
UNIVERSITY OF OSTRAVA
STRATEGIC PLAN
2021–2025

PREAMBLE – MISSION AND VISION

A university with a mission, open to the world, working for our region.

The University of Ostrava is an institution that sees its mission as **to develop the humanities, medical sciences, natural sciences and the arts in a region that has traditionally been associated with industry and technology.**

The University's goal is **to help develop solutions to pressing issues in the Moravian-Silesian Region** – whether social, environmental or medical – and **to make Ostrava a genuine university city.** The University will continue to harness its potential in this area, reflecting the region's unique identity, culture and history and enhancing the region's cultural life through a range of scholarly and creative activities.

The University of Ostrava is ready to **implement new, progressive European approaches in research and education on the regional level,** as well as creating excellent conditions for **international cooperation** and fostering **a welcoming environment** for international academics and students.

The University is determined to be an institution that **provides targeted support for high-quality scholarship** as well as systematically seeking out **new areas for research** and nurturing **research teams with the potential to achieve excellence.**

The University of Ostrava is open to the challenges of today's society, and it applies **a responsible and individual approach** to a broad spectrum of students, including specific groups (seniors, socially disadvantaged students, students with specific needs). The University supports **equal access to education** and embraces the need for **positive communication with the general public.**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
PRIORITY 1: HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING FOR AN EDUCATED SOCIETY	8
SUB-GOAL 1: To adapt the portfolio of current and planned degree programmes in order to enhance their relevance to life and work in the 21st century	9
SUB-GOAL 2: To implement methods of competency-based teaching	11
SUB-GOAL 3: To increase flexibility and inclusivity in studies	12
SUB-GOAL 4: To create a motivational environment for students	12
PRIORITY 2: EXCELLENT RESEARCH TO ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE	14
SUB-GOAL 1: To strengthen our research infrastructures connected with practical internationalization and interdisciplinarity in scholarly/creative activities	16
SUB-GOAL 2: To complete the system of comprehensive evaluation for employees' scholarly/creative activities and to reinforce our University's culture in scholarly/creative activities	17
SUB-GOAL 3: To reform doctoral studies with an emphasis on quality and effectiveness	18
SUB-GOAL 4: To increase the effectiveness of knowledge transfer for the public and commercial spheres	19
PRIORITY 3: A UNIVERSITY THAT BENEFITS SOCIETY	20
SUB-GOAL 1: To become a respected and sought-after institution which, via its employees and students, will actively contribute to the evolution of an educated society and the entrenchment of humanistic ideals across the whole of society	21
SUB-GOAL 2: To become an important institution contributing to society's sustainable and socially harmonious path of development	22
PRIORITY 4: INTERNATIONALIZATION	24
SUB-GOAL 1: To develop the strategic management of internationalization and its professional institutional infrastructure	25
SUB-GOAL 2: To enhance the international dimension of teaching and develop employees' global competencies	26
SUB-GOAL 3: To enhance the attractiveness of the University for international students, academics and researchers	28
PRIORITY 5: PEOPLE, FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY	31
SUB-GOAL 1: To support the development of a motivational environment for staff and to improve services to staff	32
SUB-GOAL 2: To improve the quality of the University's strategic management via funding tools	33
SUB-GOAL 3: To manage and operate the University in line with the principles of social responsibility (especially with regard to the environment)	34
SUB-GOAL 4: To improve and modernize infrastructure facilitating the further development of the University	35
SUB-GOAL 5: To ensure that information systems are secure and user-friendly in order to boost the efficiency of all activities at the University	36
PRIORITY 6: COMMUNICATION AS THE BASIS FOR COOPERATION	39



SUB-GOAL 1: To improve internal communication as a tool to strengthen the sense of belonging to the University's community	40
SUB-GOAL 2: To improve external communication and presentation of the University as a gateway into society as a whole	41

Introduction

The University of Ostrava's **Strategic Plan** for the upcoming five years should be understood as a **natural continuation** of the previous strategic plan. **Our main goal** remains to develop the University into an **integrated community**, functioning on the basis of a **shared culture of cooperation** and endorsing the following **shared values**:

- openness;
- professionalism;
- an individual approach;
- social responsibility (especially with regard to the environment) and community engagement;
- inclusion;
- diversity;
- flexibility;
- positive communication.

Our list of shared values has been expanded in this new Strategic Plan with the addition of **flexibility** and **positive communication**, and extra emphasis has been placed on **social responsibility** (especially with regard to the environment). It is of crucial importance for the University of Ostrava that **our shared goals and values** should be implemented in practice. We are a medium-sized university, spread out across the city in various locations, and we offer a unique and highly diverse portfolio of degree programmes. **It is not sufficient for us merely to be the sum of our individual faculties.** In order for us to become stronger and better in the future, it is essential that we **work together in a spirit of cooperation, communicate coherently with the public, and nurture our deep regional roots.**

The core **mission of the University's management team** is to act as a **service provider to the University community** – **operating a range of professional services** to support the University's main activities, **coordinating the activities** of the University's various constituent parts, and **supporting new ideas and innovative approaches.** The University's management team must also strive to **build a positive image of the University** – both within the University and externally.

This Strategic Plan addresses the key goals that we as a University want to achieve during the upcoming five years, which are grouped together under the following priorities:

Priority 1: High-quality teaching for an educated society

Priority 2: Excellent research to enhance knowledge

Priority 3: A university for the benefit of society

Priority 4: Internationalization

Priority 5: People, facilities and technology

Priority 6: Communication as the basis for cooperation

Compared with the previous five-year strategic plan (in which internationalization acted as a common thread running through all the priorities listed), in the new plan we have decided to **raise the status of internationalization to that of a separate priority.** This does not mean that internationalization should be viewed as something separate from all the other important activities. Quite the opposite, in fact: our intention is to **emphasize the crucial importance of internationalization for the University's future development.** Our goal is to continue the good progress we have already made

in internationalization during recent years and **to reinforce the international dimension of our teaching, research and creative activities**. We will also draw inspiration from international experience when cooperating with industry and employers, strengthening our links with graduates, implementing effective management techniques, and presenting the University to the public.

The development activities outlined in this Strategic Plan will be financed primarily from the budget of the Czech Republic's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which has set aside specific funding to support the institutional development of the University of Ostrava (IP 2021) as well as funding the Strategic Management Support Programme (PPSŘ) and Central Development Projects (the CRP programme). We will also make use of EU structural funds – especially the Operational Programme (OP) Research, Development and Education, which will soon be concluded, and two Operational Programmes which will soon be launched, the OP Jan Amos Comenius and the Just Transition Fund. Further funding will come from the Education Ministry's ProgFin programme for modernizing facilities and equipment at universities, subsidies from the city and the region, and the University's own funds (especially the standard funding for educational activities received from the Education Ministry as well as subsidies supporting the long-term conceptual development of research institutions).

Regarding the Education Ministry's newly created Strategic Management Support Programme (PPSŘ), which from 2022 will replace the Institutional Programme for the Development of Higher Education: The overwhelming majority of the activities listed below in this Strategic Plan will be funded partially or entirely from this new programme. For many years, the University of Ostrava has used funding targeted at strategic development (the current Institutional Programme, which will be replaced by the PPSŘ) to cover the costs of development-related activities that span the entire University – so the funding is used on a University-wide basis rather than being allocated to specific faculties. In order to make it clear precisely which activities will be funded from the PPSŘ, these activities are marked below with four asterisks (****).

This Strategic Plan should be understood as a “living document”. The various activities set out in it will be subject to regular discussion and evaluation, and when necessary they will be updated and amended. When compiling the plan, we drew on a number of strategic documents and materials:

The University of Ostrava's Long-Term Development Strategy 2015–2020

University of Ostrava Annual Reports 2015-2019

The Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan for Higher Education for the period up to 2021

The National Strategy for Education Policy 2030+

The strategic documents of Operational Programmes, especially the OP Jan Amos Comenius and the Just Transition Fund

The City of Ostrava's Strategic Development Plan 2017–2023

The Moravian-Silesian Region's Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System 2020

Currently valid legislation (especially the Higher Education Act and its draft amendment)

The European Charter for Researchers (including the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers)

Discussed by the University of Ostrava Academic Council on 24 February 2021.

Approved by the University of Ostrava Academic Senate on 15 March 2021.

Approved by the University of Ostrava Board of Trustees on 29 March 2021.

Submitted for deliberation by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports:

Ostrava, 31 March 2021

.....
prof. MUDr. Jan Lata, CSc., Rector, University of Ostrava

PRIORITY 1: HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING FOR AN EDUCATED SOCIETY

Since its foundation in 1991, **the University of Ostrava** has been **closely linked with the local region and its transformation**. An integral part of the University's mission has always been not only to provide higher education to an excellent standard, but also to contribute towards **the "humanization" of a region that has traditionally been a bastion of heavy industry**. In order to enable the University to pursue this mission, the structure of its degree programmes has always reflected not only current trends in higher education, but also **the specific needs of the Moravian-Silesian Region (the second most populous region in the Czech Republic) with regard to its development and transformation**. During its three decades of existence, the University of Ostrava has established itself as a stabilized higher education institution offering a broad spectrum of studies both in traditional academic fields and in professional (vocational) subjects, with a range of different forms of study available (full-time, part-time, distance learning). Students can register for any course at any faculty, thus taking control over the profile of their own individual studies. The University also offers a stable system of support for students with specific needs. **Particular attention** has been paid to the creation of **University-wide counselling and support services** for applicants and students (including those with specific needs) and to the clear and systematic presentation of the various study options available.

Although we have achieved a standard that is comparable with similar educational institutions in the Czech Republic, we still feel there are certain weaknesses in the system and form of education at the University of Ostrava. These weaknesses are primarily the following: **the relatively low level of permeability among different degree programmes** and specializations; **the weak focus on the competency-based model of studies**; relatively **high dropout rates** especially in the first year of studies; **inadequate University-wide support for the development of pedagogical skills** among teaching staff; **a lack of social integration activities** for students; **inadequate University-wide support for practical placements and internships**; and the fact that **accepted standards of support for students with specific needs** have not yet been fully adopted.

