



**National Accreditation Bureau
for Higher Education**

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2020 Annual Report

I. Introduction

Legal basis

The National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (hereinafter “NAB”) was established on 1 September 2016 by the Act No. 137/2016 Coll. that amended the Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Some Other Acts (Higher Education Act). The mandate of NAB is stipulated particularly in its Part Nine and further by the Statute of NAB. On 4 September 2018, the Government of the Czech Republic approved a new Statute of NAB by its Resolution No. 568. It revised and amended some provisions dealing mainly with the Pool of Evaluators and the operation of evaluation committees.

According to Section 83 (2) h) of the Higher Education Act and Article 24 of the Statute, NAB releases its annual report every year. This annual report covers the period between 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020.

Mandate of NAB

In accordance with the Higher Education Act, NAB decides on accreditations of degree programmes, institutional accreditations of higher education institutions (hereinafter “HEIs”) and accreditations of habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors. It also carries out external evaluations of HEIs’ educational, creative and related activities, performs audits of compliance with legal regulations in carrying out accredited activities, and subsequently publishes the results of the evaluations. It is also responsible for issuing binding standpoints to determination of a type of a HEI. Furthermore, NAB issues standpoints to granting state approval to legal entities wishing to operate as private HEIs, and provides the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (hereinafter “MEYS”) with standpoints to granting domestic permits/authorisations to non-European HEIs and their branches. Last but not least, NAB renders standpoints to matters related to higher education (hereinafter “HE”) requested by the Minister.

II. Structure of NAB

Board of NAB

The executive body of NAB is the 15-member Board that consists of a Chair, two Vice-Chairs and twelve other members. Five members of the Board including the Chair are appointed from persons nominated by MEYS, other central bodies of the state administration, professional and employers' organisations, or by other bodies involved in educational and creative activities. Ten members of the Board, including a student member, are appointed by the Government from persons proposed by the representative bodies of HEIs. The Board members are appointed for a period of six years with the exception of the student member who is appointed for a period of two years. They may be appointed for a maximum of two terms.

In 2020, several changes took place in the composition of the Board. With effect from 2 March 2020, the Vice-Chair JUDr. Ivan Barančík, PhD., became its Chair, with a term of office until 31 August 2022.

In August 2020, the following members of the Board were appointed by the Government Resolution No. 737/2020 for the second term of office with effect from 1 September 2020: prof. RNDr. Libor Grubhoffer, CSc., and prof. RNDr. Eva Táborská, CSc. (until 31 August 2026) and Mgr. Bc. Michal Zima (until 31 August 2022). The then member Radek Špicar, M.Phil., was appointed Vice-Chair of the Board with a term of office until 31 August 2026. The following members of the Board were appointed for the first term as of the same date: prof. JUDr. Hana Marková, CSc., and prof. PhDr. Martin Wihoda, Ph.D. (until 31 August 2026) and plk. gšt. prof. Ing. Stanislav Florus, CSc. (until 31 August 2022). On 28 August 2020, plk. gšt. prof. Ing. Stanislav Florus, CSc., resigned as a member of the Board.

On 14 October 2020, prof. RNDr. Ivan Netuka, DrSc., a member of the Board since 1 September 2016, passed away.

By the Government Resolution No. 1357/2020 of 21 December 2020, prof. RNDr. Viktor Beneš, DrSc., was appointed for the first term until 31 August 2024 and prof. Ing. Martin Macko, CSc., also for the first term until 31 August 2022.

Composition of the Board as of 31 December 2020:

JUDr. Ivan Barančík, Ph.D. – Chair
RNDr. Tomáš Jelínek – Vice-Chair
Radek Špicar, M.Phil. – Vice-Chair
prof. RNDr. Viktor Beneš, DrSc.
prof. RNDr. Libor Grubhoffer, CSc.
prof. Ing. Martin Macko, CSc.
prof. JUDr. Hana Marková, CSc.
doc. MgA. Ivo Mathé
prof. Ing. Petr Noskievič, CSc.
doc. Ing. Tomáš Pavelka, Ph.D.
prof. Ing. Jaroslav Petr, DrSc.
prof. PhDr. Eva Šmelová, Ph.D.
prof. RNDr. Eva Táborská, CSc.
prof. PhDr. Martin Wihoda, Ph.D.
Mgr. Bc. Michal Zima

Although, according to the Higher Education Act, the Board consists of 15 members, for almost the entire period of 2020 it had a reduced number of members:

- from 1 January to 14 October 2020: 14 members,
- from 15 October to 20 December 2020: 13 members.

