessive administrative burden on researchers, but this should take place at the level of the individual faculties and institute.
- Where units have been established on the basis of external grant funding, a strategy to ensure the longer-term prospects of these units' researchers and topics should be prepared in advance before the funding ends (but not before the units' performance can be evaluated).
- The university should always be conscious of preserving and enhancing the existing balance and harmony between the research autonomy of individuals and individual units or teams and any centralized vision or model of working.

R&D&I QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT SYSTEM

4.2 System of support for a quality R&D&I environment and incentive measures for quality science

Evaluate the systems/measures/tools described to stimulate high-quality science at the HEI being evaluated. In your evaluation, consider the documented effectiveness of the measures described, their impact on achieving the mission and vision of the HEI being evaluated, the realization of excellent science and the possible absence of key systems/measures/tools.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

UO has an ostensibly appropriate and quite broad internal support infrastructure to support R&D&I. It has several appropriate incentive/funding structures, with targeted grants for excellence and interdisciplinarity, and we above all commend the strategic focus on interdisciplinarity and regional transformation, which has proven results in the period of evaluation.

Despite financial constraints, UO has developed incentive systems that reward performance and support quality research. However, the real impact of these tools is limited by budgetary pressures and the low growth of national funding. There is an impressive set of centralized resources to support research at multiple stages with the aim of eventually moving toward substantial external funding (where needed). These include internal grant support, support for revising and resubmitting grants, and building interdisciplinary teams and projects across the university. It moreover operates several internal funding programs for students and junior researchers. According to the feedback provided by Faculty and staff representatives interviewed during the on-site visit, not to mention research outcomes in the period of evaluation, this support infrastructure appears to work as intended, which is a commendable achievement. Efforts have also been made to attract foreign employees, with already documented impact.

Recommendations:

- We encourage UO to ensure that there is appropriate and equal access to this information and uptake of opportunities across faculties. During our site visit, it seemed that some faculties were generally more aware of and plugged into centralized information and resources.

- We anticipate that UO is aware of how budgetary pressure affects funding for internal incentive schemes and encourage the university to seek alternative sources to sustain them.
- We perceive that the rectorate may be best placed to support genuinely collaborative research, which seems essential to UO's future, and would especially encourage further collaboration with industry in the region.
- UO should ensure it periodically evaluates the efficiency of existing mechanisms and perform adjustments as necessary (e.g. incentive schemes), especially focusing on the efficiency of measures taken at the whole university level vs that on the level of individual faculties or institutes.
- UO should establish a support and incentive system specifically to encourage resubmission of grant proposals that were not funded but received productive feedback upon first submission.

4.3 Quality control system for R&D&I environment

Evaluate the described internal and external evaluation system in terms of its quality, effectiveness and suitability for the HEI.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

We commend the transparent methodology for internal evaluation and allocation of LCDRO funds. Examples of evaluation clearly show that different indicators are used for each unit, which is appropriate given that different fields have different indicators of success. Staff are required to create a 5-year plan and are evaluated annually to assess and adjust trajectory. 5-year and yearly strategic plans, including assessing and adjusting these plans, with clearly set goals are commendable, but reviewers must ensure that the goals are reasonable and attainable, and that support, including mentoring and training, are available.

In response to a written question, UO advised that the external scientific boards, which evaluate matters of personal and career progress are mainly used for appointments of professors, accreditations and tracking evaluations of some projects (DigiWell), but not for evaluations of the units in terms of the R&D&I, contradicting what is claimed in the self-evaluation report.

Recommendations:

- UO should ensure that units have access to support and resources to address needs when evaluation shows that academic staff are not able to meet planned trajectory, or when units and academic staff are not showing achievement in indicators of significance to the unit.
- UO should ensure that principles, criteria and algorithms for unit (and employee) evaluation are transparently negotiated and communicated to the academic staff (with a specific focus on the department head level).
- Since individual employee evaluation falls under HR, where the Higher Education Act guarantees substantial autonomy to individual faculties, all units should ensure that the self-evaluation part does not present excessive burden on academic employees. We detected that the extent of this burden may vary between faculties. The relative weight of the employee self-evaluation should never exceed that of tangible outputs such as publications, successful grant applications or teaching outputs.
- We note that in the document here: <https://dokumenty.osu.cz/osu/hrs4r/internal-review-for-renewal-assessment-of-hrs4r-new-action-plan-2024-2027.pdf>, it is written: "There is a

lack of continuity of the evaluation of employees with further managerial decisions and there is no tool to check the interconnection of the university strategic goals with the setting of the career-development goals of employees and evaluation.” This relates to a point above regarding the relationship between the university’s central research strategy and research autonomy in units and among individuals. Staff might be asked to show how their plans align with the central strategy, but in normal circumstances this should be quite straightforward for them to show. We strongly recommend that local research supervisors in the same or cognate fields know best about the research context.

