



Národní akreditační úřad
pro vysoké školství

National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education

2023 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 functioning of evaluation committees. On 6 December 2021, another amendment to the Statute of NAB was approved by Government Resolution No. 1120, which simplified and clarified processes and procedures based on previous experience with NAB’s operation.

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 2023 and 31 December 2023.

Mandate of NAB

In accordance with the Higher Education Act, NAB decides on accreditations of degree programmes, accreditations of habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors and institutional accreditations of higher education institutions (hereinafter “HEIs”). 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 in charge of issuing standpoints to determination of the type of HEI. Furthermore, NAB issues binding standpoints on 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 on granting domestic permits/authorisations to non-European HEIs and their branches. Finally, NAB renders standpoints on matters related to higher education (hereinafter “HE”) requested by the Minister.

II. Organization Structure

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, except for the student member who is appointed for a period of two years. They may be appointed for a maximum of two terms.

Composition of the Board as of 31 December 2023:

- Ing. Robert Plaga, Ph.D. – Chair
- PhDr. Tomáš Fliegl – Vice-Chair
- Radek Špicar, M.Phil. – Vice-Chair
- Ing. Michal Farník
- prof. RNDr. Libor Grubhoffer, CSc.
- prof. PhDr. Jiří Lach, M.A., Ph.D.
- prof. JUDr. Hana Marková, CSc.
- doc. MgA. Ivo Mathé
- prof. Ing. Petr Noskievič, CSc.
- doc. Ing. Tomáš Pavelka, Ph.D.
- prof. JUDr. Josef Salač, Ph.D.
- prof. MVDr. Iva Steinhauserová, CSc.
- prof. PhDr. Eva Šmelová, Ph.D.
- prof. RNDr. Eva Táborská, CSc.
- prof. Rikard von Unge, Ph.D.

Between 1 January and 31 December 2023, the Board held eight regular meetings and one extraordinary meeting.

Appeals Committee

The main task of the Appeals Committee 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.

Composition of the NAB Appeals Committee as of December 31, 2023:

- JUDr. Ivan Barančík, PhD.
- prof. JUDr. Josef Bejček, CSc.
- prof. JUDr. Aleš Gerloch, CSc.
- prof. JUDr. Milana Hrušáková, CSc.
- JUDr. Ing. Josef Staša, CSc.

In the reporting period, the Appeals Committee convened three times.

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 to prepare standpoints usually on individual administrative proceedings, on the type of HEI, on applications for state approval to operate as a private HEI, on ensuring foreign higher education degree programmes including conditions for proper instruction, and to prepare 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 2023, NAB launched two calls for proposals for inclusion of persons in the Pool of Evaluators. As a result, 211 new evaluators were enrolled.

In addition, as of 1 January 2023, 1,178 persons were included based on the call launched in 2022.

In 2023, evaluators whose six-year term expired were removed from the Pool. Some were re-enrolled based on new calls. Students whose studies ended and a few individuals at their own request were also removed. The total number of evaluators registered in the Pool as of 31 December 2023 was 1,659, with some evaluators registered in multiple fields of study.

Field of study*	Number of Evaluators as of 31/12/2022	Number of Evaluators as of 31/12/2023
Architecture and Urbanism	41	47
Security Sector Fields	67	117
Biology, Ecology, and Environmental Studies	59	90
Transportation Sciences	38	50
Economic Disciplines	94	100
Electrical Engineering	51	41
Energetics	50	36
Pharmacy	35	45
Philology	67	73
Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Theology	43	62
Physics	47	47
History	59	89
Chemistry	55	88
Informatics	60	80
Cybernetics	43	35
Forestry and Wood Sciences	46	34
Mathematics	44	46
Media and Communication Studies	28	42
Non-teaching Pedagogy	52	80
Political Sciences	50	71
Food Science	41	28
Law	64	104
Psychology	48	45
Social Work	34	41
Sociology	36	43
Civil Engineering	50	69
Mechanical Engineering, Technology and Materials	58	75
Physical Education and Sport; Kinanthropology	25	34
Mining and Mineral Processing	34	25
Pedagogy	86	139
Art	62	71
Art and Culture Sciences	45	57
Earth Science	57	75
Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Hygiene	29	31
General Medicine and Dentistry	65	114
Healthcare Fields	62	100
Agriculture	53	62
Total	1878	2386