In view of the above, **the University of Ostrava's primary goals in terms of its educational provision** during the upcoming period are (besides maintaining and enhancing the quality of the degree programmes and support services provided to students) as follows: **to adapt our degree programmes** in order to enhance their relevance to life and work in the 21st century; **to substantially strengthen our implementation** of the methods and principles of **competency-based teaching** in current and planned degree programmes (particularly by developing a system to support **the development of pedagogical skills** among academic staff); **to combat** the nationwide problem of **dropout and failure rates** among students **by boosting the flexibility, diversity and inclusivity of education** and **creating a highly motivating environment** for applicants and students, with a particular focus on support for social integration activities; to review and update the current admissions procedures and to achieve overall improvements in international communication **in accordance with modern higher education culture**, defined by respect for the principle of **equal opportunities in education** and reflecting the needs and interests not only of talented students, but also of students with specific educational needs – including those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. These efforts will be complemented by our determination to offer an excellent, supportive and highly motivating environment for studying, including excellent support services; this will influence graduates' decision whether to continue their studies at our University at a higher level, and it will also help us recruit applicants from other universities (including institutions in other countries).

In view of the above, we have defined the following four sub-goals in the area of educational provision:

- Sub-goal 1: **To adapt the portfolio of current and planned degree programmes in order to enhance their relevance to life and work in the 21st century**
- Sub-goal 2: **To implement methods of competency-based teaching**
- Sub-goal 3: **To increase flexibility and inclusivity in studies**
- Sub-goal 4: **To create a motivational environment for students and to reduce dropout/failure rates**

We will monitor our progress on achieving all these sub-goals using the following **indicators (to be achieved by 2025)**:

- There will be a 5% reduction in first-year dropout rates.
- At least 20% of timetabled courses will include elements of “blended learning”, which will meet the standards of the newly created blended learning concept at the University.
- At least 5% of timetabled courses will include transferrable skills (competencies) in their learning outcomes.
- 100% of newly recruited teaching staff will complete at least one course in the development of pedagogical skills.
- At least 30% of all academic staff will complete at least one course in the development of pedagogical or IT skills.
- At least 50% of first-year students will participate in a social integration activity.
- At least 25% of students will study professional (vocational) degree programmes.
- At least 30% of academic degree programmes will incorporate a semi-optional (elective) internship/practical placement.
- A special offer of job positions with employers will be created for students with specific needs.
- 100% of degree programmes will be analyzed to assess their permeability for students with specific needs.
- All faculties will offer at least one degree programme systematically tailored to the requirements of students with specific needs.

Responsible for implementing and coordinating this priority:

- Vice-Rector for Studies and Lifelong Learning

Funding sources:

IP 2021/PPSŘ 2022+, CRP, OP and other EU sources, internal funding

SUB-GOAL 1: To adapt the portfolio of current and planned degree programmes in order to enhance their relevance to life and work in the 21st century

Measures:

1. 1. 1: Modification of graduate profiles at the University of Ostrava to emphasize transferable skills for life and work in the 21st century in accordance with the concept of competencies for global citizenship (critical thinking, open-mindedness, handling diversity, respect for difference, understanding the interconnectedness of the world, dealing with conflicts, ethical responsibility and involvement, sustainable living, acting in support of justice and equality) – incorporation into learning outcomes; methodological, financial and organizational (coordination) support for the development of global

citizenship competencies across all degree programmes at the University. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.C/

1. 1. 2: Review of the current range of degree programmes based on ongoing evaluations by the University's Council for Internal Evaluation, taking into consideration demand, dropout rates, job market options, the degree of internationalization, quality of staff provision and quality of scholarly/creative activities in an attempt to achieve an optimum ratio of students for a university of our type: 60% (Bachelor's programmes) : 32% (Master's programmes) : 8% (doctoral programmes), and/or to increase the proportion of students in Master's and doctoral programmes while increasing the number of students to 10 000 (subject to adequate funding provision by the Ministry of Education). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.C/
1. 1. 3: In conjunction with the Council for Internal Evaluation, modification of the concept for part-time and distance learning programmes taking into account developments on the national level (review of standards for the accreditation and approval of degree programmes). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.B; 2.C/
1. 1. 4: In conjunction with degree programme coordinators, review of the form and content of state final examinations depending on the graduate profile and in connection with the professional/academic profile of the programme (including review of the necessity for elaborating graduation theses or modification of the form of the thesis). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.C; 1.D/
1. 1. 5: In conjunction with the Council for Internal Evaluation and representatives of potential future employers, review of the concept of teacher training degree programmes to explore the possibility of implementing long-cycle Master's programmes, enhancing the quality of teacher training practical placements, and developing the professional profile of graduates of these degree programmes. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.D/
1. 1. 6: In conjunction with the Council for Internal Evaluation, review of the concept of professional and academic degree programmes (review of standards for the approval and creation of degree programmes) with the aim of clearly distinguishing between their different graduate profiles and programme content (including distinct admission requirements reflecting the different applicant target groups – recent school-leavers vs. applicants already in employment). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.D/
1. 1. 7: Financial support for the creation of interdisciplinary degree programmes, courses and modules and degree programmes responding to high demand in society. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.C/
1. 1. 8: Support for professional (vocational) degree programmes incorporating a substantial proportion of internships and practical placements as well as the direct involvement of employers in teaching (with particular focus on funding for the implementation of practical placements and internships at employers). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.C/
1. 1. 9: Systematic University-wide support for practical placements in professional and academic degree programmes (support staff at the University Advice and Counselling Centre, methodological and legislative support, incorporation into degree programme quality monitoring). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.C/
1. 1. 10: Involvement of relevant partners in the process of updating and evaluating degree programmes (regular surveys of graduates' job market performance, involvement of

graduates and employers in the evaluation of degree programmes e.g. via focus groups, definition of competencies for typical job positions, etc.). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.B/

1. 1. 11: Identification of degree programmes that are unique and of outstanding quality, their targeted promotion outside the region. **** /SZ MŠMT II.4/

SUB-GOAL 2: To implement methods of competency-based teaching

Measures:

1. 2. 1: Modification of the standard block of courses that are common to all teacher training degree programmes, accentuating primarily the development of communication skills, motivation skills, managing crisis situations, identifying potential, teamwork). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.C/
1. 2. 2: University-wide support for teaching staff to improve their pedagogical skills (project-based teaching, discussion, critical thinking methods, research- and inquiry-based methods, situation-, simulation- and roleplay-based methods, methods involving students in the teaching process, practical workshops, assessed practical placements and internships) and IT skills via a range of University-wide courses; reflection of the development of these skills in the assessment and career development of teaching staff (creation of a teaching support centre). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.A/
1. 2. 3: Systematic motivation and support for teaching staff to incorporate soft competencies and transferrable skills (especially creativity, presentation skills, positive communication), including intercultural competencies, into teaching provision in current courses. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.C/
1. 2. 4: Enhancement of cooperation between degree programme coordinators and the Council for Internal Evaluation to support the development and quality of degree programmes, particularly with regard to teaching provision (e.g. regular meetings of the Council for Internal Evaluation with degree programme coordinators). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.B/
1. 2. 5: Creation of a platform for sharing and exchanging teaching experience – for teaching staff, students, and practical placement/internship coordinators (e.g. examples of good practice, unusual teaching methods and strategies). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.A/
1. 2. 6: Creation of systems enabling students to develop business skills and innovative thinking (design of an educational programme, online courses). **** /SZ MŠMT II.7/
1. 2. 7: Increase in the prestige of high-quality teaching provision as part of the work of academic staff members (regular awards for interesting innovations and long-term high standards of teaching provision, initiation of a University-wide discussion regarding additional formal and informal forms of support, coordinated by the Council for Internal Evaluation, emphasis on the assessment of teaching quality as a component in employee assessment, etc.). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.A; 1.B/
1. 2. 8: Support for surveys and questionnaires involving various target groups (applicants, students, graduates, employers) regarding the range of degree programmes offered, their structure and content, services provided; systematic implementation of relevant findings from these surveys into the ongoing development of degree programmes and support services. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.B/

1. 2. 9: Support for the development of additional forms of teaching quality assessment, in addition to existing student surveys (e.g. focus groups, observation, etc.). Systematic application of the results of teaching quality evaluations when evaluating degree programmes and teaching staff. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.B/

SUB-GOAL 3: To increase flexibility and inclusivity in studies

Measures:

1. 3. 1: Support for flexible forms of education, especially support for the fully-fledged integration of online and distance learning forms of learning (blended learning) into full-time studies wherever relevant (including support in the form of facilities and equipment provided to teaching staff involved in blended learning); creation and implementation of a blended learning concept at the University of Ostrava, including technical, methodological and staff support. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.A; 2.A; 2.B; 2.D/
1. 3. 2: Increased flexibility for students during their studies (e.g. enabling students to transfer between different degree programmes or postpone their choice of specialization, expansion of the range of degree programmes combining different degree subjects, recognition of the results of previous education, including informal education). **** /SZ MŠMT 2.E; III.A/
1. 3. 3: University-wide coordination of lifelong learning (promotion, development concept, coordination), creation of a system of micro-qualifications plus support for their implementation (i.e. short educational programmes, mainly in online form, which supplement traditional academic degree programmes and enable existing students as well as graduates and other interested parties to expand or supplement their existing qualifications during their professional careers). **** SZ MŠMT 2.F; 2.G/
1. 3. 4: Systematic support for the removal of barriers and the integration of students with specific needs into standard studies (development of counselling services for these applicants and students, professionalization of the provision of these services, adoption of accepted standards for counselling services for applicants and students). **** /SZ MŠMT II.2/
1. 3. 5: Development of a range of degree programmes systematically tailored to the requirements of students with specific needs (University-wide methodology, financial and staffing support for degree programme coordinators and teaching staff). **** /SZ MŠMT II.2/

SUB-GOAL 4: To create a motivational environment for students

Measures:

1. 4. 1: Expansion and improvement of the range of counselling services available, taking into consideration the changing needs of applicants and students (improved offer of career and psychological counselling, especially for students with specific needs). **** /SZ MŠMT II.1/