4.4 Sustainability and resilience of R&D&I

Evaluate the described system of measures for sustainability and resilience of R&D&I in terms of their quality, effectiveness or possible absence of key measures.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The meaning of ‘sustainability and resilience’ is interpreted variously in the self-evaluation report, with persuasive reference to policies on environmental and social aspects, energy savings, a knowledge transfer system, transfer of R&D&I results to society intellectual property, data science management etc. Everything here is sensible and indeed impressive.

Ongoing projects (e.g., HAIE and others addressing social inequities) highlight a clear social sustainability strategy and contributions to the wellbeing of populations and communities in the region. We missed reference to a commendable major initiative aiming towards establishment of a joint senior care facility between the Faculty of Medicine and a charity, which was presented during the on-site visit. Although only a small part of the preparatory work took place during the evaluation period, it was already initiated at that time, and clearly deserves a honourable mention.

Recommendations:

- We encourage UO to think ahead, beyond existing major collaborative regional projects that are sustaining and informing much research across the university. As far as possible it should assertively position itself as part of the decision-making process on future work of this type, since its expertise, input and resources are so essential to it.
- From the perspective of perhaps most universities, UO has an enviable, apparently symbiotic relationship with local and regional authorities and is performing an exceptional and diverse role not only in its Czech region, but in neighbouring regions of other countries. It should continue to nurture and invest in this relationship with the municipality and other entities that build bridges between the university and the communities that surround it (particularly those that have been historically disadvantaged).
- UO should consider whether many activities are kept sustainable by resisting centralization, maintaining faculty/institute autonomy where appropriate legally expected, for example in areas such as digitization and smart technology.

PERSONEL POLICY

4.5 Structure of human resources

Evaluate the described structure of human resources at the evaluated HEI in terms of age composition, degree of internationalization, distribution by job classification, and gender balance. For the assessment, use the data from the annexed tables 4.5.1 and 4.5.2; it is also possible to draw on the more detailed staffing data presented in indicator 3.1 of the self-evaluation reports for the evaluated units.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Overall, most units are doing very well given the budgetary challenges originating outside the university's control, in terms of size and focus of the institution in terms of age composition, degree of internationalization, distribution of job classification, and gender balance. There is support from the central administration to address issues when they arise.

There is evidence of a healthy shift in the age structure towards a younger age-average in "senior" positions, increased use of staff-friendly work arrangements (part-time), a substantial increase in the proportion of women especially in early career researcher positions (which may be related to the reported growth of the share of ECRs over 40, likely to include those who re-entered the research field after a career break).

We do nevertheless note signs of increasing economic pressure in the length and size of contracts. Human resources are unevenly distributed across faculties and disciplines, and some teams face instability after projects end. While the increased use of less than full-time contracts may reflect increased concern for staff work-life balance, the participation of external experts with primary employment elsewhere, or the increased participation of students in research projects, it can also signal an effort to save money. Large numbers of part-time staff has implications for workload that must be carefully monitored and inevitably for research intensity.

Attracting senior researchers remains difficult due to the location and salary levels, though we heard that this situation is improving as Ostrava represents a more affordable option to other major Czech university cities.

Recommendations:

- UO should continue and intensify its efforts to invest in long-term career paths and HR marketing to strengthen its attractiveness, which can be founded not least in its highly positive research environment.
- Since the broad category of "technical and administrative staff" masks the distinction between administrative workers and research-oriented technical staff such as lab technicians or IT support, care must be taken to avoid unsustainable expansion of the former at the expense of the latter.

4.6 Academic and Research Careers

Evaluate the described system for the recruitment and career development of academic and research staff. Evaluate the system in terms of its quality and effectiveness, as well as the potential absence of key elements.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

In 2019 UO won an EU HR Award and has implemented a number of effective measures for the transparent recruitment and career development of academic and research staff, as described in the self-evaluation report. There has been a commendable increase in the recruitments of high-profile international researchers, as recommended in the last evaluation of the IEP, but at least as impressive were the attempts to keep young, high achieving students and faculty at the institution, i.e., investing in and growing their own research staff.