Between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2020, the Board held eleven regular meetings and one extraordinary meeting.

Appeals Committee

The main task of the Appeals Committee of NAB is to decide on appeals against the Board's decisions in administrative proceedings. Its members are appointed by the Government from persons with a higher education degree in Law; three of them are appointed by the Government on the proposal of the representative bodies of HEIs.

On 17 August 2020, JUDr. Stanislav Kadečka, Ph.D., who had been a member of the Appeals Committee from 12 September 2016, passed away.

Composition of the Appeals Committee as of 31 December 2020:

prof. JUDr. Josef Bejček, CSc.
prof. JUDr. Aleš Gerloch, CSc.
prof. JUDr. Milana Hrušáková, CSc.
JUDr. Ing. Josef Staša, CSc.

Although, according to the Higher Education Act, the Appeals Committee of NAB consists of 5 members, it had a reduced number of members from August 2020:

- from 18 August to 31 December 2020: 4 members.

In the reporting period, the Appeals Committee duly convened twice.

Office of NAB

As stipulated by the Higher Education Act, MEYS secures the operation of NAB materially and financially. Tasks related to professional, administrative and technical support of the NAB activities are carried out by the Office of NAB (hereinafter "the Office"), which is a department of MEYS – a unit falling directly under the Minister.

Pool of Evaluators

In accordance with the Higher Education Act, NAB administers a Pool of Evaluators as a database of persons eligible to be appointed to evaluation committees. Evaluation committees are advisory bodies of NAB; according to the Statute, the Chair appoints them for the preparation of standpoints in individual administrative proceedings, to evaluate applications for state approval to operate as a private HEI and for the preparation of reports on external evaluation of HEIs. The Pool of Evaluators is divided according to fields of study stipulated by the Government Regulation No. 275/2016 Coll., On Fields of Study in Higher Education.

In 2020, NAB launched two calls for nominations of persons to be included in the Pool of Evaluators. 67 new evaluators were enrolled and 11 persons removed from the Pool at their own request. In addition, 20 students were removed because of their graduation. The total number of enrollments in the Pool of Evaluators as of 31 December 2020 was 1,535 persons. Some of them are enrolled in several fields of study.

Field of study*	Number of evaluators as of 31/12/2019	Number of evaluators as of 31/12/2020
Architecture and Urbanism	37	43
Security Sector Fields	57	59
Biology, Ecology, and Environmental Studies	60	61
Transportation Sciences	39	39
Economic Disciplines	97	98
Electrical Engineering	50	53
Energetics	47	51
Pharmacy	34	38
Philology	62	64
Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Theology	41	41
Physics	47	47
History	57	63
Chemistry	52	56
Informatics	57	62
Cybernetics	40	44
Forestry and Wood Sciences	47	48
Mathematics	49	50
Media and Communication Studies	27	31
Non-teaching Pedagogy	53	53
Political Sciences	43	48
Food Science	43	44
Law	52	60
Psychology	41	45
Social Work	33	34
Sociology	37	38
Civil Engineering	44	51
Mechanical Engineering, Technology and Materials	60	59
Physical Education and Sport; Kinanthropology	34	33
Mining and Mineral Processing	34	34
Pedagogy	91	92
Art	64	68
Art and Culture Sciences	41	44
Earth Science	56	56
Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Hygiene	32	32
General Medicine and Dentistry	73	73
Healthcare Fields	60	66
Agriculture	58	57
Total	1849	1935

* In the order stipulated by the Higher Education Act (alphabetical order in Czech)

III. Activities of NAB

Modification of internal regulations

At its meeting in May 2020, the Board adopted the **Rules of Procedure of NAB's Permanent Committees on Evaluation Methodology**. These evaluation committees, established for respective fields of study in accordance with the Government Regulation No. 275/2016 Coll., On Fields of Study in Higher Education, are advisory bodies to the Board aiming at the internal evaluation of NAB, assessments of evaluation committees' experience and a development of their activities' methodology. The Board has established them in order to transfer experience between evaluators and the Board, as well as to unify administrative practice in individual fields of study.

Preparation of methodical and conceptual documents

In response to the state of emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, NAB had been reporting on its activities and its position on the use of distance learning tools during the emergency since its beginning in spring 2020. In August 2020, the Board approved the **Methodological Guideline of NAB on the Use of Distance Learning Tools in Full-Time and Combined Studies in the Academic Year 2020/2021**, which it had previously discussed with the representative bodies of HEIs and MEYS. This document responded to the HEIs' need to provide education in exceptional circumstances. In the guideline, the Board defined principles of using distance learning tools in those cases where objective external circumstances do not allow a degree programme to be carried out in accordance with the accreditation granted for full-time or combined form of study.