1. 4. 2: Systematic support for positive communication with applicants and students (e.g. training for staff of study departments and other student-facing service provision departments as well as academics in the role of pedagogical counsellors, focusing on communication skills, mediation techniques, the unique demands of communication focused on students with specific needs, responsible and appropriate strategies for solving study-related problems, training for teaching staff focusing on methods for developing students' potential). **** /SZ MŠMT II.1; II.2/
1. 4. 3: Timely identification of students who are potentially at risk of failing to complete their studies (dropout), e.g. via data from IT systems, systematic work with such students in the form of individual counselling, including more involvement by degree programme coordinators in combating failure and dropout from their degree programmes. **** /SZ MŠMT II.6/
1. 4. 4: Review of current admissions procedures, possible increased use of various ways of identifying specific talents and aptitude for a particular degree programme (in addition to knowledge-based tests), modification of conditions for admissions procedures. **** /SZ MŠMT 2.E/
1. 4. 5: Systematic development of cooperation with secondary schools (e.g. pedagogical counsellors providing expert advice on choosing suitable degree programmes, active presentations at secondary schools to showcase the range of degree programmes available to applicants, identification of and targeted work with highly motivated secondary school students via special educational programmes – e.g. “trial” university studies, expanded options for secondary school students to participate in current teaching of selected specialist courses). **** /SZ MŠMT II.1/
1. 4. 6: Creation of targeted scholarship programmes to support students with exceptional talent and exceptional performance (study results) in order to boost motivation, reduce barriers and combat disadvantage. **** /SZ MŠMT II.1; II.4)
1. 4. 7: Support for mentoring by students in higher year-groups to students in lower year-groups (creation of the role of student counsellor); support for the prevention and solution of conflicts between students or between students and teaching staff (creation of the role of student ombudsman); support for the prevention of inappropriate behaviour by teaching staff towards students and vice versa (e.g. sexual harassment, arrogant behaviour, etc.), especially in the form of methodological support, training and raising awareness. **** /SZ MŠMT II. 1; II. 6/
1. 4. 8: Support for students' integration into university life, primarily in the form of support for social integration activities targeted at first-year students; support for the activities of student associations (provision of facilities, funding via scholarship programmes and grant schemes). **** /SZ 1.E; II.3/
1. 4. 9: Promotion of a healthy lifestyle among students, including support for sports-related activities (e.g. counselling services focusing on nutrition and diet, sports activities, a system offering participation in sports activities, improvements in the University's sports infrastructure and facilities). **** /SZ MŠMT II.8/
1. 4. 10: Support for a systematic offer of jobs at the University for students of the University (systematic compilation of data on vacant positions at the University that would be suitable for students, use of the new institution of shared job positions, etc.). /SZ MŠMT II.2/



PRIORITY 2: EXCELLENT RESEARCH TO ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE

In recent years, the University of Ostrava has made dynamic progress in the area of scholarly and creative activities, which can be characterized as a general shift from quantity to quality. This shift has been manifested in the following improvements:

- the definition and consolidation of new main research directions;
- the recruitment of new employees (postdocs, from abroad);
- the establishment, funding and development of promising new research directions;
- the official adoption of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers (including the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers), implementation of measures derived from this;
- the creation of a University-wide centre for technology and knowledge transfer to coordinate advisory, educational, analytical and administrative activities in the field of intellectual property protection and commercialization;
- the receipt of several prestigious awards by University employees (including two Neuron awards);
- a substantial increase in the volume of funding received for research projects – Czech Science Foundation, Czech Republic Technology Agency, and especially the Operational Programme Research, Development and Education, in which the University achieved successes in the “Excellent Research” call (2 projects) and the “Long-Term Intersectoral Cooperation” call (4 projects).

However, despite the substantial qualitative progress made in the areas outlined above, we are still aware that the University suffers from certain weaknesses **in the field of research**; these weaknesses have been identified both during the process of internal evaluation and also by the International Evaluation Panel. They include **a low level of interdisciplinarity** and especially **internationalization** in research, primarily in terms of staffing and the structure of research teams (and artistic teams), which leads to a lower success rate of applications for international projects (e.g. Horizon 2020 etc.), the incomplete system for the **comprehensive evaluation of employees’ scholarly and creative activities**, and the still **not entirely efficient organization of doctoral studies**.

The University of Ostrava’s **main goal** in the upcoming period is to **overcome** all the above-listed **weaknesses** by **creating an attractive and motivational environment for talented researchers and artists, top-quality teams and collaborating institutions**. We are determined to enrich society with **excellent, responsible, ethical and socially relevant research meeting national and international standards of quality**, including the development of top-class artistic studies and artistic activities integrated into practical applications. In order to achieve this goal, we will **systematically develop our activities in selected research directions** (in natural sciences, medicine, social sciences and humanities), **as well as striving for a substantial enhancement of**

research quality by preparing strategic projects such as REFRESH¹ and LERCO², with the aim of succeeding in our applications for EU structural funding during the period 2021–2027. Further important tasks in the upcoming period will be to complete our human resources management strategy in the field of scholarly/creative activities and to retain our HR Excellence in Research award.

In view of the above, we have defined the following four sub-goals in the area of scholarly/creative activities and doctoral studies:

- Sub-goal 1: **To strengthen our research infrastructures connected with practical internationalization and interdisciplinarity in scholarly/creative activities**
- Sub-goal 2: **To complete the system of comprehensive evaluation for employees' scholarly/creative activities and to reinforce our University's culture in scholarly/creative activities**
- Sub-goal 3: **To reform doctoral studies with an emphasis on quality and effectiveness**
- Sub-goal 4: **To increase the effectiveness of knowledge transfer for the public and commercial spheres**

We will monitor our progress on achieving all these sub-goals using the following **indicators (to be achieved by 2025)**:

- At least 3 international grants financed by EU funds for research and innovation.
- Retention of the HR Excellence in Research award in upcoming assessments.
- Increase in completion rates of doctoral studies at all faculties (to at least 40%).
- At least 5 new strategic partners (strategic partnership contracts) from the non-public sector.
- Increase of at least 25% in research assessment parameters in THE and QS rankings.
- Increase in the number of publications in IF journals to more than 300 per year, retaining the proportion of 1st and 2nd quartile outputs at around 60%.
- Increase in B and C category publication outputs at prestigious publishers (FORD Social Sciences category and Humanities and Arts category) to 10 per year.
- At least 2 publications per year in the top-ranking multidisciplinary journals (in the top 5%) and at least 3 B and C category publication outputs per year (FORD Social Sciences category and Humanities and Arts category) evaluated as excellent in Module 1 M17+.
- At least 5 joint activities with partners from the public and commercial spheres (workshops, educational events and public awareness events, round tables, etc.).
- Increase in the number of internships and twinning activities involving staff and students (by at least 10%).
- Initiation of at least 5 collaborative projects with partners from the public and commercial spheres.
- Increased participation of academics and researchers at specialist exhibitions/fairs, conferences and events focusing on collaboration between the public sector and the public and commercial spheres (by at least 15%).

¹ REFRESH is a project that integrates technical research (VŠB-Technical University of Ostrava) with social scientific research focusing on the analysis of the impact of technological transformations on the transformation of society and vice versa. The research encompasses a broad historical context, yet it also addresses pathological phenomena in contemporary society and lays the foundations for predicting future societal developments in relation to the transition to a new energy concept.

² LERCO is a project based on the integration of biomedical, epidemiological, environmental, genomic and movement research, including the creation of a new international research centre at the University of Ostrava with potential for international applications of the research results.

- Publication of at least 5 joint outputs in collaboration with partners from the public and commercial spheres.
- Increase in the involvement of partners from the public and commercial spheres (or employees of businesses) in teaching (by at least 10%).
- At least 3 final theses/dissertations per year assigned in collaboration with partners from the public and commercial spheres.

Responsible for implementing and coordinating this priority:

- Vice-Rector for Research and Artistic Activities

Funding sources:

IP 2021/PPSŘ 2022+, CRP, OP and other EU sources, internal funding

SUB-GOAL 1: To strengthen our research infrastructures connected with practical internationalization and interdisciplinarity in scholarly/creative activities

In order to achieve this goal, it will be essential to provide targeted financial and methodological support for selected research directions that have already been established in the previous period, combined with the creation of an effective HR management strategy and the phased implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers (including the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers) – i.e. a path of evolution – as well as striving to achieve a substantial acceleration of processes by means of EU structural funding as part of two strategic projects: LERCO and REFRESH. The potential implementation of the LERCO project (biomedical research, epidemiological research integrated with research of healthy lifestyles and the environment) and the REFRESH project (social scientific research and humanities research focusing on current issues in modern global society) requires the completion of appropriate research infrastructures integrated with the establishment of research teams on an international basis. These steps will lead to the genuine internationalization of our research teams, the strengthening of their scholarly/creative activities in an international environment, the enhancement of their international networking, and their involvement in international research schemes; they will also facilitate a range of other activities connected with applications for international research grants. Potential success in securing funding for the above-mentioned strategic projects will also have a positive impact on all facets of scholarly, creative and educational activities at the University, including a substantial boost to the quality of doctoral studies.

Measures:

2. 1. 1: Comprehensive analysis of the development of all current and potential main research directions, elaboration of a concept for their strategic support in order to secure international project funding and to facilitate cooperation with outstanding international institutions and recruitment of top-quality researchers. /SZ MŠMT 4.A/
2. 1. 2: Analysis of the current use of laboratories and technical equipment, preparation of a strategy for the more efficient use of staff and equipment (facilities sharing). **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B/
2. 1. 3: Systematic support for teams when preparing applications for national and (especially) international research and innovation projects, strengthening support and administrative infrastructure for research at the central level (University-wide) as well

as at the level of the individual constituent parts of the University to include experts in international research funding schemes. **** /SZ MŠMT 4.D; 6.C/

- 2. 1. 4. Targeted (financial) support of international mobility for academics, non-academic staff and doctoral students for purposes of networking in the area of scholarly/creative activities. **** /SZ MŠMT 4.D; I.B/
- 2. 1. 5: Preparation of strategic projects (especially LERCO and REFRESH) with the potential to deliver substantial qualitative improvements in research by securing funding to support the development of research infrastructure, the internationalization of research teams and increased interdisciplinarity in scholarly/creative activities. /SZ MŠMT 4.B; 4.C/

SUB-GOAL 2: To complete the system of comprehensive evaluation for employees' scholarly/creative activities and to reinforce our University's culture in scholarly/creative activities

The University of Ostrava will strive to achieve satisfactory quality in all areas of research covered by the M17+ evaluation system. For this reason, it is absolutely essential for the University to develop (in addition to the national-level methodology) its own effective system for distributing funding and evaluating research activities, which will make it possible to conduct a more detailed multi-criteria quality assessment and thus to carry out long-term quality monitoring focused on constituent parts of the University, teams and individuals. Although a system of this type was envisaged in the previous strategic plan, its implementation proved highly problematic due to ongoing modifications of the national M17+ evaluation system. A system of this type must also be created and implemented to assess scholarly and creative activities. In conjunction with this, measures will be adopted to strengthen a University-wide culture in the area of scholarly/creative activities.