The report outlines excellent policies for pipelines for retaining individuals from student stage to faculty members e.g. returning after parental leave, etc. However, while some faculties have active HR strategies, overall, the system lacks robustness and transparency in academic career progression, and career development is under pressure due to financial instability and limited positions.

The opportunity of sabbatical leave is a very good idea to encourage the staff to apply for new projects. We note, however, that this scheme is severely under-used in comparison with the sector internationally, primarily – we understood – because of the excessive demands placed on staff by accreditation requirements, notably in arts and humanities, that relating to teaching load and administration.

Recommendations:

- UO should prioritise creating a research-leave culture as it exists in the kinds of major research-intensive institutions that it aspires to be. Increasing opportunities for and take-up of sabbatical leave should be a key aspect of its research strategy. This, fundamentally, is how major grant bids can be developed and researchers gain meaningful time in other, primarily international workplaces where they can witness different approaches and examples of best practice. Schemes that enabled scholars from other institutions to come to UO to cover for a colleague's sabbatical leave would further enhance this effect.
- As part of the typical career trajectory, UO should recommend that staff experience at least an extended stay, if not a period of employment, at a different institution before reaching the associate professor stage.
- The Ministry-led, recurring process of accreditation is manifestly very time-consuming. UO might find support from other universities in lobbying for a less cumbersome system for accrediting programmes modelled on best practice in other countries. Meantime, it should do all it can to acknowledge and alleviate the burden that this process places on staff whose research productivity is consequently severely affected.
- UO should ensure that those taking on mentorship roles (outlined as manager of adaptation process and employee's supervisor) have training in best practices of mentorship – e.g., around expectation and goal setting, communication skills, and connecting to resources. Mentorship should not be considered only as part of onboarding, but as a process that continues throughout the 'life course' of the academic staff.
- UO should develop clearer career pathways and mentorship structures for early-career researchers.
- While the offer of formalized training for new employees (Moodle courses) is impressive, care is needed to distinguish which of these courses are mandatory for a particular employee to perform at a particular position. The Rector's Order no. 207/2023 imposes a somewhat overwhelming list of training duties on new employees, including taking mandatory Moodle courses as a part of the adaptation process. The list of courses, however, contains no less than 20 items, some of them clearly meaningful only for certain types of positions (e.g. a PhD student working on a part time researcher position should not have to undergo mandatory training on administrative and technical staff evaluation). It should be at the discretion of the senior employee to decide on the need of formal training, and it should be possible to replace any formal training by an informal/self-study

version at all in justified cases (e.g. experienced researchers moving from another institution).

- UO should offer training courses related to research areas regulated by special legislation (e.g. working with human data and tissues, animal experimentation, genetically modified organisms...) to those employees for whom it is relevant.

4.7 Gender equality measures

Evaluate the gender equality measures described in self-evaluation. Evaluate the measures in terms of their quality and effectiveness, as well as the potential absence of key measures.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

All policies and procedures seem in line with quality and effective gender equality measures. Even thinking of key leaders on campus who we met, there was a fairly good balance by gender (the chart in the report shows a better balance at upper levels in 2024 than in 2020, so moving in right direction). The UO implements a so-called Gender Equality Action Plan which seems both sensible and effective. We commend especially the focus on supporting primarily work-life balance and return after career breaks is a very reasonable one.

Recommendations:

- Rather than focusing on proportion of male vs female academics or students overall or at certain types of positions, UO should monitor male vs female applicants' success rate and be specifically concerned with eliminating causes of any obvious bias (i.e. situations where the success rate varies greatly while the number of applicants and successful candidates is large enough to exclude random fluctuations).
- If there are opportunities for leadership development, UO should ensure that all types of individuals are invited and understand that this is for them.
- References to childcare might also include support for other carers, such as those supporting seriously ill or elderly family members.

4.8 Mobility of academic and research staff (including sectoral and inter-sectoral mobility)

Evaluate the described mobility of academic and researcher staff. Pay attention to whether the evaluated HEI achieves the set objectives, whether the mobility objectives are appropriately set for the HEI and whether the strategies in place lead to their achievement or help remove existing barriers to mobility.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment

Understood broadly, academic mobility at UO is improving. UO is successfully striving to increase staff mobility by developing different internal programs to support funding for (outcoming and incoming) mobility (Via PhD, To Be In) as well as promoting the use of external funds (Erasmus, Fullbright, NEOLAIa) and some specific targeted funds. A respectable 20 PhD students travelled on Erasmus during the assessment period. NEOLAIa has great potential to expand the number and depth of opportunities for early stage researchers, PhD students and post-docs, to gain not just mobility but also mentorship abroad.