Internal evaluation

In accordance with the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Statute of NAB and the Framework for Internal Quality Assurance and Evaluation of NAB's activities, NAB prepared an **Update to the Internal Evaluation Report of NAB 2016-2019 for the year 2020**. The Board had entrusted its preparation to three selected members. The update assessed the steps taken by NAB in the past year in response to the recommendations formulated in the Report. As a follow-up to this document, the Board also adopted a specific timetable for the implementation of actions on individual recommendations; the task of its coordination was assigned to the NAB's Chair and Vice-Chairs.

Training of evaluators

The training did not take place in 2020, as the Pool of Evaluators was expanded only on a small scale at that time and a core of evaluators had been created with sufficient practical experience and orientation in the issue of assessing the quality of HEIs and degree programmes. Nevertheless, NAB focused its attention on further enhancing the capacities of current evaluators and sharing previous experience from their work in evaluation committees. To this end, the permanent committees on evaluation methodology were established.

Information provision under the Act No. 106/1999 Coll., On Free Access to Information

Pursuant to Section 18 of the Act No. 106/1999 Coll., On Free Access to Information, NAB, as an obliged entity, includes a report on its activities in regard to providing information as

part of the 2020 Annual Report. According to Article 38 (3) of the Statute, the duties of the obliged entity are delegated to the Director of the Office.

- Number of submitted requests for information: 3
- Number of issued refusal decisions: 0
- Number of submitted appeals against a decision: 0
- Copies of substantial parts of a court judgment reviewing the legality of the obliged entity's decision to refuse the request for information: none
- List of exclusive licenses granted, including justification of the need for exclusive license: none
- Number of complaints submitted on the basis of Section 16a, reasons for submitting them and a brief description of the respective resolution: 0

Further information related to the application of the Act No. 106/1999 Coll.: In accordance with its Section 5 (3), the obliged entity publishes the provided information on its official notice board.

Other activities

The Chair, the Vice-Chairs and other members of the Board held meetings with **members of the representative bodies of HEIs** (Czech Rectors Conference, Council of HEIs), **representatives of MEYS and other partners**. Intensive communication took place, beside other things, on the impact of emergency measures related to the coronavirus pandemic on HEIs. Representatives of NAB also participated in **discussions on the draft amendment to the Higher Education Act**, acted as members of working groups to **prepare strategic documents in the area of HE**, and engaged in thematic seminars focused on accreditation and quality assurance in HE. NAB was also represented in discussing the intention of MEYS to prepare a **methodology for carrying out educational activities in the distance form**.

Audits of compliance with legal provisions

In 2020, NAB completed audits of compliance with legal provisions at University of Ostrava, The Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice, Anglo-American University, The Czech University of Life Sciences Prague and VSB - Technical University of Ostrava. Given the diverse nature of the findings resulting from the audits, it can be generally stated that serious deficiencies were found in the functionality of the internal quality assurance systems, admission procedures (especially in proving the general recognition of the equivalence or validity of a foreign certificate of secondary education in the Czech Republic), and provision of a degree programme with its area of study after the expiry of the accreditation. The audits also found violations of the Higher Education Act in connection with lifelong learning, non-fulfillment of the information obligation towards NAB, shortcomings in keeping study documentation and incorrect keeping of data in the student register.

External evaluations of educational, creative and related activities

In 2020, the Board launched an external evaluation of educational, creative and related activities of the Film and Television School (FAMU) of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. External evaluations of the University of Economics in Prague and Palacký University in Olomouc were also launched in connection with the institutional accreditation granted to these universities. The external evaluation of the University of Economics in Prague was completed in 2020; the other mentioned evaluations were not completed in the given period.

The external evaluations of Jan Amos Komenský University Prague and the College of Regional Development and Banking Institute – AMBIS, a.s., which started in 2019, were not completed in the given period.

Administrative proceedings

Application-based administrative proceedings

a) Accreditations of degree programmes:

In the reporting period from 1 January to 31 December 2020, NAB received **354** applications for accreditation of degree programmes.

In the given period, it conducted administrative proceedings on the following number of the applications. The figures relate to the number of degree programmes that were applied for. They include applications submitted to NAB prior to the start of the reporting period in the cases when NAB conducted related administrative proceedings in that period.

Applications¹	Accreditation granted	Accreditation denied	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished as of 31/12/2020	Total
Bachelor	173 260	0 0	15 30	77 115	265 405
Short-Master	195 181	1 1	19 17	62 101	277 300
Long-Master	7 6	0 0	1 4	2 8	10 18
Doctoral	105 114	0 0	12 37	34 78	151 229
Cooperation with another legal entity	19 26	0 0	1 14	5 11	25 51
Total	499 587	1 1	48 102	180 313	728 1003

Of this number, NAB granted accreditation to the following number of professionally oriented degree programmes:

Professionally oriented	Accreditation granted
Bachelor	67
Short Master	32
Long Master	0
Total	99

b) Accreditations of fields for habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors:

In the reporting period, NAB received **82** applications for accreditation of fields for habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors.

¹ Data for the reporting period are given in bold. Data for the previous period, i.e. 1 January – 31 December 2019, are given in plain text for comparison.

It conducted administrative proceedings on the following number of the applications. The figures relate to the number of fields that were applied for. They include applications submitted to NAB prior to the start of the reporting period in the cases when NAB conducted related administrative proceedings in that period.

Applications¹	Accreditation granted	Accreditation denied	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished as of 31/12/2020	Total
fields of habilitation procedure	79 207	0 0	1 3	16 56	96 266
fields of procedure for appointment of professors	66 182	1 3	3 3	20 49	90 237
Total	145 389	1 3	4 6	36 105	186 503

c) Institutional accreditations:

In the reporting period, NAB received **1** application for institutional accreditation and **1** application for extension of institutional accreditation.

In this period, it decided on the following number of applications. The figures relate to the number of HEIs that applied for institutional accreditation, the number of fields of study that were applied for and the number of types of degree programmes that were applied for within individual fields of study.

Applications for institutional accreditation¹	Accreditation granted	Accreditation extended	Accreditation denied (application rejected or narrowed)	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished as of 31/12/2020	Total
HEIs	1 7	0 1	0 1	0 0	2 1	3 10
fields of study	1 41	0 1	0 8	0 0	7 1	8 51
Bachelor type	1 40	0 1	0 8	0 0	7 1	8 50
Master type	1 37	0 1	0 12	0 0	7 1	8 51
Doctoral type	1 30	0 1	0 5	0 0	6 1	7 37

The Board took note of **983** degree programmes approved by HEIs under their institutional accreditations in the reporting period.

Administrative proceedings instigated by NAB

a) Proceedings towards revocation of accreditation:

In the reporting period, NAB conducted the following number of administrative proceedings towards revocation of accreditation of a degree programme. The figures relate to the number of degree programmes (or areas of study in the cases where the degree programme is divided into areas of study) that were subject of the proceedings towards revocation.

Proceedings¹	Accreditation revoked	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished as of 31/12/2020	Total
Proceedings towards revocation of accreditation	0 2	0 2	11 0	11 4

b) Proceedings towards restriction of accreditation:

In the reporting period, NAB conducted the following number of administrative proceedings towards restriction of accreditation of a degree programme. The figures relate to the number of degree programmes (or areas of study in the cases where the degree is divided into areas of study) that were subject of the proceedings towards restriction.

Proceedings¹	Accreditation restricted	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished as of 31/12/2020	Total
Proceedings towards restriction of accreditation	0 2	1 4	13 1	14 7

In the reporting period, NAB received the following number of requests to abolish a restriction of accreditation of a degree programme. The figures relate to the number of degree programmes (or areas of study in the cases where the degree programme is divided into areas of study) that were subject of the abolition request.

	Requests to abolish restriction where proceedings were not instigated	Proceedings instigated and restriction of accreditation abolished	Proceedings instigated and then terminated	Proceedings instigated and as of 31/12/2020 unfinished	Total
Proceedings towards abolition of restriction of accreditation	0 1	0 0	0 1	0 0	0 2

c) Proceedings towards suspension of accreditation:

In the reporting period, NAB conducted the following number of administrative proceedings towards suspension of accreditation of fields for habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors.

Proceedings ¹	Accreditation suspended	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished as of 31/12/2020	Total
Proceedings towards suspension	0 0	1 0	0 0	1 0

Standpoints

Standpoints to applications for state approval

In the period from 1 January to 31 December 2020, the Board received **1** application for state approval to operate as a private HEI. The examination of the application was not completed in 2020.