Measures:

- 2. 2. 1: Update of the concept for the central (University-wide) distribution of institutional funding (DKRVO – Long-Term Conceptual Development of Research Institutions) taking into account the specific nature of different fields of research and the need to support transfer (application), societal relevance and activities related to innovation and enterprise. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B/
- 2. 2. 2: Taking into account the distribution of institutional funding (DKRVO, RUV – Register of Artistic Outputs), modification of the system for evaluating the results of research and artistic activities at all levels (individual employees, departments etc.), including the modification of tools for long-term monitoring and annual reporting on research and artistic activities in relation to the national-level assessment methodology. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D/
- 2. 2. 3: Implementation of activities to share good practice in research and to support open access to research, emphasizing the policy of Open Science and the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, e.g. analysis of publication activities at the University, elaboration of a strategy for future developments including support for open access publication. Preparation of conditions for shared data storage of research results, facilitating safer and more efficient data management and analysis. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B; 6.A; 6.C/
- 2. 2. 4: Introduction of systematic mentoring for young academics and researchers (separately from self-mentoring in academic and non-academic/administrative activities; mentoring

in non-academic activities should be provided centrally in order to reduce the administrative burden on academic management staff). **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D/

2. 2. 5: Introduction of a system for regular training of students and academics focusing on plagiarism and academic integrity, support for plagiarism detection tools. **** /SZ MŠMT 3.C/

SUB-GOAL 3: To reform doctoral studies with an emphasis on quality and effectiveness

Doctoral degree programmes represent a key element of research at universities. Doctoral students make an important contribution to research teams, and postdocs help to create a network for research cooperation among institutions. The University of Ostrava's aim is to create an effective and comprehensive system for educating talented doctoral students which reflects the strategic plan devised by the Ministry of Education, emphasizing improvements in students' competencies, a positive social environment, internationalization, high-quality professional education, and integration with professional networks. In this regard, we expect to see synergic effects if the funding applications for the strategic projects LERCO and REFRESH are successful (HR internationalization, examples of good international practice, improvement of research infrastructures).

Measures:

2. 3. 1: Establishment of a Doctoral School as a comprehensive tool for boosting the competencies of doctoral students in scholarly/creative activities and soft skills, i.e. introduction of a standard shared block of content for doctoral degree programmes, design of a system for the long-term monitoring of doctoral studies, wide-ranging pilot analysis and elaboration of an action plan for the development of doctoral programmes, full implementation of electronic systems for doctoral programmes. **** /SZ MŠMT 3.C/
2. 3. 2: Procurement of tools for more effective elaboration and higher quality of doctoral dissertations (tools for proofreading, plagiarism detection, and easier feedback between students and supervisors). **** /SZ MŠMT 3.C; SZ MŠMT 6.A/
2. 3. 3: Design of a system of measures enabling students to become more closely involved in professional networks, e.g. introduction of the role of external mentor (with a focus on the involvement of international mentors). **** /SZ MŠMT 3.C; 3.D/
2. 3. 4: Elaboration of subject-specific standards for the selection of supervisors, accentuating the quality of publications and grant-funded activities. **** /SZ MŠMT 3.C/
2. 3. 5: Preparation of tools to enable better financial remuneration for talented students involved in research, including a support system for grant-funded activities by doctoral students and postdocs (special scholarship programme, internal grant competition). **** /SZ MŠMT 3. B; 3.C; 3.D/
2. 3. 6: Development of a support system facilitating short-term mobility for doctoral students and postdocs. **** /SZ MŠMT 3.C; I.B/

SUB-GOAL 4: To increase the effectiveness of knowledge transfer for the public and commercial spheres

It is our aim to continue making the University an increasingly attractive and responsible partner – not only in applied research, but also in selected applications of artistic activities. We plan to draw on existing cooperation with our current major partners from the commercial and public spheres (Ostrava University Hospital, businesses, public administration, galleries, theatres) and to continue our intensive search for new partners in specific fields of research and applied arts. We will also continue to develop our facilities for education and consultancy on knowledge transfer, technology transfer and commercialization, focusing not only on academic staff, but also on students.

Measures:

2. 4. 1: Expansion of the concept for the popularization of research and artistic activities to include target groups consisting of the general public and partner institutions. **** /SZ MŠMT II.11/
2. 4. 2: Targeted development of administrative and methodological support for employees in the field of intellectual property protection, seeking opportunities for transfer of scholarly/creative activities into the public and commercial spheres via a newly created University-wide centre for technology and knowledge transfer. **** /SZ MŠMT II.10; 6.C/
2. 4. 3: Development of collaboration with partners from the public and commercial spheres, not only in applied research (DMS projects, collaborative projects, licensing etc.) but also in applied arts, accompanied by a targeted strategy leading to the securing of funds, especially from the non-public sector. **** /SZ MŠMT II.10/
2. 4. 4: Implementation of the University's planned marketing strategy for technology/knowledge transfer. **** /SZ MŠMT II.10/
2. 4. 5: Targeted (financial) support for activities in the field of Proof of Concept projects focusing on the identification of new services and products with application potential and activities leading to the creation of spin-off companies. **** /SZ MŠMT II.8/

PRIORITY 3: A UNIVERSITY THAT BENEFITS SOCIETY

The University of Ostrava is keenly aware of its **responsibility for the development of society, especially the region** in which it is rooted and where the impacts of its activities are the most prominent. The University is already an active participant in public debates on a wide range of socially relevant issues. All the measures outlined under this Priority are thus designed to support and enhance existing activities (either by individuals or larger units of the University), as well helping to promote **the initiation of new activities as part of the University's third role** and to lead towards a systematic assessment and remuneration of individual staff members and larger units that help strengthen the University's position in this area. The University of Ostrava is closely involved in monitoring current events in society, identifying emerging or persistent trends, and assessing the strategies of other key actors on the regional, national and European level. The University **conceives its third role as a broad-based field of activity that benefits society as a whole**, including the University's major contribution to **the evolution of an educated society**, its **participation in debates on society-wide trends and issues**, and its contribution to the overall **socio-economic transformation of our region and internationalization on the internal and external levels**. Our University's global ambition in this area is to become a key player in society-wide as well as regionally-based debates and discussions, thus impacting on the direction of travel of the Moravian-Silesian Region and society in general. The University is also aware of the restricted options and tools it has at its disposal, so it will strive to act in conjunction with a wide range of other actors (social, economic, cultural, sporting and political) when addressing the needs of minority groups. The University of Ostrava is determined to act in such a way as to reinforce and promote the ideals on which it is founded – the ideals of freedom, ethics, humanism, democracy, tolerance, healthy lifestyle and civil society.

In order to pursue these visions in its own area of social responsibility, the University plans to focus primarily on its involvement in dealing with pressing social (and primarily regional) issues, where it is aware of its substantial potential to contribute towards the development and implementation of solutions.

In view of the above, we have defined the following sub-goals in the area of the third role:

- Sub-goal 1: **To become a respected and sought-after institution which, via its employees and students, will actively contribute to the evolution of an educated society and the entrenchment of humanistic ideals across the whole of society**
- Sub-goal 2: **To become an important institution contributing to society's sustainable and socially harmonious path of development**

We will monitor our progress on achieving these sub-goals using the following **indicators (to be achieved by 2025)**:

- Creation of a database of third role-related activities by University staff.
- 80% of employees will consider the evaluation of staff activities in the third role to be adequate (increase of 15%).
- Creation of a clear structure for managing third role-related activities.
- Creation of a University communication platform for expert statements targeted at the public (stream) and organization of at least 4 events per year on socially relevant topics (with a major impact on the region).
- 10% of employees will undergo training or receive expert advice on expanding and improving their activities with regard to the third role.

- Creation of a University volunteer centre.
- 10% of students will be involved in volunteer activities organized by the University.
- The University will become a member of the national Platform of Interested Parties for Corporate Social Responsibility (or a similar platform).

Responsible for implementing and coordinating this priority:

- Rector, Manager of the Rector's Office

Funding sources:

IP 2021/PPSŘ 2022+, CRP, OP and other EU sources, subsidies from the City and the Region, internal funding

SUB-GOAL 1: To become a respected and sought-after institution which, via its employees and students, will actively contribute to the evolution of an educated society and the entrenchment of humanistic ideals across the whole of society

At the heart of the University's mission is its role in contributing to the intellectual potential of humanity, promoting and entrenching the ideals of humanism, tolerance, equality and social inclusion. As a leading public institution, the University must concern itself not only with the ideals of education and democratic values; it must also use its work in this area as a channel for raising public awareness of its key activities – education and scholarship – especially with relation to its main fields of research. The University is keenly aware of the importance of its mission, especially with regard to the evolution of an educated society – and this applies not only to its own students. For many decades, the overall level of education achieved by the population in the Moravian-Silesian Region has been lower than in many other comparable regions, and this situation brings a number of negative social impacts. In this context, the University of Ostrava plays an irreplaceable role as an institution whose mission is to spread the benefits of education and alleviate such negative phenomena. A further key role of the University involves collaborating with other education providers (especially within the Moravian-Silesian Region) in order to facilitate the evolution of a more educated society, thus helping to “humanize” the region and improve quality of life. In conjunction with other key players in education and culture, the University has the potential to play a major role in initiating and accelerating processes which will contribute to this transformation, combating negative social phenomena and ensuring a continual increase in quality of life within the region. We have identified several weak areas in our efforts to achieve these goals, and it is these areas on which we plan to focus our efforts during the upcoming years. These main weaknesses include the lack of motivation among employees and students to become involved in third role activities and the inadequate degree of systematization and institutionalization of our collaboration with other educational and cultural institutions.

Measures:

3. 1. 1: Development of institutional and scholarship-type support systems for third role activities, support for practical placements and reciprocal activities. **** /SZM MŠMT 1.C; II.12/

- 3. 1. 2: Creation of a concept for collaboration between University students and staff and a network of cultural institutions (libraries, galleries, museums, non-profit organizations), especially within the Moravian-Silesian Region. **** /SZ MŠMT II.12/
- 3. 1. 3: Creation of a concept for contacts and more intense collaboration with a network of educational institutions, collaboration on the implementation of curricular and extra-curricular educational activities (across all types of educational institutions). **** /SZ MŠMT II.12/
- 3. 1. 4: Creation of a database of third role-related activities by University staff. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D/
- 3. 1. 5: Creation of a system for evaluating third role-related activities by University staff and its integration into the wider system of staff evaluation. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B; 5.D/

SUB-GOAL 2: To become an important institution contributing to society's sustainable and socially harmonious path of development

In the upcoming decades, countries and regions will have to deal with the impacts of major global processes such as climate change, energy transition, the transformation of the global economy and political system, the weakening of democratic and liberal principles (which form the foundation of the European Union and the post-1989 Czech Republic), increasing polarization within society (with regard to income, social status and values), new challenges in public health, and changes in the field of culture and art. In the Czech Republic and the Moravian-Silesian Region, the impacts of these changes will include the creation of thousands (or tens of thousands) of new jobs in new sectors, as well as huge changes in working practices within existing professions. This trend will have a major knock-on effect on demand for graduates' skills on the job market – but it will also substantially impact upon social cohesion. The University of Ostrava will play a crucial role in addressing these issues by equipping its students with skills and competencies for work and life in general, helping to prepare them for future society-wide challenges. The University will also become an initiator of society-wide debate and discussion concerning the issues outlined above, including the implementation of key measures in the University's activities and their management. However, we have identified a number of weaknesses in our current efforts to achieve the outcomes described above, and it is these weaknesses that we plan to address in the upcoming years. The main areas for improvement include inadequate provision for voluntary activities and civil society activities, inadequate training and/or support for staff with regard to public presentation and media participation, inadequate use of marketing tools to monitor the external impacts of the University's activities (including research into the University of Ostrava brand), the insufficient perception of social responsibility as a key part of the University's activities, and the insufficiently elaborated structure of management systems concerning third role-related activities.