Recommendations:

- UO should strengthen support, including funding, for outbound mobility and build institutional partnerships to foster staff exchange. It should continue to support Erasmus (10% of funding) and mentorship exchange via NEOLAIa. As research becomes a more core aspect of all faculties, aiming to increase Erasmus from averaging 5 per year to even 6-7 per year, would enhance the impact of this program. Since NEOLAIa is in early stages, sending just a few early career researchers each year will begin to build a foundation for this program.

- The duration and timing of the ToBeIn fellowships could be specifically tailored to promote incoming sabbatical visits, as discussed during the on-site visit.
- UO could consider a minimum mobility requirement (at least inter-institutional, not necessarily international) as a prerequisite for career advancement beyond a certain stage (e.g. from assistant to associate professor).

RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

4.9 Research infrastructure

Evaluate the system described for the acquisition/optimisation of core facilities and other equipment and their renewal. Evaluate the system in terms of its effectiveness and suitability for the HEI. Also consider the system for sharing instruments and equipment, including core facilities and equipment of evaluated units. Use the data in Annex Table 4.9.1 to support your evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

This is an area where there seem to have been extensive investments and strides since the last review, and during the assessment period. Several major strategic projects, which are interdisciplinary and draw from staff across faculties, were prepared and acquired. The NEOLAlia Alliance is a strong move towards sharing research infrastructures with partners. UO has secured high investment in buildings and equipment in the context of the LERCO (an impressive new building) and REFRESH (four living labs) strategic projects, with the Faculties of Education and Fine Arts and Music moving into bespoke, discipline-centred new modern buildings. The research infrastructure is well managed, especially in medical and natural sciences. Shared use of equipment is promoted and core facilities are functional. In some cases, the infrastructure is shared also with outside users to ensure its optimal usage (especially the Faculty of Medicine training facilities).

Recommendations:

- We encourage UO to continue making investments in research infrastructure, including exciting plans for its own primary school and other facilities. This will require maintaining and deepening relationships with regional and national authorities and perhaps also private investors. There is some concern that the expansion witnessed in the current period of evaluation will be difficult to sustain or repeat.
- UO should continue and where relevant expand the practice of opening its infrastructure to the wider public.
- UO should consider establishing an internal billing system for shared use of large instrumentation in cases where it is not yet in place. One panellist noted that the Microsoft PowerBi interface might not be optimal for sharing infrastructure information and UO should consider at least adding an option to filter the list by discipline (e.g. Clinical medicine, Imaging, Computation...).

FINANCES

4.10 Budget and structure of financial resources

Evaluate the budget and financial resource structure of the evaluated HEI in terms of its suitability for the HEI, i.e. whether the financial resource structure is appropriate for the size and type of the evaluated HEI. You should also pay attention to the ability of the evaluated HEI to attract prestigious research projects. Use the data in the annexed tables 4.10.1 to 4.10.5 to support your evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

We found these tables especially difficult to navigate, notably reconciling the figure of 100 per cent public funding in Table 4.10.1 and 4.10.2 with the figures for non-public sources in 4.10.5, which included manifestly public sources like the city and ministries. Nevertheless it is clear that the university is heavily reliant on public domestic funding. Income from EU projects or private sources remains limited in this period and we judged the five foreign-funded projects highlighted as only moderately prestigious. UO does, however, show agility and ingenuity in the range of funding sources it successfully accesses.

Recommendations:

- UO is very reliant on regional funding that is currently allowing it to prosper but may not be sustained, looking not least at the economic situation, changing geo-political priorities, EU expansion etc. It must prioritize diversification of income and build capacity for large-scale international projects.
- UO should encourage colleagues in the most promising positions to bid regularly and repeatedly for major international funding and should ensure the working conditions that create a culture of applying, revising and re-applying, sharing of best practice, that might then become a culture of more sustained success.