Standpoints to granting domestic permits/authorisations to non-European HEIs and their branches

From 1 January to 31 December 2020, the Board received for consideration **4** applications for the granting of domestic authorisation to operate as a branch of a non-European foreign HEI. The applications were submitted by 3 domestic entities, one of which submitted 2 separate applications in turn related to different non-European HEIs. 2 of these 3 domestic entities are private HEIs with state approval, the remaining one is another legal entity. These entities applied for domestic authorisation to carry out a total of 20 foreign degree programmes in the Czech Republic, of which 10 were Bachelor and 10 Short-Master ones. The degree programmes that were the subject of applications for domestic authorisation most often fell into the economic, IT, artistic, and media fields. The Board issued an affirmative standpoint to MEYS on the implementation of a total of 4 foreign Bachelor degree programmes for 2 different applicants. For the remaining 6 Bachelor and 10 Short-Master degree programmes, it issued a negative standpoint on their implementation in the Czech Republic.

This increase, compared to the previous two years with no received request, was partly due to the UK's exit from the EU. As a result, as of 1 January 2021, the foreign degree programmes of pertinent HEIs carried out in the Czech Republic were transferred from the regime of European HEIs (in accordance with Section 93a (2) of the Higher Education Act) to the regime of non-European HEIs (in accordance with Section 93a (3) of the Higher Education Act) and obliged to obtain a domestic permit. However, some of the examined applications also concerned branches of non-European HEIs from the USA.

Standpoints to determination of the type of a HEI

In the reporting period, the Board received **1** application for determination of the type of a HEI. Its examination was not completed in 2020.

Standpoints to follow-up reports and reports on changes

In 2020, the Board discussed **116** follow-up reports and their supplements related to degree programmes (or areas of study in the cases where the degree programme is divided into areas of study) and **4** follow-up reports / supplements related to the fields of habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors. These follow-up reports were requested by

NAB as part of its activities. In 2 cases, they were follow-up reports on the implementation of educational activities requested by the Accreditation Commission before the entry into force of the amendment to the Higher Education Act. The mechanism of submitting and discussing follow-up reports enables monitoring of the quality of degree programmes and fields of habilitation procedures and the procedures for appointment of professors in the course of their accreditations.

In 2020, the Board also discussed 7 follow-up reports related to institutional accreditations, which serve mainly to verify the implementation of the recommendations made to the HEI when granting the institutional accreditation.

In addition, the Board discussed 268 reports on changes in degree programmes (or areas of study where the degree programme is divided into areas of study) and 32 reports on changes in the field of habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors, which NAB received on the basis of information duty stipulated for HEIs by the Higher Education Act.

IV. International Cooperation

Membership in international associations

In 2020, NAB was an affiliate of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), which brings together accreditation agencies at the European level and acts as a partner for other European bodies in HE. The affiliate status in ENQA enables NAB to take part in its activities, seminars and other events as well as to benefit from opportunities to exchange good practice and experience with its member agencies. Staff members of the Office represented NAB at general assemblies of the association, which were held in virtual form this year.

NAB continued to be a member of CEENQA (The Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education), which serves as a platform for meetings of accreditation agencies in the Central and Eastern European region. A representative of the Office acted as the vice-president of the Board of the organization and represented NAB at the General Assembly of CEENQA and at regular virtual meetings of members.

Other international activities

A key activity was the involvement in the **SEQA-ESG project (Supporting European QA Agencies in Meeting the ESG)** funded by the European Commission, which will run until 2022. Its aim is to support NAB and other European accreditation agencies that are not yet full members of ENQA to fully implement the ESG standards and to prepare for external evaluation of compliance with these standards in order to achieve full membership in ENQA and registration in the European Register of Accreditation Agencies (EQAR). NAB participates in the project through MEYS, the institutional partner of the project in the Czech Republic. In December 2020, NAB co-organized with MEYS a virtual **National Peer Counseling Visit**. The event was attended by domestic stakeholders and international experts in higher education quality assurance and opened a discussion on meeting the ESG standards and possible changes in the setting of the national quality assurance.

In 2020, the pan-European Peer Support Group C on Quality Assurance, which was one of the three support groups established for the period 2018–2020 as part of the implementation of the Bologna Process, ceased its activities. The group brought together most of the countries from the European Higher Education Area and created a platform for coordinated activities of individual groups of countries aimed at a greater degree of fulfillment of the indicators of the Bologna Process. A representative of the Office represented the Czech Republic at the meetings of the Support Group. The cooperation was to include a thematically focused study stay of the Czech delegation in Sweden, which, however, could not take place due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.