Measures:

- 3. 2. 1: Creation of a volunteer centre to support students' involvement in university life, voluntary activities, student organizations and initiatives. **** /SZ MŠMT II.3/
- 3. 2. 2: Support for the transfer of research-based knowledge to the wider general public, dissemination of knowledge via involvement in the media and other contacts with the public. Delineation of support mechanisms to improve the quality of third role-related activities for University staff (and also students) – training, expert consultancy. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D; II.12/

3. 2. 3: Systematic collaboration with public administration, the non-governmental sector and the commercial sphere in key areas (social, environmental, cultural, sporting, medical). Involvement of University employees in decision-making and advisory bodies at the national, regional and municipal levels. Establishment of a University-wide database to help identify opportunities for participation in major institutions. **** /SZ MŠMT II.12; II.14/
3. 2. 4: Delineation of processes to help define and formulate the University's (or faculties') opinions and stances with regard to society-wide issues, to be based on expert knowledge and the values on which the University is founded. **** /SZ MŠMT II.11; II.12/
3. 2. 5: More intensive and higher-quality public presentation of the University's activities for the benefit of society via appropriate communication channels and tools (especially electronic communication). Delineation and assessment of marketing metrics for the ongoing presentation of the results of scholarly/creative activities to the general public. **** /SZ MŠMT II.11; II.12; II.14/
3. 2. 6: Creation of a management concept that moves away from the current somewhat disjointed approach to the third role and establishes the role of a manager (at both University and faculty level) responsible for third role-related activities, including a clearly defined area of scope and clearly defined responsibilities. In the context of the implemented measures, the recruitment of additional staff to cope with the increased volume of work in this area. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B; 5.D; 6.C/

PRIORITY 4: INTERNATIONALIZATION

The goal of our University's Strategic Plan in the area of internationalization is to achieve the following outcomes: **internationalization** will form **an integral part** of the University of Ostrava's strategic management, and **it will be anchored into the quality standards defined for degree programmes**, which will reflect a broad range of elements involving the international dimension of the curriculum. Various forms of **international experience will be available to all students and employees**, and the related knowledge and skills **will form part of the University's graduate profile** and learning outcomes. All faculties will offer degree programmes taught in foreign languages, plus a wide range of specialist courses taught in foreign languages; international students, teaching staff and researchers will be fully integrated into the life of the academic community. **A well-elaborated system of service provision for international students and employees** will not only make the University of Ostrava more attractive by offering an excellent, supportive environment in which international students and staff can study and work; it will also offer them a path into the wider community, the city and the region – which will be enriched by their presence here. The University of Ostrava is a key actor in the internationalization of the region, and as a hub of education and a meeting-place for the international community, it enhances the region's cohesion and tolerance and promotes a culture of openness among the population as a whole. **The University of Ostrava is a member of a European Universities Initiative alliance** as well as an active participant in international university networks, and it contributes to the ongoing development and evolution of the European Higher Education Area by participating in strategic partnerships. The University is **a socially responsible institution** which **responds flexibly** to current global trends and **challenges in international education**, and it actively supports students' and academics' participation in development-related cooperation on the international stage. The University's rapid recent progress in these areas is reflected in its upward trajectory in renowned international rankings.

We intend to achieve these outcomes by focusing on the following three sub-goals:

- Sub-goal 1: **To develop the strategic management of internationalization and its professional institutional infrastructure**
- Sub-goal 2: **To enhance the international dimension of teaching and develop employees' global competencies**
- Sub-goal 3: **To enhance the attractiveness of the University for international students, academics and researchers**

We will monitor our progress on achieving all these sub-goals using the following **indicators (to be achieved by 2025)**:

- At least 10 accredited degree programmes including a mobility window (a semester enabling students to participate in international mobility).
- At least 20 courses provided via a virtual mobility system.
- At least 3 accredited degree programmes provided in conjunction with international partners (joint / double / multiple degrees).
- An increase in the proportion of students travelling abroad for international mobility – to 5% of the total.
- An increase in the number of international degree programmes taught in a foreign language to 10.
- At least 20% of administrative staff will complete an English language course.

- At least 20 academics will be enabled to complete training on specialist teaching with English-Medium Instruction (EMI).
- At least 3 activities undertaken by the University of Ostrava as part of its membership in Czech and international university networks.
- At least 3 activities of university networks including the University of Ostrava.
- At least 10 projects submitted in calls for international strategic partnerships.
- 100% of internationally relevant University regulations and orders issued by the Rector (i.e. regulations/orders of relevance to international staff and students) will be translated into English.

Responsible for implementing and coordinating this priority:

- Vice-Rector for International Relations

Funding sources:

IP 2021/PPSŘ 2022+, CRP, OP and other EU sources, internal funding

SUB-GOAL 1: To develop the strategic management of internationalization and its professional institutional infrastructure

Internationalization is one of the University's strategic management priorities, and it falls within the purview of the Vice-Rector for International Relations. The University has an International Office, whose members are trained in the necessary processes and constantly monitor current trends in international education; the International Office works closely alongside the international departments of all the individual faculties. In 2019, the University underwent an external audit of its strategic management of internationalization and the processes implemented: independent international experts provided detailed feedback and recommendations for the subsequent period, primarily focusing on the need to enable a larger community of students and staff to gain international experience and to develop a system of data-based strategic management for internationalization. In 2016 the University set up the Alliance of International Offices of Czech Universities, which offers a platform for systematic sharing of experience and other forms of cooperation. The University of Ostrava has reinforced its position in the higher education landscape of Europe and beyond by means of active participation in meetings and discussions on international education, membership in prestigious university networks, and the establishment of the International Council as an internal advisory body of the Rector. The University is also focusing on the development of partnerships and the joint creation of systems and facilities. It is a member of a European Universities Initiative alliance, and it is preparing a project for the next call within the European Universities Initiative.

The University's goal in the upcoming period is to use its existing facilities and experience to plan and implement concepts and supporting measures which will open up a path to international experience and related knowledge and skills for all students at the University of Ostrava, thus helping to enhance quality across the full range of the University's activities. These concepts and supporting measures must be sustainable, robust, and resilient against global risk factors; it is therefore essential that they are firmly anchored within the University's strategic documents, provided by professional staff, and implemented via secure digital data processing. The ongoing development of internationalization is facilitated by the University's efficient and effective collaboration with partners via its membership of university networks and a European Universities Initiative alliance.

Measures:

4. 1. 1: Preparation and implementation of a concept for the internationalization of degree programmes and cooperation with the Council for Internal Evaluation to anchor this concept within the quality standards for degree programmes at the University, including quality control systems. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.B; I.A/
4. 1. 2: Increased involvement of members of the International Council in the strategic management of the University, e.g. as reviewers and advisors on key activities and processes. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B; V.A/
4. 1. 3: Preparation of a project to develop a European Universities Initiative alliance for the next programme call. **** /SZ MŠMT V. A; V.B/
4. 1. 4: Provision of professional support for the preparation of strategic partnership projects: organization of proactive campaigns to present possible international partner institutions to faculties as well as experience-sharing workshops involving the University of Ostrava's International Office, faculties and international partners. **** /SZ MŠMT 6.C; V. A; V.B/
4. 1. 5: Development of the University's active membership in the Alliance of International Offices of Czech Universities and international university networks; initiation of an alliance of universities' international cooperation centres within the Baltic University Programme as part of the Czech Republic's EU Presidency (winter semester 2021) and development of good practices and cooperation as part of this platform. **** /SZ MŠMT V.B/
4. 1. 6: Support and development of digitalization in the University's internationalization activities, implementation of the European "Erasmus Without Paper" initiative and use of the University's study information system (STAG) for managing mobility and inter-institutional agreements, including regular training and methodological support for the relevant staff members. Use of data to monitor the situation and quality of internationalization, including quality evaluation of cooperation with partner universities. **** /SZ MŠMT 6.A; V.A/
4. 1. 7: Provision of high-quality staffing for the coordination, operation and methodological management of internationalization, professional growth of staff via further education. **** /SZ MŠMT I.C; IV.B; 6.C/
4. 1. 8: Provision of a professional environment offering equal access to mobility and other activities enabling students with specific needs and socially disadvantaged students to gain international experience. **** /SZ MŠMT I.B; II.2/
4. 1. 9: Coordination of cooperation between the International Office, the Office for Research and Artistic Activities and the Quality Centre to work on supporting measures in order to improve the University's position in renowned international rankings. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B; V.A/

SUB-GOAL 2: To enhance the international dimension of teaching and develop employees' global competencies

In the past five years, the University of Ostrava has substantially expanded its range of international study and research stays available to students. In 2017 it launched the new VIA programme (including a special VIA PhD component), opening up opportunities for students to engage in mobility

beyond the boundaries of the Erasmus+ programme and enabling doctoral students to undertake research stays at prestigious non-European universities. In 2019 the “OU Aid – Make a Difference” programme was launched to support development-related cooperation of students and academics; the programme is based on collaboration between the University of Ostrava and non-profit or state organizations in the Czech Republic and developing countries. Effective cooperation between the faculties and the International Office has led to an increase in the number of international credit mobility projects. Cooperation involving faculties and individual departments via the University’s centralized project “We Are Ostrava!” and the “To Be In” (Towards Better Internationalization) programme has enabled academics to become more closely involved in the process of internationalization, and the University has thus been able to welcome increased numbers of international students, experts and artists. However, despite the expansion of the range of available opportunities for international mobility, the fall in student numbers at the University has meant that we have not been able to increase the number of students travelling abroad for mobility; this number is currently stagnating, and moreover student and staff mobility is vulnerable to crisis situations such as pandemics and related issues.