4.11 Rules for the use of institutional support for the LCDRO

Evaluate the strategy described and the rules for the use of institutional support for the LCDRO. In your evaluation, consider the effectiveness of the implemented strategy and policies and whether they contribute to the mission and vision of the HEI.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Despite inflationary pressures that reduced the value of funding, the system for allocating institutional support is a strong point of UO. The formative methodology is innovative and transparent, and it encourages gradual improvement. The general principles of budget allocation listed reflect genuine striving towards just and sustainable solutions. Examples of use of institutional support were strong and aimed to reward and support excellence in science (e.g., high quality publications), increase capacity and internationalization, implement programs that are transparent and encourage cost-sharing with departments.

Recommendations:

- UO, as well as individual faculties, should ensure the methodology (algorithm) used to translate results of evaluation into budgetary incentives is transparent and that its impact undergoes periodic evaluation.
- It should ensure access to programmes remains even across and within faculties.
- The system should be used strategically to support growth areas and internationalization.

- UO should consider enabling individual units to retain (or re-acquire) unspent funds left behind at the end of the year (or their equivalent). Units could thus maintain some form of “virtual saving accounts” to compensate e.g. for fluctuations in project funding.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

4.12 Significant collaborations in R&D

Evaluate listed examples of significant R&D&I collaborations with respect to the effectiveness of the collaborations established, their proportionality and appropriateness to the type of HEI and its mission and vision.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

UO shows itself strongly active in regional partnerships, with progress in international collaborations, which remain less developed, fragmented and sporadic. As noted before, its relationship with the region and collaborations with Ostrava institutions are a major asset. The report here is dominated by the Faculty of Medicine, though there are collaborations involving other faculties that might be considered no less impressive.

Recommendations:

- UO should prioritise the development of international collaborations, at least at the European level. While Medicine (and Health Sciences) seems an important area to continue building international collaborations, it would be good to see UO highlight other units in its reporting and enable other units to identify and take opportunities too.
- It should expand collaborations with academic institutions in the Czech Republic beyond Ostrava – for research projects, seminars, student mentorship, etc.

STUDIES

4.13 Doctoral studies

Evaluate the described organisation of doctoral studies. Pay attention to the setup and quality of the processes, as well as their effectiveness through basic statistics, such as drop-out rate or data on the future career of graduates.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The system of doctoral studies is described in detail, makes sense and the reported success rate is remarkably high, exceeding the national average. Addressing wellbeing via a task force looking at systemic issues is wise and the non-cosmetic implementation of findings will be important. It would have been good to have more information about how PhD students are involved in research projects, publications etc. It is unclear if time spent advising PhD students transparently counts toward workload/teaching.

Recommendations:

To build on this progress, we suggest the following:

- UO should increase elements of teaching in doctoral programmes that take place in English.
- It should explore opportunities for forms of joint PhD supervision (including but not limited to cotutelle).
- It should continue to bolster onboarding of PhD students, mentorship training for advisors, and building out Welcome Day/introductory course, which will all enhance the wellbeing of PhD students.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

4.14 Implementation of recommendations in Module 4

Evaluate how the HEI has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the HEI has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

Overall UO has made tangible efforts to follow and implement the recommendations from the previous evaluation. Many of them have been accomplished. A few goals were not fully implemented and remain in the aims for the next assessment period e.g. offering doctoral degrees with universities in other countries (the increase in doctoral salaries has been resolved at national level). The response to the recommendation to consider factors underlying gender imbalances seems to have focused primarily on increasing the involvement of women or achieving an equal proportion of women and men in certain types of position.

Recommendations:

- UO should not lose sight of those issues that were not fully implemented previously, e.g. offering doctoral degrees with universities in other countries.
- Efforts to ensure gender balance especially in more senior academic and administrative roles should not be restricted to promoting more women, but ensuring that opportunities

to acquire the requisite experience or qualifications are accessible to all and criteria for evaluating career achievements are equitable, for example for those taking career breaks or temporarily reduced hours.