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

III. Activities of NAB

Contribution to Legislation

The primary objective in 2023 was the implementation of ESG (European Standards and Guidelines) standards. NAB had previously developed an action plan to outline priority areas and specific measures necessary to achieve compliance with ESG. Following this plan, NAB began preparing proposals to modify the system of external quality assurance in higher education to address barriers to ESG implementation. Inspired by several European countries, NAB pursued the goal of separating quality assurance issues from the Higher Education Act into a standalone law. NAB initiated discussions on the conceptual framework of such a law with representatives from the ministry responsible for the law and other stakeholders. This initiative was informed by NAB's experience with the current quality assurance system and best practices from well-functioning international systems.

Modification of Internal Regulations

Following the amendment to the Statute of NAB, approved by the Government by its Resolution No. 1120 on 6 December 2021, the Rules of Procedure of the NAB Evaluation Committees were amended. Changes to some rules governing the activities of the evaluation committees resulting from the amendments to the Statute were incorporated. Among other things, the amendment enabled a distance and hybrid form of committee meetings, which should make their activities more flexible and efficient.

Preparation of Methodological and Conceptual Documents

In 2022, NAB conducted a comprehensive review of its evaluation methodology. In 2023, it focused on specific educational issues, issuing guidelines for professionally oriented degree programmes. These guidelines summarize specific regulations related to professionally oriented degree programmes and declare practices for their preparation, evaluation, and implementation. The NAB Council considered legal regulations, its administrative practices, suggestions from universities, strategic documents from the MEYS, and other expert materials.

NAB also published guidelines on incorporating distance learning elements in full-time degree programmes. The document defines the framework for using distance learning components in accredited full-time programmes, outlining basic principles for their inclusion and providing examples of appropriate and inappropriate uses.

NAB's methodological efforts in 2023 included preparations for the WFME (World Federation for Medical Education) recognition process. Early in 2023, NAB adopted methodological materials for preparing and evaluating accreditation applications for General Medicine master's programmes. These materials reflect the WFME Global Standards for the quality assurance of general medical education. Developed in collaboration with medical faculties as part of a 2022 project, these materials include sample application forms, guidelines for assessment, on-site

visit procedures, and templates for outputs of the assessment. These materials will be used for accrediting General Medicine programmes and for external evaluations of medical faculties offering these programmes.

Training of Evaluators

In 2023, two webinars were conducted focusing mainly on the assessment methodology and interpretation of accreditation standards. More than 600 evaluators participated. NAB also provided all evaluators with training materials offering a comprehensive overview of the legal basis for evaluation activities, the process of assessing accreditation applications, and basic evaluation principles according to accreditation standards. These materials include commented examples of evaluation committee standpoints as inputs for NAB Board decisions.

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

According to Section 18 of the Act No. 106/1999 Coll., NAB, as an obliged entity, includes a report on its activities regarding the provision of information as part of this 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: 5
- Number of issued refusal decisions: 2
- 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.: The obliged entity publishes the provided information on its official notice board in accordance with Section 5 (3).

Other Activities

The Chair, Vice-Chairs, and other members of the Board met with representatives of higher education bodies (Czech Rectors Conference and Council of HEIs), MEYS representatives, the Centre for International Cooperation in Education, and other partners. NAB's representatives were also involved in discussions related to the preparation of the draft amendment to the Higher Education Act and led negotiations on the new concept of NAB's activities in line with ESG. They participated in thematic meetings and seminars focused on accreditation and quality assurance in higher education.

In March 2023, NAB organized a conference titled "How Teaching Actually Works in Universities" in collaboration with Ostrava University. The conference aimed to formulate proposals for improving the quality of higher education, focusing on the evaluation, support, and recognition of academic teaching work to ensure sufficient time, competencies, and

motivation for quality teaching. International experts from Sweden and Germany presented their experiences from universities where teaching and pedagogical competencies are continuously developed. Their insights were discussed by representatives of Czech universities in a panel discussion. To achieve the goal of improving education quality and developing effective teaching, representatives from NAB, MEYS, Czech Rectors Conference, Council of HEIs, and the Student Chamber of the Council of HEIs agreed on the need to implement specific measures.

In May 2023, the 23rd annual conference on University Quality Assessment was held in Telč. The conference evaluated experiences with the functioning of institutional accreditations and internal approval processes for degree programmes. NAB was one of the conference partners. NAB representatives led a panel discussion on the systemic motivation of academic staff for pedagogical development and quality teaching and participated as panelists in a discussion on distance learning methods.

Audits of Compliance with Legal Regulations

In the reporting period, an audit initiated in 2022 at the Faculty of Physical Culture of Palacký University in Olomouc was completed. NAB found deficiencies in compliance with related legal regulations, especially Act No. 500/2004 Coll., Administrative Procedure Code, and Act No. 499/2004 Coll., on Archives and Records Service, as well as internal regulations and standards. These deficiencies concerned the admission process to the degree programme at the Faculty of Physical Culture and affected the transparency of the admission process and potentially unequal assessment of applicants.

External Evaluations of Educational, Creative, and Related Activities

In 2023, the Board completed external evaluations of educational, creative, and related activities at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague and the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, conducted in connection with the institutional accreditation granted to these HEIs.

NAB continued to conduct external evaluations related to granted institutional accreditation. In 2023, the Board initiated external evaluations of educational, creative, and related activities at Charles University, focusing on institutional accreditation. This evaluation process employed a new methodology emphasizing the assessment of the internal quality assurance system's functionality through, among other things, the analysis of selected degree programmes. Emphasis was also placed on obtaining insights directly on-site through interviews with various groups within the HEI.

The Board also initiated external evaluations of educational, creative, and related activities at the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts, focusing on the institutional environment of the HEI. Another external evaluation started at the Faculty of Medicine of Palacký University in Olomouc, targeting the General Medicine master's degree programmes, and is conducted in connection with the WFME recognition process NAB is undergoing. An external evaluation was also initiated at the Prague College of Psychosocial Studies, s.r.o., to assess the overall state of educational, creative, and related activities, including personnel provisions for these activities.

Administrative Proceedings

Application-based administrative proceedings

a) Accreditation of Degree Programmes:

In the reporting period from 1 January to 31 December 2023, NAB received 193 applications for accreditation (e.g. granting, extension and expansion of accreditation) of degree programmes.

It conducted administrative proceedings on the following number of 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 31/12/2023	Total
Bachelor	69 60	1 1	6 8	50 43	126 112
Short-Master	58 46	0 0	9 9	33 37	100 92
Long-Master	3 3	0 0	0 0	3 2	6 5
Doctoral	34 22	0 0	4 6	23 29	61 57
Cooperation with another legal entity	8 21	0 0	2 1	4 10	14 32
Total	172 152	1 1	21 24	113 121	307 298

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

Professionally oriented	Accreditation granted
Bachelor	35 21

¹The data for the current period, January 1 – December 31, 2023, are shown in bold. For comparison, the data for the previous period, January 1 – December 31, 2022, are shown in regular font.

Short-Master	12 5
Long-Master	1 1
Total	48 27

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

During the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023, the NAB received 233 applications for the accreditation of fields for habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors.

It conducted administrative proceedings on the following number of 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 31.12.2023	Total
Fields of habilitation procedure	266 35	2 0	3 0	41 83	312 118
Fields of procedure for appointment of professors	256 33	4 0	4 0	38 84	302 117
Total	522 68	6 0	7 0	79 167	

c) Institutional Accreditation:

In the reporting period from 1 January to 31 December 2023, the NAB received one application for the granting of institutional accreditation.

Decisions were made on the following number of applications (e.g. for granting or expansion of the institutional accreditation). 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 expanded	Accreditation denied (application rejected or narrowed)	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished as of 31/12/2023	Total
HEIs	0 1	1 0	0 0	0 0	3 3	4 4
fields of study – Bachelor type	0 9	1 0	0 0	0 0	7 3	8 12
fields of study – Master type	0 9	1 0	0 0	0 0	7 3	8 12
fields of study – Doctoral type	0 9	1 0	0 0	0 0	3 1	4 10

In 2023, the NAB Board acknowledged 242 degree programmes approved by higher education institutions under their institutional accreditation.

Administrative proceedings instigated by NAB

a) Proceedings towards revocation of accreditation:

In the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023, NAB conducted the following number of administrative proceedings towards revocation of accreditation of degree programmes. The figures relate to the number of degree programmes (or areas of study in the cases where the degree programme was divided into areas of study) that were subject of the proceedings towards revocation.

Proceedings¹	Accreditation revoked	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished as of 31/12/2023	Total
Revocation of accreditation	2 1	3 0	1 3	6 4

b) Proceedings towards restriction of accreditation:

In the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023, NAB conducted the following number of administrative proceedings towards restriction of accreditation of degree programmes. The

figures relate to the number of degree programmes (or areas of study in the cases where the degree was divided into areas of study) that were subject of the proceedings towards restriction.

Proceedings ¹	Accreditation restricted	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished as of 31/12/2023	Total
Restriction of accreditation	1 0	4 1	4 4	9 5

c) Proceedings on revocation of accreditation for fields of procedure for appointment of professors

In the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023, NAB conducted the following number of administrative proceedings towards revocation of accreditation of fields of procedure for appointment of professors. The figures relate to the number of fields that were subject of the proceedings towards revocation.

Proceedings ¹	Accreditation revoked	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished as of 31/12/2023	Total
	2 1	3 0	1 3	6 4

d) Proceedings towards revocation of institutional accreditation:

In the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023, NAB conducted administrative proceedings towards revocation of institutional accreditation with 1 HEI. The following data refer to the number of fields of study and types of degree programmes that were the subject of the proceedings.

Proceedings	Accreditation revoked	Proceedings terminated	Proceedings unfinished of 31/12/2023	Total
field of study – Bachelor type	0 0	0 1	0 0	0 1
field of study – Master type	0 0	0 1	0 0	0 1
field of study – Doctoral type	1 0	0 0	0 1	1 1

Standpoints

Standpoints on applications for state approval

During the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023, the NAB Board received 1 application for state approval to operate as a private HEI.

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

During the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023, the NAB Board received 1 application for granting domestic authorisation to operate as a branch of a non-European foreign HEI, which concerned 7 degree programmes.

Standpoints on determination of the type of HEI

During the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023, the NAB Board received 1 application for a standpoint on the determination of the type of HEI. No standpoint on this application was issued during the reporting period. The NAB Board also issued one standpoint on an application submitted in 2022, stating that the HEI in question was of university type.

Standpoints on follow-up reports and reports on changes

In 2023, the NAB Board discussed 297 follow-up reports and their supplements related to degree programmes (or areas of study where the degree programme was divided into areas of study) and 43 follow-up reports and their supplements related to fields of habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors. These follow-up reports were requested by NAB as part of its activities. The mechanism of submitting and discussing follow-up reports enables monitoring of the quality of degree programmes and fields of habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors during their accreditation period.

In 2023, the NAB Board also discussed 19 follow-up reports related to institutional accreditation, which serve primarily to verify the implementation of the recommendations made to the respective HEI when granting institutional accreditation.

In 2023, the NAB Board further discussed 5 follow-up reports requested by the NAB Board based on audits of compliance with legal regulations in the implementation of accredited activities, and 1 follow-up report requested by the NAB Board based on an external evaluation of educational, creative, and related activities of HEIs.

Furthermore, in 2023, the NAB Board discussed 146 reports on changes in degree programmes (or areas of study where the degree programme was divided into areas of study) and 220 reports on changes in the field of habilitation procedures and procedures for appointment of professors, which NAB received based on the information duty stipulated for HEIs by the Higher Education Act.

IV. International Cooperation

Membership in international associations

In 2023, 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 experiences with its member agencies. The NAB Vice-Chair and Office staff represented NAB at the association's general assemblies.

NAB was also 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. NAB representatives participated in the regular CEENQA General Assembly as well as virtual meetings of members throughout the year, where they presented NAB's activities in ensuring the quality of higher education in the Czech Republic.

In 2023, the NAB Board approved the intention for NAB to seek membership in the INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education), which is an association of more than 300 accreditation agencies and other institutions worldwide.

Other international activities

In October 2023, the third forum of the accreditation agencies of the Visegrad Four countries (V4QA) was held, this time organized by NAB in Prague. The accreditation agencies continued their previous discussions on common problems and prospects for further development of quality assurance systems at both national and European levels. One of the main topics this year was the external evaluation of agencies by ENQA and WFME, which the involved agencies undergo.

NAB presented to representatives of partner accreditation agencies its preparation for adjustments to the external quality assurance system with the aim of establishing it as a separate law.

NAB continued its international activities in the area of recognition of medical education in the USA. In 2023, it took further steps in the process of obtaining recognition status from WFME (World Federation for Medical Education). The focus of this activity was on preparing and submitting documentation demonstrating the implementation of WFME requirements in domestic quality assurance processes and organizing the evaluation process in cooperation with WFME. Part of the assessment of the national quality assurance system is a visit by an international expert panel, which will observe the evaluation of a medical faculty conducted by NAB on-site. This visit is scheduled for spring 2024.

In June 2023, a meeting was held between NAB representatives and representatives of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA). NAB representatives presented the Czech system of

quality assurance in higher education and its digitalization. KAA representatives discussed the specifics of the Kosovan quality assurance system and the establishment of KAA in the Kosovo academic environment. In the final part of the meeting, there was a discussion on current trends and issues in the field of quality assurance in higher education and related challenges. Both sides agreed on the potential for further cooperation and sharing experiences from the Czech and Kosovo accreditation environments.

In 2023, there were three meetings of the Europe-wide Peer Support Group C on Quality Assurance (TPG-C), which was created as one of the three support groups established as part of the implementation of the Bologna Process. The group brings together most countries from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and provides a platform for coordinated activities of individual groups of countries towards better implementation of the objectives of the Bologna Process. The first meeting of this working group in Bucharest in March 2023 was dedicated to the issue of cross-border quality assurance in higher education and the overall internationalization of quality assessment in the European Higher Education Area, including in relation to international degree programmes (such as Joint-degree or Multi-degree). The second meeting of this working group took place in Kazakhstan in June 2023 and focused on presenting the progress of individual accreditation agencies in implementing the action plan for ESG compliance. Additionally, several thematic seminars were held during the meeting, covering topics such as the digitalization of accreditation systems, potential benefits and risks associated with AI, and the overall impact of AI technologies on quality assurance systems. The third meeting took place in Brussels in September 2023. It primarily involved presenting a summarizing comparative analysis focused on mapping the use and role of microcredentials across EHEA countries and discussing the outputs of this analysis for the ministerial communiqué.

Representatives of the NAB Office also participated in two employee mobility projects (exchange visits of accreditation agency staff) implemented with the support of the IMINQA project, which was created as a supportive educational project within the TPG-C working group. In February 2023, a NAB Office employee participated in a staff mobility visit at the Austrian Accreditation Agency (AQ Austria), and in October 2023, a mobility project was carried out at the Swedish Accreditation Agency (UKÄ). The aim of the exchange visits was to share experiences and examples of good practice between the two agencies, as well as to strengthen mutual relationships and create a platform for potential future cooperation.