In the upcoming period, we will focus on the broad-based development and improvement of the conditions that will facilitate the international composition of the University’s academic community and accelerate the internationalization of degree programmes and the teaching process. The aim of internationalization in degree programmes is to enable students to gain international experience and to acquire intercultural competencies – by offering them easy access to a range of high-quality international mobility opportunities, organically incorporating these opportunities into study structures, and providing a broad spectrum of options for gaining international experience while still at the University of Ostrava – activities falling into the category of “internationalization at home”, which will be integrated into degree programmes.

Measures:

- 4. 2. 1: Preparation and implementation of language support and methodological guidance for teaching staff who are preparing or already teaching specialist courses in a foreign language (specialized courses and tutorials for EMI – English-Medium Instruction). **** /SZ MŠMT I.A; I.C/
- 4. 2. 2: Enhancing foreign-language communication skills among administrative staff (English-language courses tailored to the specific professional requirements of administrators). **** /SZ MŠMT I.C; V.A/
- 4. 2. 3: Training for academics and administrative staff focusing on intercultural competencies and special skills for working with and teaching multicultural groups of students as well as options for the internationalization of degree programmes. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.A; V.A/
- 4. 2. 4: Modernization of course syllabuses and teaching methods in degree programmes taught in Czech in order to ensure that the learning outcomes include transferable skills in accordance with the concept for the internationalization of degree programmes, including intercultural competencies. **** /SZ MŠMT II.B/
- 4. 2. 5: Support for academic staff (via consulting and financial remuneration) to modify the curricula of individual degree programmes in order to incorporate a semester targeted at the development of students’ international competencies: a semester spent on an international study stay or internship (mobility window), internships at companies and institutions in the Czech Republic that operate primarily in a foreign language,

attendance of specialist courses taught in a foreign language (excluding foreign-language degrees). **** /SZ MŠMT II.B/

- 4. 2. 6: Creation of new partnerships with high-quality European and non-European universities, expansion of the portfolio of partnerships for student mobility in Erasmus+, VIA and other programmes. **** /SZ MŠMT I.B; V.B/
- 4. 2. 7: Support for the implementation of student and staff mobility (and an increase in mobility numbers) within the Erasmus+, VIA, OU Aid and other programmes, support for the coordination of mobility programmes. **** /SZ MŠMT I.B/
- 4. 2. 8: Support for the creation of a virtual mobility offer, implementation of virtual mobility into curricula – especially collaborative courses integrating University of Ostrava students and students from universities abroad (COIL – Collaborative Online International Learning), blended learning courses combining virtual teaching of international student groups with short-term international study stays. **** /SZ MŠMT 2.A; 2.B; I.B/
- 4. 2. 9: Provision of specialized English-language courses for doctoral students as part of a Doctoral School: English for international cooperation in research and academic writing. **** /SZ MŠMT 3.C; I.A/
- 4. 2. 10: Support for academics creating new compulsory and semi-optional (elective) curricular courses taught in foreign languages for students in Czech-taught Bachelor's and Master's programmes, implementation of the new courses integrating Czech and international students in the teaching provision. **** /SZ MŠMT IV.C; V.A/
- 4. 2. 11: Support for academics preparing and implementing degree programmes provided jointly with international universities, in the form of consultancy and funding for related international travel. **** /SZ MŠMT II.A/
- 4. 2. 12: Support for the involvement of international visiting professors in regular teaching provision to University of Ostrava students. **** /SZ MŠMT II.B/
- 4. 2. 13: Development and administration of the OU Aid programme enabling the University to fulfil its third role on the international stage, enhancing students' international experience, supporting student mobility and introducing students to development-related cooperation. **** /SZ MŠMT I.B; II.12/
- 4. 2. 14: Expansion of activities as part of the "To Be In" internationalization programme to create an effective tool for involving academic staff in the systematic internationalization of degree programmes, including administrative support for projects and their implementation provided by the International Office. **** /SZ MŠMT V.A/
- 4. 2. 15: Expansion of promotional activities and the range of motivational tools supporting student mobility and internationalization at the University (e.g. videos, Study Abroad Days, preparatory workshops held prior to travelling abroad for mobility, campaigns via University and International Office social media, etc.). **** /SZ MŠMT I.B/

SUB-GOAL 3: To enhance the attractiveness of the University for international students, academics and researchers

Since 2016, the University of Ostrava has regularly participated in a range of international exhibitions, fairs and conferences on international education, both in the Czech Republic and abroad;

it is a partner of the Czech portal *Study In the Czech Republic* as well as international companies (Study Portals, Keystone) acting as agents promoting university degree programmes across various countries and continents. In conjunction with the University's Marketing and Communication Centre, the International Office contributes to the international presentation of the University on various English-language websites. The expansion of the range of degree programmes taught in foreign languages, and the improvement of service provision for international students, has brought a 300% increase in the number of international students arriving at the University of Ostrava every year compared with the level in 2015; this number includes both visiting students and students enrolled in the University's degree programmes (degree students) from abroad, though the latter category is still relatively small.

In the upcoming period, our efforts will therefore focus on further expanding the range of degree programmes taught in foreign languages as well as on improving the system for recruiting international students, communicating with applicants and ensuring effective cooperation on service provision with faculties, the University's Student Club and other student organizations, and the University Advice and Counselling Centre. The attractiveness of the University as a student destination is closely connected with the city and the region, as well as with the opportunities available for international students to become integrated into the life of the university and the wider community; for this reason, we will intensify our cooperation with the relevant city and regional authorities as well as with organizations whose primary focus is on developing the international environment in Ostrava and the Moravian-Silesian Region.

Measures:

4. 3. 1: Support for the implementation of degree programmes taught in foreign languages and the recruitment of international students: improvement of cooperation with recruitment agents and international portals for student recruitment, survey of demand for degree programmes, support for preparatory courses in Czech as a foreign language for applicants, consultancy on setting up motivational scholarships, visa support etc. **** /SZ MŠMT II.A; IV.A/
4. 3. 2: Improvements in both the content and form of the University of Ostrava's international websites, increased use of social media to target potential international students. **** /SZ MŠMT IV.A; V.A/
4. 3. 3: Enhancement of promotional activities at international education events (exhibitions, fairs etc.). **** /SZ MŠMT IV.A/
4. 3. 4: Improvement of facilities and service provision for international students by involving Ostrava students in the Student Club's buddy programme and as ambassadors of the International Office, including cooperation with halls of residence staff; introduction of systems to monitor international students' satisfaction with service provision. **** /SZ MŠMT IV.B; IV.C/
4. 3. 5: Provision of a bilingual (Czech/English) working and studying environment, development of activities supporting the integration of international students and academics into the academic community: systematic preparation of all relevant documents in parallel Czech and English versions, expansion of adaptation courses, support for ongoing courses in Czech as a foreign language for international students (both visiting students and degree students from abroad), creation of programmes to familiarize students with the city and the region, preparation of a study guide for international students, etc. **** /SZ MŠMT IV.B; V.A/

- 4. 3. 6: Development of cooperation with schools, city and regional authorities/organizations to integrate international students, academics and researchers into the city and region and help them integrate with local residents. **** /SZ MŠMT IV.B; V.A/
- 4. 3. 7: Elaboration and implementation of a communication strategy for cooperation between the Rector's Office and the faculties on activities related to the recruitment of international students, their arrival at the University, and the provision of services to them throughout the entire duration of their studies at the University. **** /SZ MŠMT IV.A; V.A/
- 4. 3. 8: Support for an expanded range of paid short-term study programmes taught in foreign languages, including international summer schools. **** /SZ MŠMT II.A/
- 4. 3. 9: Preparation and implementation of a strategy and web portal for communication with international graduates of degree programmes and international visiting students (including graduates of short-term study programmes), including careers advice provision. **** /SZ MŠMT IV.C/

PRIORITY 5: PEOPLE, FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY

The University of Ostrava's main aim in its strategic management and design of internal administrative processes is to achieve solutions by applying smart, modern, innovative and novel approaches **with an emphasis on reducing bureaucratic burdens**, especially for academics and researchers, **high-quality strategic decision-making** and management at a University level, and the design of administrative processes **making increased use of information and communication technologies** in order to achieve **fully digitalized administration** as far as possible within the current legislative framework, thus creating modern, high-quality infrastructure.

During the past five years, the University has succeeded in securing substantial levels of funding to create new University facilities and modernize existing facilities, to improve and professionalize the provision of many services to faculties on a centralized (University-level) basis, to establish a basic framework for the development of human resources management and evaluation (reflected in the receipt of the HR Excellent in Research Award), and to continue in the digitalization of various spheres of activity. However, despite this progress, there still remain weak areas in the University's infrastructure, its employee motivation systems, and its administrative and management processes; in the upcoming period, the University will focus on addressing these weaknesses. Among them are the **incomplete employee evaluation process**, the need to **review funding tools** as part of the **distribution of University funds** in order to better target **strategic planning** in each affected unit of the University, the **insufficient user-friendliness of the University's information systems** and their **inadequate level of security in the context of their resilience against cyber-attack**, the **low effectiveness of services related to construction projects**, the **lack of unified human resources management processes** (leading to the risk of incurring sanctions from funding providers), the **incomplete system of University-level courses developing professional expertise** and competencies among employees, the inadequacy of motivational tools for staff career development, the **insufficient emphasis on eco-friendly operations**, and the **inadequacy of some elements of University infrastructure** with regard to the need for modern, high-quality facilities for both students and staff.

In view of the above, we have defined the following five sub-goals:

- Sub-goal 1: **To support the development of a motivational environment for staff and to improve services to staff**
- Sub-goal 2: **To improve the quality of the University's strategic management via funding tools**
- Sub-goal 3: **To manage and operate the University in line with the principles of social responsibility (especially with regard to the environment)**
- Sub-goal 4: **To improve and modernize infrastructure facilitating the further development of the University**
- Sub-goal 5: **To ensure that information systems are secure and user-friendly in order to boost the efficiency of all activities at the University**

We will monitor our progress on achieving all these sub-goals using the following **indicators (to be achieved by 2025)**:

- 100% of employees will undergo long-term evaluation in accordance with the University's Career Regulations.
- 80% of employees will have the opinion that their participation in activities to enhance their professional skills is adequately reflected in their employee evaluation.
- 80% of employees will be satisfied with how the University provides information about the range of educational activities available for the enhancement of their professional skills.
- 50% of academic and research staff will participate in international activities for their career development and growth.
- 100% of newly recruited employees will be allocated a mentor to help them during their initial adaptation period.
- 90% of employees will be satisfied with how the University enables them to maintain an appropriate work/life balance.
- 90% of employees will be satisfied with the mediation tools that the University offers them for cases of disputes and conflict situations.
- 90% of employees will hold the opinion that the University offers them adequate non-financial benefits.
- 80% of employees will hold the opinion that the University takes into consideration the specific features of their particular specialization/field as part of their employee evaluation.
- 100% of newly recruited employees will undergo cyber-security training.
- 100% of newly recruited management staff will undergo the appropriate management training.
- The University will have a concept for reducing the environmental impacts of its activities.
- The University will fund 20 student or employee mini-projects/activities focusing on reducing the environmental impacts of its activities.
- 4 new electronic/digitalized administrative systems will be created.
- There will be a 20% reduction in the number of internal incidents threatening the University's cyber-security.
- 100% of the constituent parts of the University will have a plan for the modernization of their investment assets.