MODULE 4 RATING

MODULE 4 – SUMMARY EVALUATION	
After evaluating each indicator, please provide an overall evaluation of Module 4. Assess the overall state of the research and institutional environment and the quality of the internal processes of the HEI. Consider whether and how the set processes contribute to the fulfilment of the HEI's mission and vision. The aggregate grade is determined in accordance with the rules of the Methodology HEI2025+ as a simple average of the scores for each indicator.	
INDICATOR	RATING [1–5]
4.1 Organisation and management of R&D&I	5 - Outstanding
4.2 System of support for a quality R&D&I environment and incentive measures for quality science	5 - Outstanding
4.3 Quality control system for R&D&I environment	4 - Very good
4.4 Sustainability and resilience of R&D&I	5 - Outstanding
4.5 Structure of human resources	5 - Outstanding
4.6 Academic and Research Careers	4 - Very good
4.7 Gender equality measures	5 - Outstanding
4.8 Mobility of academic and research staff (including sectoral and inter-sectoral mobility)	4 - Very good
4.9 Research infrastructure	5 - Outstanding
4.10 Budget and structure of financial resources	4 - Very good
4.11 Rules for the use of institutional support for the LCDRO	5 - Outstanding
4.12 Important collaborations in R&D&I	5 - Outstanding
4.13 Doctoral studies	5 - Outstanding
4.14 Implementation of recommendations in Module 4	5 - Outstanding
AVERAGE RATING	5 - Outstanding
GRADE [A–D]	A
Summary assessment: Substantial improvements to the R&D&I environment have been made during the review period. This has included serious consideration of the recommendations made during the previous review, and implementation of a number of strategies and processes, as well as a significant increase in large multidisciplinary externally funded projects (e.g. REFRESH, LERCO, DigiWELL) that have positively impacted FTE on research grants, doctoral education, and internationalization (mobilization and recruitment of 'global experts').	
Summary recommendations: • UO should greatly prize and continue to nurture and invest in its enviable, symbiotic relationship with the municipality and other local and regional authorities, which enables it not only to expand its facilities, but also to perform a powerful and diverse role in the region that extends beyond the Czech Republic. At the same time, it should be actively	

seeking ways of diversifying its sources of major funding and collaboration, in case in future this relationship (and the resource available to UO) changes.

- UO should, wherever relevant, prioritize internationalization and international competitiveness, notably in research strategy and internal structure, staff mobility and international grant applications.
- UO should prioritise creating a research-leave culture as it exists in the kinds of major research-intensive institutions that it aspires to be. Increasing opportunities for and take-up of sabbatical leave should be a key aspect of its research strategy.
- UO should ensure that all units and individual staff are equally aware of and have equal access to the range of research information, support and incentives that the centre makes available.
- UO should intensify its efforts to make itself attractive to the best researchers, especially early-career researchers, developing clearer career pathways, adopting sensible, tailored initial training and best practices in mentoring (and mentor-training), offering professionally meaningful contracts in terms of hours and length, and making the diverse workload manageable. UO should especially do all it can to acknowledge and alleviate the constant burden that course accreditation places on particular areas of the university.
- UO should in all areas be conscious of preserving and enhancing the existing balance and harmony between the research autonomy of units and individuals and any centralized vision or model of working.

MODULE 5 – STRATEGY AND POLICIES

5.1 Mission and vision of the evaluated institution in R&D&I

Evaluate the described vision and general mission of the university emphasizing R&D&I (in context of its educational function and the educational policy strategy of the state or the relevant ministry for higher education. Compare the defined mission with reality. The evaluation should consider how the mission and vision of the HEI has been fulfilled in the past five-year period and whether the vision for the next five-year period is adequately set and realistically achievable.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The University of Ostrava has developed a coherent and realistic R&D&I strategy, aligned with its regional mission and internal capacities. The strategy emphasizes interdisciplinarity, societal impact, and support for early-career researchers. Importantly, the strategy is not only declarative but supported by concrete actions (e.g. internal evaluation methodology, thematic priorities, regional partnerships). UO is focusing on the right areas, both those that need continued growth and input/support, but also those likely to continue to help UO enhance its research capacity and reputation.

The stated mission does not explicitly include good, creative and original research driven by sound scientific questions, but maybe this goes without saying. We note that the current and predicted total share of research for Engineering and Technology is very low (perhaps because this is covered by the technical university). Research with maximum benefit for society and the region, and research involving and supporting early-stage researchers and doctoral students are critical foundations on which to build networks and capacity for future research.

The knowledge transfer and wider investment in solutions for the region and community, as well as the investments that the municipality is making in UO, show a symbiotic relationship which is likely to continue to reinforce positive outcomes for both entities. Keeping support for junior researchers

(post-docs) and PhD students in the 2026-30 Strategic Plan shows the institution understands that this early investment is likely to increase research capacity and have long-term payoffs for the institution.

Recommendations:

- UO should continue to invest in support for junior researchers (post-docs) and PhD students to increase their research capacity, as well as incentives and salaries that increase the likelihood that they will stay at the institution.
- The University should maintain its support of high-quality research, which in most fields means internationally competitive, i.e., internationally recognized.
- Boost the RDI capacities in engineering and technology.