Responsible for implementing and coordinating this priority:

- Bursar, Manager of the Rector's Office, Head of the Information Technology Centre, Director of the University Library

Funding sources:

IP 2021/PPSŘ 2022+, CRP, OP and other EU sources, ProgFin, internal funding

SUB-GOAL 1: To support the development of a motivational environment for staff and to improve services to staff

In the previous period, the University of Ostrava focused primarily on building systems enabling it to improve its human resources management activities. These involved the creation of systems for employee evaluation (both for academic and non-academic staff) and the preparation of new systems for employee education/training and recruitment. In the upcoming period, these systems must move into the implementation phase, and the University must focus on ensuring that they maximize the potential of human resources and create a motivational environment.

Measures:

- 5. .1 1: Expansion of the system of adaptation plans for newly recruited employees (or for employees who move to a different position or move up to a management position) across the entire University. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D/
- 5. 1. 2: Support for conflict mediation tools and the prevention and elimination of inappropriate behaviour among employees (e.g. by creating the position of an employee ombudsman, introducing regular staff surveys on discrimination, gender issues and academic integrity, creating methodological guidelines for solving disputes and dealing with inappropriate behaviour, etc.). **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D/
- 5. 1. 3: Support for tools facilitating the recruitment of new employees with experience outside the University of Ostrava when filling academic/research vacancies, support and motivation of employees with experience of working at other institutions (especially abroad). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.C; 5.D/
- 5. 1. 4: Support for career growth programmes targeted at academic staff (e.g. more precise rules for the provision of sabbaticals, the introduction of internal grants for staff applying for sabbaticals) and non-academic staff (e.g. the introduction of rules governing the acquisition of new qualifications) in accordance with the University's strategic goals. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D/
- 5. 1. 5: Support for tools enabling employees to maintain a good work/life balance (e.g. support for children's groups, home working, shared positions). **** /SZ MŠMT 2.C; 5.D/
- 5. 1. 6: Support for a University-wide system providing internal training/education for staff (especially focusing on pedagogical, IT, management and language competencies), incorporation of this system into the system of career development and employee evaluation. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.A; 5.D/
- 5. 1. 7: Support for systematic employee evaluation and its use in identifying and supporting potential in staff (training, mentoring, sharing good practice). **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D/

SUB-GOAL 2: To improve the quality of the University's strategic management via funding tools

One of the most effective tools to support the University's ongoing strategic development (and the development of its constituent parts) is the provision of financial motivation. The University intends to make greater use of financial tools – not only when distributing funds for education and scholarly/creative activities, but also by creating specific grant schemes to support the University's key development priorities.

Measures:

- 5. 2. 1: Modification of the methodology for allocating funds to education/training activities in order to take in consideration changing student numbers, adjustment of budgetary rules to make funding provision conditional upon the fulfilment of selected qualitative and quantitative parameters in accordance with the University of Ostrava's Strategic Plan. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B; II.7/
- 5. 2. 2: Modification of the methodology for the distribution of institutional funding (DKRVO – Long-Term Conceptual Development of Research Institutions) to incorporate increased emphasis on strategic management of scholarly/creative activities in accordance with

- the M17+ assessment system (e.g. provision of contracted funding to be dependent on the fulfilment of selected qualitative and quantitative parameters). **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B/
5. 2. 3: Systematic creation and utilization of funding to support the strategic development of the University and its constituent parts, optimization of the use of University funding (compilation of a plan for spending University/faculty funding). **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B/
5. 2. 4: Improved provision of information to improve familiarity with the methodology governing the internal allocation of funding, especially for middle management positions (heads of departments, centres, institutes) by incorporating information provision into the system of compulsory training for management staff. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B; 5.D/
5. 2. 5: Systematic use of available data resources for the strategic management and allocation of funding by the University and its constituent parts, including national and international benchmarking. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B/
5. 2. 6: Creation of specifically targeted internal grant schemes as a strategic development tool. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B/
5. 2. 7: Provision of University-wide training to enhance competencies among management staff (including research team leaders), focusing on the management of people, research and artistic activities. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D/

SUB-GOAL 3: To manage and operate the University in line with the principles of social responsibility (especially with regard to the environment)

By their very nature, universities and social responsibility go hand in hand; they are inextricable from each other. In the upcoming period, the University of Ostrava intends to accentuate its social responsibility by placing stronger emphasis on the ecological and social aspects of its operations and management.

Measures:

5. 3. 1: Implementation of the principles of responsible procurement (especially with regard to environmental and social aspects) when involved in public procurement activities – support for environmentally sustainable solutions, preference for contracting services from socially responsible companies, purchase of fair trade products). **** /SZ MŠMT II.15/
5. 3. 2: Systematic waste recycling (reduction in volumes of unrecycled waste), support for plastic-free solutions. **** /SZ MŠMT II.15/
5. 3. 3: Increased proportion of energy to be sourced from renewable resources. /SZ MŠMT II.15/
5. 3. 4: Analysis of the energy demands of University operations (in terms of the use of basic types of energy), improvements in energy efficiency (both buildings and operational processes). **** /SZ MŠMT II.15/
5. 3. 5: Internal grant support for mini-projects with a positive impact on ecological aspects of operations. **** /SZ MŠMT II.15/
5. 3. 6: Support for activities targeting students and staff to raise awareness of the need for environmentally sustainable, socially responsible behaviour. **** /SZ MŠMT II.12; II.15/

- 5. 3. 7: Incorporation of issues related to environmentally and socially responsible operations and processes into the system of compulsory staff training provision. **** /SZ MŠMT II.15/
- 5. 3. 8: Systematic support for selected clean mobility measures. **** /SZ MŠMT II.15/
- 5. 3. 9: Preparations for an ecological audit of the University. **** /SZ MŠMT II.15/
- 5. 3. 10: Systematic implementation of principles of social responsibility and preference for eco-friendly solutions across all University activities. **** /SZ MŠMT II.15/

SUB-GOAL 4: To improve and modernize infrastructure facilitating the further development of the University

High-quality modern infrastructure is an essential requirement for the development of all universities. At present, the University of Ostrava operates in a total 37 buildings at various locations throughout the city. Two new buildings are currently under construction; these will provide essential facilities for the development of artistic and sports-related activities. It is also necessary to complete the modernization of three buildings in the city centre which are on the verge of becoming inoperable, as well as completing currently ongoing reconstruction projects which will provide modern teaching facilities (practice hospital, technical training facilities). For future development, it will be important to make use of funding from new operational programmes in order to finance substantial new research infrastructure projects. All the investment projects outlined below are integrated with other aspects of this Strategic Plan, especially those aspects connected with education provision and scholarly/creative activities.

Measures:

- 5. 4. 1: Modification of the University of Ostrava's Site Development Plan in accordance with the regularly updated Strategy for the Modernization and Development of University Facilities. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B/
- 5. 4. 2: Completion of the reconstruction and modernization of building A (Faculty of Science). /SZ MŠMT /SZ MŠMT 1.E/
- 5. 4. 3: Completion of the reconstruction and modernization of building E (Faculty of Arts). /SZ MŠMT 1.E/
- 5. 4. 4: Procurement of funding for the reconstruction of buildings D and DM (Faculty of Arts), launch of reconstruction work (construction permit already issued). /SZ MŠMT 1.E/
- 5. 4. 5: Launch of additional planned construction work at the Faculty of Education in Mariánské Hory to provide technical education/training facilities. /SZ MŠMT 1.E/
- 5. 4. 6: Completion of the new Faculty of Fine Arts and Music complex at Černá Louka. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.E; II.A/
- 5. 4. 7: Completion of the new Behavioural Health Centre complex at Černá Louka (Faculty of Education). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.E; II.9/
- 5. 4. 8: Completion of reconstruction work at the Faculty of Medicine – practice hospital, modernization of the Dean's Office. /SZ MŠMT 1.E; II.A/

- 5. 4. 9: Preparations for the construction of facilities for the LERCO centre at the Faculty of Medicine site in Zábřeh and the Faculty of Science site in Hladnov (Hladnov) in order to procure external funding. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.E; 3.C; 4.B; 4.D; 4.E/
- 5. 4. 10: Reconstruction and modernization of the Hladnov halls of residence (provided that external funding is secured, particularly programme funding from the Ministry of Education). **** /SZ MŠMT II.1/ II.2/ IV.B/
- 5. 4. 11: Reconstruction of the Rector's Office (especially the loft areas), provided that external funding is secured. **** /SZ MŠMT 6.C/
- 5. 4. 12: Reconstruction of building P (Faculty of Fine Arts and Music), provided that external funding is secured. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.E/
- 5. 4. 13: Continued modernization of University premises to ensure barrier-free access. **** /SZ MŠMT II.2/
- 5. 4. 14: Continued modernization of student and staff facilities, particularly with a view to new requirements for online/distance teaching and the ongoing improvement of the studying and working environment as well as the need for better energy efficiency. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.E; 2.A; 2.B; II.3/
- 5. 4. 15: Modernization of technical equipment and other facilities to improve education, scholarly/creative activities and the third role of the University. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.A; 1.E; 2.A; 2.B/

SUB-GOAL 5: To ensure that information systems are secure and user-friendly in order to boost the efficiency of all activities at the University

An important prerequisite for the ongoing development of the University is the reduction of the administrative burden imposed on academic and research staff, combined with the provision of more effective support services. In the previous period, the University has sought to achieve improvements in this area by professionalizing administrative services – and work in this direction will continue in the future. It is essential to foster the development of an administrative culture that is professional, proactive, positive, helpful and solutions-oriented, combined with the ongoing review of the quality of administrative provision (centralization versus decentralization). However, one of the most important tools in this area – and one which has a substantial impact on administrative burdens and the efficiency of administrative processes – is the existence of high-quality, secure information systems, as well as an advanced level of digitalization. For this reason, the University intends to develop and maximize its use of information and communication infrastructures, providing all users with integrated, secure and intuitive information systems for all their activities. Modern information and communication technologies will be systematically used in order to reduce administrative burdens on both staff and students, and this will also play a major role in overcoming the disadvantages caused by the fact that the University's premises are scattered across various locations throughout the city.