5.2 Research and development objectives

Evaluate the set goals of the HEI in both the area of R&D&I and the development of the HEI as an institution. Consider whether the goals are adequately established in relation to the size and type of the HEI, as well as its mission and vision, and whether they are achievable within the proposed timeframe.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

The 10 goals on R&D&I and the development of UO appear wholly in accordance with the points in its vision and mission in the previous section, and they also seem adequate and achievable, as long as budgets are sustained at the level of recent years. The strategic priorities are well defined and grounded in institutional strengths. The university has identified cross-cutting themes such as health, digitalization, inclusion, and post-industrial transformation, which resonate with both local and international agendas. These themes are reflected in large-scale interdisciplinary projects (e.g., DigiWELL, REFRESH).

Recommendations:

- UO should further align strategic priorities with European research missions and challenges.
- It should develop budgetary tools that support maintaining existing excellence (i.e. find a way compensate for fluctuations in funding by enabling faculties and departments to create savings transferrable from year to year, or by other means)
- It should identify fields and areas that should receive increased targeted support to maintain or achieve excellence or reach specific listed goals.
- It should continue to integrate PhD students, junior researchers (post-docs), and early career faculty into research projects, and grant writing initiatives can build a pipe-line of experienced researchers.

5.3 Institutional instruments and measures for the implementation of the research and development strategy

Evaluate the described institutional and strategic instruments for the fulfilment of the research and development objectives regarding how they will contribute to the fulfilment of these objectives. In your evaluation, also pay attention to the possible absence of key instruments or measures.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The extensive list of measures adopted to fulfil research and development objectives for the next five years period is overall sensible and impressive. We had some concerns that Measure 6 (which was not well expressed in English) hinted at a greater role for externally imposed research priorities in determining which fields of research will be supported, potentially at the expense of high-quality research judged not to conform to those priorities.

Recommendations:

- UO should preserve the current balance between research autonomy and the central vision, setting priorities that encompass all areas of research excellence and potential.
- Rather than imposing priorities by directives from the outside, it should focus on nurturing existing excellence, attracting external talents in fields corresponding to the declared priorities, and possibly reshaping areas with less productivity.
- It should develop cohort-based or other multidisciplinary mentoring programs (for a variety of stages – PhD student, post-doc, early career, mid-career) that provide professional development skills including, but not limited to, grant writing. For ideas on the types of professional development that might support various stages see ncfdd.org

5.4 Implementation of recommendations in Module 5

Evaluate how the HEI has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the HEI has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

5 - Outstanding

Qualitative assessment:

UO has, as elsewhere, been impressively responsive and effective in implementing the recommendations of the previous IEP. Indeed, in some cases it is perhaps even too modest. In some fields, OU exceeds the regional importance and is fully competitive with the big established Czech universities. Notable implementations include a new system of “return grants” to support return after a career pause (e.g., parental leave), which is likely to support early-career faculty due to age/life stage.

Recommendations:

- In relation to online education, while the use of distance learning elements may be beneficial in some situations, the default should remain in-person teaching.
- The recommendation to promote the participation of UO researchers in editorial boards and special issues, including open access publications, should be revised to indicate awareness of predatory publishing, and training and guidelines relating to this should be available to staff.

MODULE 5 RATING

MODULE 5 – SUMMARY EVALUATION

After evaluating each indicator, please provide an overall evaluation of Module 5. Evaluate the overall setting of the HEI's strategic objectives and development plan.

The aggregate grade is determined in accordance with the rules of the Methodology HEI2025+ as a simple average of the scores for each indicator.

INDICATOR	RATING [1–5]
5.1 Mission and vision of the evaluated institution in R&D&I	5 - Outstanding
5.2 Research and development objectives	5 - Outstanding
5.3 Institutional instruments and measures for the implementation of the research and development strategy	4 - Very good
5.4 Implementation of recommendations in Module 5	5 - Outstanding
AVERAGE RATING	5 - Outstanding
GRADE [A–D]	A

Summary assessment:

While there continues to be room for growth and better distribution of resources/research engagement across the institution, UO has made great strides, finding ways achieve and extend research excellence, contribute to the region, develop the capacity of staff, and manage an ever more complex range of fields and interdisciplinary collaborations.

Summary recommendations:

- UO should preserve the current balance between research autonomy and the central vision, setting priorities that encompass all areas of research excellence and potential.
- Rather than imposing priorities by directives from the outside, it should focus on nurturing existing excellence, attracting external talents in fields corresponding to the declared priorities, and possibly reshaping areas with less productivity.
- The University should maintain its support of high-quality research, which in most fields means internationally competitive, i.e., internationally recognized.
- UO should continue to invest in support for junior researchers (post-docs) and PhD students to increase their research capacity, as well as incentives and salaries that increase the likelihood that they will stay at the institution.
- It should develop cohort-based or other multidisciplinary mentoring programs (for a variety of stages – PhD student, post-doc, early career, mid-career) that provide professional development skills including, but not limited to, grant writing.
- It should develop budgetary tools that support maintaining existing excellence (i.e. find a way compensate for fluctuations in funding by enabling faculties and departments to create savings transferrable from year to year, or by other means)

OVERALL EVALUATION IN MODULES 1 TO 5

OVERALL EVALUATION

Provide a summary evaluation of the HEI as a whole across all five modules. Justify your evaluation and highlight the main strengths and/or weaknesses of the evaluated HEI. The overall grade is determined according to the rules of the "Methodology VŠ2025+".

MODULE	MODULE WEIGHT	GRADE [A–D]
MODULE 1 and 2	50 %	B
MODULE 3	30 %	A
MODULE 4	10 %	A
MODULE 5	10 %	A
OVERALL RATING		A – Excellent

Qualitative assessment:

The University of Ostrava has an impressively meaningful understanding of its mission and role, primarily in the context of the post-industrial region where it is located. In the period of evaluation, it has clearly reflected strategically and structurally as an institution and within each of its units on how to fulfil that mission, responding transparently to the recommendations of the previous panel, but also to the findings of its own ongoing analyses, and the recommended outcome of our panel indicates what we perceive as the considerable success of those efforts. Given capacity, resources, competing priorities, status, location and other limitations, we sometimes found it very difficult to identify what more given units could have done.

The University has made excellent, mutually beneficial use of an enviably symbiotic relationship with other local stakeholders, notably local government, manifested both in facilities that support cutting-edge research while being available to the wider public and professional community, and in major projects that foster a growing culture of interdisciplinary collaboration between university units while making a direct and wide-ranging impact on society and the local environment.

The criteria for a grade of A emphasize international competitiveness. As indicated in the Module 3 evaluation reports, some units demonstrate this quality more obviously than others, and it will be a major challenge for the University in the next cycle to tackle this unevenness. However, the leadership, structures, strategies and policies are those of an internationally competitive institution, while reviewers of individual units noted in nearly all cases that the conditions to compete internationally were present and reflected, for example, in increased applications for international funding, increased international collaboration, including established institutional partnerships and consortia, increased international publication, and international mobility (including visiting scholars to Ostrava), not limited to neighbouring countries. Reviewers also point to the growing culture of interdisciplinary research, increased and increasingly deep and long-lasting research-related collaborations with non-academic partners, and state-of-the-art facilities as key factors likely to attract international cooperation and funding.

Recommendations:

- Our recommendations repeatedly suggest ways in which the University can take the next steps in raising its international profile and competitiveness, from submitting and recycling

ambitious bids for major international funding to expanding staff mobility and exchange. We hope that the outcome of this evaluation will encourage the University to punch its weight more confidently and take more ambitious steps to build and deepen international relationships and recognition.

- The University and its units could do more to see its role and activity in its region more ambitiously as a 'case study' that can contribute and lead comparative research, knowledge transfer, collaborations with comparable national and international partners, wider social, economic or environmental impact etc.
- The University needs to show its commitment to research excellence in the way it manages staff workload, prioritising the development of promising research by reducing other commitments, so that staff can, for example, take research leave to work abroad with partners or work on ambitious funding applications. It should ensure that all parts of the University are equally aware of opportunities for research-related financial or administrative support, mentoring, training etc. A recruitment strategy that expands the research-active base or releases research-active staff from administration, especially in certain units, can also play a role.
- The central research leadership at the University showed itself to be energetic, alert and encouraging, above all as a facilitator of interdisciplinary collaboration between units, but familiar with local research leaders and the work of their units, and the current positive research culture reflected this style of engagement. We advise the University not to replace facilitation with too much direction from the centre, for example, through too narrowly defined university-level research strategies or objectives.