Measures:

- 5. 5. 1: Improvement and expansion of centrally provided support services (e.g. services related to investments in reconstruction and new construction work, services related to

building maintenance, HR services, services provided to students with specific needs, services related to lifelong learning including the U3A). **** /SZ MŠMT 6.C/

- 5. 5. 2: Continuing professionalization of service provision by completing the system of regular compulsory training for management and administrative staff. **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D/
- 5. 5. 3: Creation of a funding system (and provision of funding) to support innovations in administrative processes leading to a reduction in bureaucratic burdens. **** /SZ MŠMT 6.A/
- 5. 5. 4: Implementation of a helpdesk system for additional services provided on a University-wide basis. /SZ MŠMT /6.A; 6.C/
- 5. 5. 5: Completion of the transition to Microsoft services and full exploitation of their potential, especially in the digitalization of various types of activity and internal communication, development of other technology platforms as supplementary/backup solutions besides the Microsoft services (e.g. Google Suite, CESNET). **** /SZ MŠMT 6.A/
- 5. 5. 6: Implementation of an identity administration system to improve efficiency in managing user data and user access rights to individual information systems; this will facilitate the further digitalization of administrative processes. **** /SZ MŠMT 6.A/
- 5. 5. 7: Continuing digitalization of administrative processes, including the development of related infrastructure (e.g. processes related to employee leave and vacations, attendance, document circulation for draft contracts and other legal documents, records of students with specific needs and other clients of the University Advice and Counselling Centre, wide-ranging use of electronic signatures in accordance with eIDAS, digitalization of publication/research output records). **** /SZ MŠMT 6.A/
- 5. 5. 8: Expanded use of CRM systems to improve the efficiency of communication and cooperation with applicants, graduates and University partners. **** /S ZMŠMT 6.A; II.1/
- 5. 5. 9: Use of a CMS (content management system) to administer the University's web presentations. **** /SZ MŠMT 6.A/
- 5. 5. 10: Modernization of the library information system (in connection with the planned termination of support for the Aleph system) in order to integrate new functions (e.g. administration of e-resources, digital repository), continuing digitalization of operations at the library and study rooms, digitalization of library stocks and expansion of self-service operations. **** /SZ MŠMT 6.A/
- 5. 5. 11: Digitalization and modernization of the range of products and services offered by the University. **** /SZ MŠMT 6.A/
- 5. 5. 12: Modernization of the University's current information systems to provide greater user comfort, including the introduction of user-friendly platforms (including mobile apps). **** /SZ MŠMT 6.A; II.2/
- 5. 5. 13: Replacement and improvement of data cable and wi-fi connections, especially for purposes of online teaching. **** /SZ MŠMT 1.E; 2.A/
- 5. 5. 14: Improved security in the University's information systems – to be achieved by means of software, technical and organizational solutions, closer collaboration with the University's Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT), etc. Compliance with legal requirements for cyber-security in connection with key University information systems (especially ISMS, cyber-security legislation, GDPR). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.E; 2.A/

- 5. 5. 15: Implementation of Single Digital Gateway principles in communication with applicants, students, employees and the public. /SZ MŠMT 6.A/
- 5. 5. 16: Standardization and increased efficiency in the submission and coordination of requirements for the modification and development of the University's information and communication systems, including a greater role for the information systems coordinator and team as well as the Information Technology Centre (ITC) Council, continuing standardization of ITC services to enable better monitoring of the quality and efficiency of service provision (implementing selected principles of IT system management and development in line with ITIL standards, including service quality measurement). **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B/
- 5. 5. 17: Improved efficiency in the management and updating/replacement of hardware and software platforms of key importance for the basic operations of the University (creation of an update/replacement plan, including thorough integration into planned site reconstructions and new building projects, plus actively seeking external funding sources). **** /SZ MŠMT 5.B/
- 5. 5. 18: Increase in users' ability to effectively and securely use all functions of IT systems via a system of training resources (especially in online/distance learning forms). **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D/

PRIORITY 6: COMMUNICATION AS THE BASIS FOR COOPERATION

In the past five years, the University has succeeded in implementing several systemic elements which have enabled it **to provide more comprehensive information to staff and students about events and developments at the University and to foster a stronger sense of belonging to the University's community**. These include a regular newsletter, the online magazine OU@LIVE, and annual meeting events for all University employees. However, some of these systemic elements have only begun to be used in the past few months. This is due primarily to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to substantially wider use of Microsoft 365 tools; this platform offers strong future potential as a basis for internal University communication channels and tools for internal discussion and teamwork. For this reason, in the upcoming period we intend to exploit this unprecedented boom in the use of **online communication tools** in order to achieve **further improvements in internal communication, discussion and information provision**. However, online communication cannot fully replace face-to-face communication tools, which have proved their indispensable value especially in cementing a strong sense of community, as they enable students and staff from all the different faculties to meet in person. In order **to build a sense of community and belonging throughout the University**, and in order to foster a sense of **identification with the University's mission**, these meetings are irreplaceable (and indeed they are also of crucial importance for the integration of international students and staff into the University community). For this reason, in the upcoming period we also intend to focus on achieving improvements in this area.

From the perspective of external communication, over the past five years the University has achieved **substantial improvements in the quality of its external presentations, mainly thanks to the professionalization of services in the area of external relations and marketing on a University-wide basis**, more intense cooperation and coordination involving the individual constituent parts of the University, **the introduction of a single unified visual style** as part of an emphasis on **the importance of external presentation for the University as a whole**, and a focus on **the University's regional roots as well as its mission within the region**. In the upcoming period, it will be necessary to continue along this path, and to focus particularly on certain aspects which have not yet been fully addressed: these include **more professional presentation of the University's key activities especially in the field of research and the arts** – both on the University level and at the level of the individual faculties and other constituent parts, with the substantial involvement of academics and researchers themselves. We will also focus on **strengthening our communication with key external target groups, especially graduates**, in order to involve them more closely in life at the University.

However, our most important goal within this priority area during the upcoming years is to ensure that both our internal and external communications are positive and friendly.

In view of the above, we have defined the following two sub-goals in the area of communication:

Sub-goal 1: **To improve internal communication as a tool to strengthen the sense of belonging to the University's community**

Sub-goal 2: **To improve external communication and presentation of the University as a gateway into society as a whole**

We will monitor our progress on achieving these sub-goals using the following **indicators (to be achieved by 2025)**:

- A 10% increase in employees' satisfaction with the University's internal communication.
- A 10% increase in the proportion of employees who consider the University a good employer with a positive and friendly working environment.
- A 10% increase in the proportion of employees who think that the University acknowledges and appreciates good work and excellent results.
- A 10% increase in the net promoter score.
- Introduction of online/virtual forms of presentation for the University.
- 20% of graduates from each year will register in the newly created Graduate Portal.

Responsible for implementing and coordinating this priority:

- Manager of the Rector's Office

Funding sources:

IP 2021/PPSŘ 2022+, CRP, OP and other EU sources, city and regional subsidies, internal funding

SUB-GOAL 1: To improve internal communication as a tool to strengthen the sense of belonging to the University's community

Measures:

6. 1. 1: Support for friendly and positive internal communication as standard practice (definition of standards for internal communication, methodological materials, training, manuals, dissemination of good practice). **** /SZ MŠMT 5.D; 6.C/; II.1; II.2/
6. 1. 2: Strengthening of internal communication via online communication, discussion and teamworking tools as part of the Microsoft 365 platform (creation of templates for internal websites via Sharepoint for presenting University/faculty services, discussion platforms etc.). **** /SZ MŠMT 6.A; 6.C/
6. 1. 3: Increased activities and opportunities (e.g. culture, sport, education/entertainment) for informal meetings of students and staff (including their children) spanning all the University's constituent parts (ideally in combination with activities related to social responsibility). **** /SZ MŠMT II.3; II.8; II.12/
6. 1. 4: Use of the Open Day concept as a channel for mutual communication regarding the activities of different constituent parts of the University (e.g. for newly recruited staff and newly admitted students). **** /SZ MŠMT II.3/
6. 1. 5: Improvements to the University's internal newsletter, including a more tailored approach to target groups. **** /SZ MŠMT II.3/
6. 1. 6: Increased awareness and appreciation of excellent work and achievements by staff, students and graduates, as communicated internally within the University (preparation of special themed sections in OU@live etc.). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.B; 2.B; II.3/
6. 1. 7: Use of the events marking 30 years of the University as an opportunity to strengthen the sense of belonging to the University community. /SZ MŠMT II.3/

SUB-GOAL 2: To improve external communication and presentation of the University as a gateway into society as a whole

Measures:

6. 2. 1: Modification of the University's single unified visual style and its systematic use in external presentations (greater emphasis on online platforms – new templates, training in how to use the style). **** /SZ MŠMT 1.A; II.3/
6. 2. 2: Use of the presentational potential offered by University-branded items (taking into consideration the social and ecological aspects of their production). /SZ MŠMT II.3; II.15/
6. 2. 3: Use of the presentational potential offered by the University shop (as a venue for authors' readings, discussion meetings, educational talks – integration with activities as part of Priority 3 – A university for the benefit of society). **** /SZ MŠMT II.12/
6. 2. 4: Expansion of the University's network of strategic partnerships with selected media outlets, particularly in order to popularize and raise public awareness of research and the arts (e.g. exclusive access to information, systematic cooperation in the development of new forms of media content, provision of expert consultancy). **** /SZ MŠMT IV.C; II.11/
6. 2. 5: Development of the potential offered by the University's video studio in order to popularize and raise public awareness of research and the arts. **** /SZ MŠMT II.11/
6. 2. 6: Use of the events marking 30 years of the University as a platform to strengthen existing collaboration or establish new collaboration with key external target groups. /SZ MŠMT II.3/
6. 2. 7: Development of a database of academic/research staff for purposes of expert statements and opinions in the media (including systematic media training for employees). **** /SZ MŠMT II.12/
6. 2. 8: Development of online/virtual forms of external presentation and communication (online open days, applicant hotline, chat app, etc.). **** /SZ MŠMT II.1; II.2/
6. 2. 9: Expansion of collaboration with University graduates, creation of a graduate club, introduction of a benefit programme for graduates, use of graduates as mentors for current students. **** /SZ MŠMT II.3/

SZ MŠMT = Strategic plan of the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic