

# External Evaluation Report of Masaryk University

February 18, 2025

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# Final Report on the External Evaluation of Masaryk University

## Introduction

Based on a decision by the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (hereinafter “NAB”), an external evaluation of the educational, creative, and related activities of Masaryk University (hereinafter also “MU” or “the University”) was launched on May 2, 2024. The impetus for this external evaluation, as well as for previous external evaluations of higher education institutions with institutional accreditation (hereinafter also “IA”), was a proposal by the Deputy Minister of Education, Youth, and Sports to conduct external evaluations of higher education institutions with institutional accreditation. The general objective of the external evaluation of MU was to assess the experience to date with institutional accreditation as a new element of the quality assurance system, which MU received through the decision granting institutional accreditation issued by the NAB on May 24, 2018 (for more details, see Appendix No. 1).

The external evaluation focused specifically on the internal quality assurance system for educational activities, the functioning of the Internal Evaluation Council (RVH), and the process of approving and continuously evaluating study programs, as well as the overall involvement of students in these processes and the development of a culture of quality as such. Specifically, the evaluation committee focused on the alignment of the internal quality assurance system with MU’s strategy and vision, the overall consistency and functionality of internal regulations and standards, as well as the adequacy of the staffing of internal quality assurance bodies in terms of expertise, qualifications, the elimination of conflicts of interest, and time availability. Furthermore, the evaluation committee also examined the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the internal quality assurance system, both in terms of periodic mechanisms and in terms of overall responsiveness and the ability to react flexibly to emerging situations. Last but not least, the evaluation committee also focused on the issue of student involvement in quality assurance processes, general mechanisms for reflecting the student perspective, and its subsequent incorporation into teaching and the overall institutional framework.

In accordance with the NAB Statutes, the following evaluation committee was appointed on June 14, 2024, to conduct the external evaluation:

- Assoc. Prof. Daniela Jobertová, Ph.D. – Chair,
- Prof. Ing. Tatiana Molková, Ph.D. – Vice-Chair,
- Prof. Ing. Roman Čermák, Ph.D.,
- MUDr. Josef Fontana, Ph.D.,
- Assoc. Prof. Jiří Langer, Ph.D.,
- Mgr. Ondřej Mocek, Ph.D.,
- Ing. Bc. Martin Haváček – student,
- Mgr. Michal Nguyen – student.

Mgr. Michal Nguyen, a member of the evaluation committee, resigned during the external evaluation, and on October 4, a new member of the evaluation committee was appointed to replace him:

- Bc. Veronika Řičanová – student.

The following meetings between representatives of the Evaluation Committee and NAB and representatives of MU took place during the external evaluation:

- August 16, 2024, introductory meeting attended by the leadership of the evaluation committee and NAB representatives with the MU rector and his colleagues,
- December 4, 2024: On-site visit by the evaluation committee with representatives from the university level of MU,
- December 5, 2024: on-site visit by the evaluation committee with representatives from the MU faculty level,
- December 6, 2024: On-site visit by the evaluation committee with representatives of MU students and MU leadership.

In its work, the evaluation committee relied primarily on the following materials:

- MU’s basic strategic, conceptual, and evaluation materials
- key internal regulations of MU
- publicly available sources, particularly MU’s website
- MU’s self-evaluation report prepared according to the specified outline
- overviews of study programs approved as part of institutional accreditation
- complete approval documentation, documentation regarding any corrective measures, and documentation on the internal evaluation of educational activities for a selected sample of study programs
- data in the MU information system regarding selected study programs
- results of student evaluations of teaching for selected study programs
- materials produced as part of the RVH’s activities, particularly meeting minutes
- minutes from meetings held during on-site visits on December 4–6, 2024, generated as part of the Evaluation Committee’s activities
- supplementary materials requested in connection with the on-site visits

## 1 External Evaluation Procedure

On June 17, 2024, the Evaluation Committee requested MU’s basic strategic, conceptual, and evaluation materials, as well as its key internal regulations. The NAB also provided MU with the external evaluation methodology, containing detailed information on the evaluation’s alignment with relevant Government Regulation Standards and ESG, on specific areas under review, on the principles of the Evaluation Committee’s work, and on the format and schedule of the on-site visit. Following the appointment of the evaluation committee, its chair and vice-chair, together with the chair and vice-chair of the NAB, met with the rector and the vice-rector for education and quality at MU to clarify the process and nature of the external evaluation.

The Evaluation Committee, in cooperation with the NAB, prepared the “Framework Outline for the Preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report for the External Evaluation of Masaryk University’s Activities” and sent it to the MU Rector in accordance with Article 2(b) *NAB Methodological Guidelines for the External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions for the Purpose of External Quality Evaluation*, a request to prepare the self-evaluation report by August 30, 2024.

At the same time, the evaluation committee requested the provision of complete approval documentation, documentation regarding any corrective measures, and documentation on the internal evaluation of educational activities conducted for a selected sample of study programs (for more details, see *Appendix No. 2*) offered by MU based on authorizations arising from institutional accreditation (hereinafter also “selected study programs”). The selected sample as a whole included all types and profiles of study programs, all forms of study, and both Czech and English as languages of instruction. The sample of study programs was selected to be representative across MU’s faculties and the disciplinary focus of the educational fields offered by MU.

Beyond the requested documentation, the evaluation committee was granted access at this stage to data in MU's information system and to the results of student course evaluations. From December 4 to 6, 2024, the evaluation committee visited the MU Rector's Office, where on December 4, 2024, the committee met with MU leadership and representatives of university bodies involved in quality assurance and evaluation, specifically with the leadership and members of the RVH, staff from the Quality Department, and staff from the Center for Students with Special Needs and other support units. A separate meeting was held with students who are members of the Program Councils.

On December 5, 2024, as part of its on-site visit, the evaluation committee met with the management of MU's faculties, representatives of the Academic Senates (AS) and Scientific Councils (VR) of all faculties, as well as with the program directors and key faculty members of selected study programs.

On December 6, 2024, the evaluation committee met with students from selected study programs and MU leadership at the MU Rector's Office.

In connection with the evaluation of the submitted materials and the on-site visits, the evaluation committee requested additional supplementary materials and information as needed. MU made available or provided all materials necessary for the evaluation process that were requested during the external evaluation. It also provided excellent cooperation in organizing and facilitating the evaluation committee's on-site visits.

In preparing the external evaluation report, the evaluation committee took into account the overall development and progress that Masaryk University has undergone from the initial granting of institutional accreditation to the present. The evaluation committee is aware that the initial period following the granting of institutional accreditation was particularly demanding in terms of the workload for the RVH and other units, especially given that Masaryk University explicitly established processes for converting the original fields of study into study programs; at the same time, the RVH's decision-making practices were being established, existing decision-making and evaluation mechanisms were being adjusted, and new ones were being implemented. Similarly, the evaluation committee recognizes the overall dynamism and variability of the internal quality assurance system, which it took into account when interpreting the statements of respondents from on-site visits, as well as when interpreting all materials submitted by Masaryk University.

## 2 Masaryk University’s Quality Assurance System

This chapter addresses, in particular, issues related to the fulfillment of selected standards in Area V contained in the Government Regulation on Accreditation Standards; specifically, it focuses on the institutional environment, based on the robustness, transparency, and predictability of which the university was granted institutional accreditation in 2018:

### V. Internal Quality Assurance System

- V.2. and V.4. Definition of responsibilities for the quality of activities at all levels
- V.3. Allocation of human, material, and financial resources
- V.6. Feedback processes from students, staff, and external stakeholders
- V.9. Ongoing evaluation and improvement of the quality assurance system
- V.11. Control processes and follow-up mechanisms for addressing deficiencies
- V.12. Publication of information on the internal evaluation system, results, and measures

It also addresses specific matters contained in the standards for the accreditation of study programs, namely:

- D. III. 6. Academic staff development strategy and motivational tools

The inclusion of this sub-standard was discussed with the university during the initial meetings, as both the National Accreditation Office for Higher Education and the Evaluation Committee, on the one hand, and the university, on the other, consider the development of teaching competencies to be a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring and improving the quality of study programs, particularly in the areas of teaching and curriculum development.

### 2.1 Quality Assurance System and Functioning of the Internal Evaluation Council

The Evaluation Council for Internal Evaluation of Masaryk University (“RVH” or “Council”) was established in 2016 as a fifteen-member body, with a maximum term of six years per member. However, the Council’s future rolling renewal was ensured at the time of its establishment: this was achieved through the random selection of members, whose first term was to be only two or four years. Two members of the Council are experts from outside Masaryk University. There is one student representative on the RVH, with a two-year term. The self-evaluation report states that a student Advisory Panel was established to support the student member of the RVH; this panel is currently operating on a pilot and informal basis. Each member of the RVH may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

The composition of the RVH, according to the MU Statutes, “reflects the fields of study within which degree programs are offered at MU”; however, members’ disciplinary affiliations are not explicitly taken into account. At the same time, the practice of representing all faculties has become established, meaning one member from each of the ten faculties; the remaining five members are the Rector as Chair of the RVH, the Chair of the MU Academic Senate, a student representative nominated by the MU Academic Senate, and two external members. This practice is not legislatively addressed in the Statutes or in any other internal legislation; however, it ensures an adequate voice for all units whose primary mission is to provide instruction—i.e., with the exception of university institutes (especially CEITEC) and other non-faculty units.

A relatively unique principle of the MU RVH is the requirement for a clean lustration certificate for individuals born before December 1, 1971.

The internal evaluation rules clearly define conflicts of interest, both in voting on specific study programs (the program guarantor does not vote, though like other guarantors who are not members of the RVH, they do participate in the discussion) and regarding membership in the RVH itself. Vice-rectors, deans, associate deans, and directors of university institutes may not be members, thereby effectively isolating the university's administrative and management levels from the decision-making process. Vice-rectors participate in meetings as guests, even though they are the ones who bring essential information, suggestions, and items for decision or resolution to the RVH's activities. Deans are present during the discussion of matters related to study programs. MU's Rules of Procedure further allow a representative of the Faculty Senate to speak whenever requested, and, if necessary, other persons with the permission of the QAC Chair. QAC meetings are public; however, they may include a closed session based on a decision by the Chair. The Vice-Rector chairs the Council's meetings and makes decisions on various organizational matters based on authorization from the Rector.

Other bodies operating within the quality assurance system, explicitly mentioned in [the Rules](#) of the System for Quality Assurance and Internal Evaluation of Educational, Creative, and Related Activities at MU ("Internal Evaluation Rules" / "VH") and [the MU Study Program Quality Regulations](#), are, in addition to the study program guarantors ("SP"), the program councils (for bachelor's and master's study programs) and the field councils (for doctoral study programs). The former are a specific feature of the MU system. The SP Quality Regulations provide for the existence of both independent program councils and joint program councils for closely related fields of study; the existence of discipline councils for doctoral studies is mandated by law. The responsibilities of program councils are enshrined in the SP Quality Regulations, while those of discipline councils are mandated by law. The Study Program Quality Regulations also briefly define evaluators and outline their involvement in study program assessment processes (both for authorization and internal evaluation), as well as who approves the evaluators (for internal evaluation, the dean or rector; for the authorization of study programs, the RVH); as a key mechanism for the assessment of study program quality, the Study Program Quality Regulations establish an evaluation meeting at the faculty level and list its mandatory and optional participants.

The system of internal regulations defining quality assurance processes is relatively cohesive and compact. The MU Statutes are supplemented by the Internal Evaluation Rules (effective as of May 1, 2024), which summarize in Articles 11–16 all activities for which Masaryk University commits to applying quality assurance processes. The Rules of Procedure of the Academic Council govern the Council's proceedings. The specific parameters for the Council's decision-making regarding study programs (regarding proposals to establish study programs and subsequent draft proposals for their establishment, as well as other specific cases, i.e., the expansion or extension of study programs, etc.) are enshrined in the MU Study Program Quality Regulations. Annexed to the Regulations are the MU Study Program Standards, which are formulated in a manner that is broadly open to study programs across a wide educational spectrum. A methodological guide for the development of study programs is MU Directive No. 1-2024, which contains rules for various types of study plans (typically single-subject, with specialization, combined), as well as for distance study programs (and distance elements in on-campus programs), lifelong learning programs (LLL), doctoral programs, programs for regulated professions, professional programs, and teacher training programs.

## Analysis

Over the course of its work, the RVH has established itself as a body that, first *and foremost*, addresses operational matters, particularly in the area of study program assessment; second, it addresses cross-cutting issues, mostly through discussions and resolutions on specific aspects of the quality assurance

system itself (e.g., the quality of study program guarantors); and third, it plays a significant conceptual role in the implementation of MU's strategic decisions and monitors developments, particularly in the educational offerings, in relation to long-term goals and ambitions. A variety of available sources (minutes, meetings with RVH members, meetings with deans, meetings with program guarantors) indicate that over the course of its eight years of existence, and particularly following an initial intensive period (application for institutional accreditation, establishment of decision-making practices, the creation of internal regulations, etc.), the RVH has evolved into a functioning body that the aforementioned stakeholders consider transparent, consistent, and in a certain sense even "settled." The Evaluation Commission noted that the RVH functions as a cohesive body with a certain institutional history and an awareness of the development and refinement of its own decision-making practices over time, thanks both to the relatively small number of members relative to the size of the university and the number of study programs and fields of study, as well as to the regularity of its meetings (once a month), and also thanks to the time (beyond routine operations) allocated for conceptual work (conceptual meetings planned well in advance without an accreditation agenda). According to the minutes (from the time of the RVH's establishment to the present), the RVH has been cooperative and even active in setting university-wide rules, beginning with the creation of the internal regulation "Rules of Internal Evaluation." At the same time, particularly with the significant assistance of the Quality Department (hereinafter also "OpK"), the RVH was evidently successful in adequately and continuously communicating its activities to the faculties and to the program guarantors. At least two top-down communication channels in this regard gained importance over time: first, meetings between the RVH and program guarantors at individual faculties, and second, the publication of its decision-making practices as a methodological guide for guarantors, with the aim of minimizing the element of surprise in the Council's resolutions. It was also mentioned during the meetings that RVH members provide information about the Council's activities within "their" faculties; however, it was not possible to determine the format or frequency of such communication.

Due to the complicated nomination process, the representation of all ten faculties on the RVH is not systematic but rather a matter of custom; de facto, it is made possible by a soft internal agreement within the university and, above all, by the consensus of the nominating bodies (the Rector, the MU Academic Senate, and the MU Board of Trustees). As an example, one can cite the replenishment of the RVH discussed at the MU AS in October 2024, when the nominee was de facto presented by the MU administration with the reminder that the Council should include representatives of all faculties; the MU AS subsequently endorsed this nomination, i.e., it nominated the presented future member itself. It is evident that the faculty members of the RVH are not only representatives "from" the faculties (in the sense of sufficient coverage of educational fields and taught study programs), but also representatives "for" the faculties, with whom the academic communities of the individual faculties can consult if necessary, as was communicated to the evaluation committee. In this context, it is useful to quote from the minutes of the RVH meeting from April 2017, when, in the context of discussions on MU's internal legislation—specifically the Rules of the VH—the role of the RVH in providing support for improving activities was also debated: *"It is not explicitly specified who and how it [i.e., support for improving activities] will be provided. The purpose of the article is to ensure that the internal regulation contains not only sanctions but also the possibility of support that can positively impact the quality of the study program and simultaneously contribute to the creation and improvement of centers of excellence. Given the general nature of this provision, the members agreed to remove this measure from the draft internal regulation and retain only the possibility of imposing corrective measures under Article 11(6)."* The role of the RVH in the area of ongoing support for improving activities has clearly—and contrary to the 2017 opinion — been confirmed over time; however, the provision of consultations should not undermine the right and duty of individual members and the RVH as a whole to make objective and unbiased decisions even in cases previously consulted on, and thus naturally accompanied by certain expectations.

Based on meetings with various groups, the evaluation committee has concluded that the RVH's membership, in relation to the faculties and study programs, is unbiased and fair across the entire body. Judging by the minutes, the RVH's decision-making generally reflects a long-term consistent approach, although it would be possible to point to specific individual examples where decisions did not appear entirely comparable in similar situations. In the early years, authorizations were more frequently granted for slightly different durations, though the specific reasons are not always evident from the minutes themselves; specific recommendations for adjustments to study programs intended for the program guarantors are communicated in subsequent steps primarily by staff of the Quality Department. Similarly, the timing of internal evaluations varied, at least from an external perspective. For study programs prepared with support from operational program projects (OP VVV, OP JAK), the RVH is informed of this fact, but the approval process proceeds in a standard and impartial manner. It can therefore be stated that the decisions do not bear the hallmarks of unequal treatment of different faculties and different study programs, even though some of the justifications seemed—and still seem—to the guarantors to be not entirely convincingly argued. At the same time, however, the guarantors admitted during meetings that it is difficult in principle for a guarantor to perform an assessment of the consistency of decision-making, and thus the potential harshness of decisions, as they lack a basis for comparison across the university, and often even within a faculty.

Given the number of accredited study programs and the frequency of RVH meetings—both “approval” and conceptual—the evaluation committee considers the RVH, on the one hand, to be a productive body that does not, however, tend toward micromanagement, and, on the other hand, an academically and professionally authoritative body without any signs of “honorary” status. Both the meeting minutes and the requested documentation regarding a sample of study programs indicate that the RVH actively utilizes the oversight and corrective tools available to it: returning proposals and drafts for the establishment of study programs for revision, requesting changes to the proposed evaluators of study programs, requests for to improve staffing or, if necessary, replace the program guarantor within a specified timeframe, and requests for internal evaluations to be conducted within shorter timeframes. The presented example of a rejected study program demonstrates the RVH's ability to substantively challenge the faculty when its bodies fail to sufficiently justify the need for the study program or its proposed form, or when their own approval decision is accompanied by questions or doubts.

The RVH minutes further indicate that, for a number of activities directly related to education—for which the RVH is required to conduct evaluations under the VH Rules—these evaluations have not yet taken place. These include, in particular, the evaluation of continuing education (which is to be linked to the SP but has not yet taken place), the evaluation of courses leading to internationally recognized degrees (which has not yet taken place), evaluation of admission to study and study conditions (the RVH is to actively decide on this, but has not yet done so), evaluation of the recognition of foreign education (the RVH is to actively decide on this, but has not yet done so), and finally, evaluation of educational areas (to be conducted at least once during the period of institutional accreditation). Particularly regarding the last-mentioned area, the question arises as to whether the RVH should begin to focus on it (if it falls within its scope of activities according to the legislation)—but perhaps a more fundamental question is what purpose it should actually serve and how it should be structured. Furthermore, evaluations of related activities are to take place (according to the Rules of Higher Education, this involves ten types of activities, with the decision to initiate an evaluation always resting with the RVH); so far, it appears that the existing cross-disciplinary or thematic analyses commissioned by the RVH did not fall into these categories. The issue of evaluation of artistic activity, which is also enshrined in the VH Rules alongside scientific activity, is entirely unclear in this regard—Masaryk University has no study program accredited in the field of arts education, not even partially. The meaning and purpose of the evaluation of artistic activity are therefore unclear (note: artistic activity is typically not an activity of the university as such, but of its academic staff, within the framework of other employment relationships). The evaluation committee did not have access

to any sample of study programs in which the artistic activity of any of the faculty members was included in any way, either during the authorization process or during internal evaluation. During a revision of the legislation, it is therefore possible to reconsider the relevance of this type of activity.

As mentioned above, the university-wide legislation pertaining to quality assurance is consistent, appropriately comprehensive, and clear. At the same time, it is evolving and undergoing updates, as not everything that was conceived when the system was launched is actually being implemented. For many internal evaluations of activities, the RVH is the body that actively decides to initiate them; however, the absence of any timeframe (even, for example, once every ten years) theoretically allows for the evaluation to be completely omitted. At the same time, it can be assumed that the reflection on a range of activities is included in the annual reports of the university and the faculties, in addition to the Internal Evaluation Reports and their appendices. Faculty legislation in the area of quality assurance is rather sparse; the system is highly centralized. Internal legislation is further supplemented by methodological guidelines from individual departments; and program guarantors have a range of information available directly in the IS system on a separate portal, where forms related to the preparation of study programs and their minor or major evaluations can also be found.

Throughout the process, the Evaluation Committee also focused on examining instances where Masaryk University's interpretation of certain legal provisions differed from that of the National Accreditation Office: These primarily concerned the classification of study programs into fields of study ("OV"), or changes to OV after accreditation was granted; staffing for study programs, particularly regarding certain program directors in relation to their creative activities; and the concept of doctoral studies, specifically the possibility of creating specializations, which was utilized at Masaryk University in its early years. In a number of cases, the evaluation committee can state that the RVH reconsidered its positions based on a resolution of the NAB Council and, in subsequent negotiations with the faculties, insisted on taking into account the authoritative interpretation of NAB standards.

Nevertheless, there remains an area where the evaluation committee considers Masaryk University's interpretation to be inconsistent with the law, although this in no way implies that problems arise at the level of the actual implementation of study programs. The MU Study Program Quality Regulations define the bodies responsible for the quality of study program implementation: for bachelor's and master's study programs, these are program councils as a specific mechanism not otherwise provided for by law; for doctoral study programs ("DSP"), these are subject councils ("OR") as a mechanism firmly established by law, albeit with the possibility of further specification by the university. Masaryk University makes use of the option to establish joint disciplinary councils for doctoral study programs in the same or similar "fields of study." However, the Quality Regulations stipulate that the chair of a joint subject council is only one of the guarantors of the study programs under its supervision. The other guarantors are not chairs of the DSP subject council, although they are automatically members, and they have more significant rights than other members (e.g., all guarantors of cooperating DSPs must be present during voting). The Evaluation Committee, however, believes that a DSP guarantor cannot relinquish the rights and obligations established by law and therefore cannot fail to serve as chair of the ORDS, which makes decisions regarding students in the DSP he oversees. Speculatively, one can imagine a situation where the guarantors of other DSPs outvote one guarantor on issues concerning his or her authority in relation to his or her students, or a situation where, in the event of a tie, the chairperson's vote decides, even though he or she may not be the guarantor in question.

The issue of the competences of DSP supervisors is also linked to the institution of existing field committees ("OK"), which in the past—even after the 2016 amendment to the Higher Education Act and the granting of IA status to Masaryk University—possessed significant powers. Rector's Measure No. 3/2024, based on the NAB resolution on doctoral studies, stipulates that DSP programs with specializations will no longer be eligible for accreditation; however, it continues to affirm certain activities

through which, in the opinion of the evaluation committee of the subject council, the subject councils encroach upon or assume the powers of the guarantor: specifically, in all negotiations that the subject councils conduct directly with the dean of the faculty (the subject council proposes members of the committees for admissions, defenses, and state doctoral examinations), and furthermore, for example, they appoint supervisors and conduct the evaluation of students' studies—all without the involvement of the guarantor of the doctoral study program.

According to the additional documentation provided, specializations have been introduced at the Faculty of Informatics, the Faculty of Medicine, and the Faculty of Science; there are a total of 46 subject committees across 15 study programs (ranging from 2 subject committees per ORDS to 7 subject committees per ORDS). The methodological sheet 2024-Profilace-v-DSP issued by the Vice Rector for Education and Quality indicates that specializations will be transformed into profiles, that study programs will use (or newly create) only single-major study plans; Starting in the 2025/26 academic year, students will be admitted only to single-discipline study plans. Based on the supporting documents and the connections between them, the Evaluation Committee concludes that the field committees are bound to the existing specializations within the DSP, and at the same time acknowledges Masaryk University's position aligning its interpretation with that of the NAB (according to the minutes of the NAB Council dated January 23, 2020 *"the sole body authorized under Section 47(6) of the Higher Education Act to monitor and evaluate studies in a doctoral study program is the field council of the relevant study program. Transferring this authority to other bodies is contrary to the Higher Education Act."*). The additional supporting documents also indicate that Masaryk University currently has a single joint disciplinary council covering multiple study programs, specifically at the Faculty of Science. The minutes of these meetings are typically accompanied by "brief internal evaluations" of individual doctoral study programs prepared by the program guarantors; it is difficult to assess the extent to which the joint disciplinary board itself evaluates the year-over-year progress of doctoral students in individual programs, as these evaluations primarily contain information regarding the admissions process and the completion of studies.

In light of the issues surrounding joint disciplinary councils, specializations within doctoral study programs, and the existence of disciplinary committees, the evaluation committee therefore formulates specific recommendations below. At the same time, however, it considers it important to note that it also views these mechanisms positively, namely as an effort by Masaryk University to create larger doctoral units with a certain internal structure, potentially enabling more natural research overlaps and easier cooperation at the level of both faculty and students—which is, after all, the aim of the new legal framework for doctoral studies.

In connection with the university's internationalization strategy, the question of how this strategy is reflected in the activities of the RVH has arisen and was raised during the on-site visit. In the accreditation of study programs, emphasis is placed on teaching courses in foreign languages (English). Regarding the requirement for students to study abroad, the members of the RVH agree on the need for an individualized approach to both study programs and the students themselves, taking into account their actual capabilities. It was also confirmed that the relationship between the RVH and the MU International Council is rather loose, and that the MU International Council's initiatives are focused on the area of research. According to its statutes, the MU International Council may, through expert consultation, engage in important aspects of MU's activities (oversight of the doctoral education system, recruitment and career advancement, consultation on administrative structure); however, these issues were not the subject of the evaluation. However, the following passage from the Rules of the General Assembly is worth noting, according to which "in evaluating MU, it shall take into account the results of quality evaluations of MU's activities conducted by external actors, such as an evaluation agency listed in the EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register) or a member of the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)." According to publicly available information, a comprehensive external evaluation of Masaryk

University was conducted by the EUA, specifically the IEP program, in 2012. The Evaluation Committee believes that commissioning a new international evaluation of the university in the coming five years could be desirable and beneficial.

A separate section of this report is devoted to administrative, methodological, and informational support for the RVH's activities (see 2.3). At this point, however, one aspect of its proceedings deserves mention, namely the fact that so-called "major internal evaluations" ("VVH") of study programs are generally not explicitly addressed or discussed. It is clear that, given the large number of study programs, it is not realistic to address each one, and internal regulations do not require the RVH to do so anyway. In response to a question posed during the on-site visit, RVH members confirmed that the materials for the meetings are available in the repository and also in the IS information system, meaning that they consult all information regarding both major internal evaluations and so-called minor internal evaluations (annual updates to SP development plans) as needed and when interested; At the same time, it was noted that these are taken into account when extending the authorization to offer a study program. According to the Quality Regulations, a member of the RVH may also participate in every major internal evaluation of a study program; however, the minutes of RVH meetings indicate that the manner and extent of RVH members' involvement were not clearly defined for some time, leading to a less than comfortable level of engagement by RVH members in these processes. It appears that these initial difficulties (which were, however, repeatedly mentioned at several meetings) have been overcome. Nevertheless, the question remains to what extent the RVH monitors major internal evaluations in particular, especially given that they constitute one of its core activities (indeed, internal evaluations of study programs are listed first in the Rules of the RVH). Judging by the minutes of the RVH from the beginning of its operation to the present, internal evaluations have been the subject of discussion only minimally, and when they were, it was under the "Miscellaneous" item. Yet such issues clearly fall within the RVH's sphere of interest: for example, the minutes for one SP at the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, indicate that it is experiencing certain problems; however, the current processes do not de facto allow the RVH to systematically and consistently obtain such information. Information is therefore brought to the RVH by its member who participates in the VVH—provided, of course, that anyone actually participates, since participation by an RVH member is optional, not mandatory. Information on past Internal Evaluation Meetings is included in the Internal Evaluation Report only in summary form, not as a list; however, the RVH approves the schedule of planned Internal Evaluation Meetings at all faculties. At the same time, the Internal Evaluation Report or its appendices list newly approved study programs and, where applicable, submitted audit reports. In the future, therefore, one could consider at least a list of specific evaluations that have taken place, or, more transparently, and most importantly, the planned inclusion in the RVH agenda of information regarding those programs where significant problems have arisen (including the stance and measures taken by the faculty administration as the primary recipient of the VVH results).

## Findings

The Evaluation Committee commends

- the long-term consistent, conceptual, and cohesive functioning of the RVH, made possible, among other things, by the gradual phasing in and subsequent renewal of terms,
- the profiling of the rector's position as chair of the RVH as the primary guarantor of the university's strategic direction, with an appropriate degree of distance from operationally discussed matters,
- the appropriate handling of conflicts of interest, with the subsequent separation of the university's management from the area of quality assurance governance and control, specifically, for example, by excluding vice-rectors from the RVH,

- ensuring the transparency and predictability of decisions, including through the ongoing publication of the Board’s evolving decision-making practices as a methodological guide for the faculties,
- the quality, specificity, and overall tone of the RVH meeting minutes, which reflect the Council’s work ethic throughout the entire period under review, i.e., from the granting of IA to the present,
- the effective and welcoming onboarding of new members, enabling a quick and smooth transition into their roles
- a regular mechanism for RVH meetings with study program guarantors, supported by the Quality Department, to discuss specific topics.

The Evaluation Committee recommends

- consolidating the rules for RVH members’ participation in major internal evaluations and devoting explicit attention to the results of these evaluations during RVH meetings in separate, pre-announced agenda items,
- considering a clearer framework for the functioning of the Student Advisory Panel so that it provides sufficiently authoritative and robust support to the sole student representative on the Council (apparently due to the non-trivial composition of the RVH and MU’s internal decision to have two external members and only one student member on the Council, in order to maintain the legally mandated nomination ratios); it is also desirable that, through appropriate formalization, the sustainability of the panel’s operations and its “institutional” memory be ensured,
- analyze the actual necessity of all evaluation processes enshrined in the current version of the Internal Evaluation Rules, and take the results of this analysis into account in any future update of this regulation, including with regard to the RVH’s now relatively well-tested operational and time capacity,
- particularly in the area of internal legislation concerning doctoral studies, complete the alignment of programs with the law in accordance with the resolution of the NAB Council and address the competencies of program supervisors much more effectively and robustly in a binding university-wide regulation, especially in connection with the activities of field committees (for specializations) and the activities of DSP supervisors (within joint field councils); No legally defined body may transfer responsibility to another body in a manner that involves curtailing, removing, or relinquishing statutory rights and obligations, and any potential conflicts of jurisdiction should be minimized to the greatest extent possible in favor of the actual program guarantor.

## 2.2 Quality assurance bodies and processes at faculties, taking into account faculty-specific characteristics

### Description

Masaryk University consists of ten faculties offering study programs at all three levels of study. The Faculty of Pharmacy was added to the original nine faculties; the process of its transfer (or rather, its establishment as a completely new faculty within MU) took several years, is not yet fully completed in some aspects, and the harmonization of differences is still ongoing; nevertheless, it can already be described today as a successful structural acquisition that was well managed and organized.

Quality assurance and evaluation processes are centrally managed at the university level, although individual faculties have some leeway to influence certain aspects of these processes by issuing internal guidelines or measures issued by the dean.

Program coordinators play a significant role in the process of quality assurance, evaluation, and development of study programs. The duties of a program coordinator are defined in Article 6 of the Masaryk University Study Program Quality Regulations, and their position within the organizational structure of a given faculty may be governed by the faculty's internal regulations. In its self-evaluation report, MU points out an imbalance in the approach of study program guarantors across individual faculties, as well as within them, even though their competencies and responsibilities are defined in the relevant regulation. On the one hand, it positively evaluates program guarantors who routinely perform their duties beyond the centrally established minimum requirements; on the other hand, it views critically those guarantors who approach their duties primarily in a formal manner. Among the possible causes of this situation, it cites the workload of program guarantors and a lack of support and communication from faculty leadership. MU then identifies the low motivation of some study program guarantors as a weakness in both the self-evaluation report and the final SWOT analysis. As corrective measures, it proposes: "Introduce or support non-financial incentives, such as academic recognition, public recognition, or opportunities for professional growth linked to the successful management of study programs or in connection with high-quality teaching in courses. It is also important to provide regular feedback and support from faculty leadership, particularly to study program guarantors. Clarify the rights and obligations associated with the role of program guarantor in relation to department heads."

The MU information system supports the activities of study program guarantors by providing access to a significant amount of analytical data and a collection of documents containing relevant reports, methodological procedures, and forms. However, cooperation between guarantors and faculty quality coordinators is key; the role of these coordinators consists primarily of assisting with the administrative processes of quality assurance and evaluation. The MU Quality Department regularly organizes thematic meetings with study program guarantors, aimed at discussing current quality assurance topics and sharing best practices across faculties. The effectiveness and success of these meetings are limited by the low participation or even absence of some guarantors, who view their role as largely formal, as noted in MU's self-evaluation report.

Since 2019, program councils have been established at MU for bachelor's, master's, and follow-up master's study programs, serving as an advisory body to the study program guarantor. Their framework is set forth in Article 8 of the MU Study Program Quality Regulations. The members of the program council include guarantors, MU faculty and students, as well as employer representatives and alumni. Related or consecutive study programs may share a common program council. The task of the program councils is to reflect on the past academic year as part of the annual "small internal evaluation," provide feedback to the program guarantor, and formulate recommendations for the further development of the study program. The self-evaluation report cites the support of dynamic dialogue among stakeholders and the strengthening of a sense of shared responsibility for the quality of education as significant benefits of the existence of MU program councils. To support the activities of program councils, the Quality Department has prepared a document titled A Brief Guide for Program Councils and also organizes regular workshops for student representatives, which are very popular.

For doctoral study programs, discipline councils have been established, whose role in quality assurance processes is similar to that of program councils. Their framework is defined in Article 9 of the MU Study Program Quality Regulations. The chair of the discipline council is the study program guarantor, and the members are MU academic staff and external experts. Study programs in the same field of study may, upon agreement among the guarantors, establish a joint subject area council; this joint agreement also designates a joint chair of the subject area council (see above, including recommendations). The activities of subject area councils in the study quality assurance process are not mentioned at all in MU's self-evaluation report.

The academic senates and scientific councils of the individual faculties play a significant role in decision-making processes and the quality assurance system. Their activities are defined in the MU Study Program Quality Regulations. The Academic Senate discusses proposals for the establishment, expansion, extension, and termination of study programs and provides its opinion on them; the Scientific Council then approves such proposals. The approved material is subsequently submitted to the Internal Evaluation Council. The Internal Evaluation Council relies to a significant extent on the thorough discussion of study program proposals at the faculty level. As stated in the self-evaluation report, the discussion process at the faculty level does not always demonstrate sufficient quality, whether due to a prevailing formalism or overly brief documentation of individual discussions on specific aspects of the study program. The SWOT analysis identifies the formalistic approach of some faculty bodies as one of the weaknesses. The following is proposed as a corrective measure: “Introduce mandatory seminars and workshops for members of faculty academic senates and scientific councils, focusing on the importance of a critical approach to the issue of teaching quality when discussing study program proposals. Provide examples of good practice and model scenarios for a thorough evaluation of proposals.”

## Analysis

The actual—and in a certain sense, day-to-day—responsibility for the quality of educational activities carried out at the faculties lies with their leadership. Meetings with the deans of MU’s faculties during the on-site visit confirmed a high degree of professionalism in faculty management, but also revealed a welcoming, cooperative, and collegial atmosphere within the current dean’s team. It can be concluded that this approach is long-term and, as a result, successful: it is reflected in the significance of the faculties and the entire university not only in the Czech Republic’s education market but also in the growing awareness of MU in an international context. This is further confirmed by the fact that, during meetings with staff and students, a predominantly positive identification with the faculties and the entire university was repeatedly expressed.

The program coordinator is assigned a relatively extensive range of responsibilities under both the Higher Education Act and, in particular, the MU Study Program Quality Regulations, making him or her a key figure in the implementation of the study program and quality assurance. During the on-site visit, it was found that, in many respects, the program guarantor lacks the authority necessary to carry out such a comprehensive agenda, as these powers are primarily concentrated in senior management. The robustness and, at times, cumbersome nature of MU’s information system is also perceived as problematic; however, on the other hand, it is valued as a centralized database containing the information the program guarantor needs to perform their duties. In some cases, limited communication between the RVH and the program guarantors was identified, particularly regarding the clarity of decision-making practices and the provision of more detailed information for the development of study programs; however, it appears that over time—and thus as people become accustomed to new aspects of the quality assurance system—misunderstandings or lack of understanding are gradually diminishing or being eliminated. On the other hand, it can generally be stated that the role of study program guarantor is performed by motivated academic staff who, in addition to overseeing the academic aspects of study programs, clearly understand the institutional importance of their role and accept the responsibilities associated with it.

The meetings also revealed that study program guarantors appreciate the existence and functioning of program and field councils as their advisory bodies, as well as the cooperation among the various stakeholders. The composition of the program councils, which includes not only academic staff but also students, alumni, and employer representatives, has proven to be very positive. Although the intensity of work and the frequency of meetings vary across faculties and within faculties (one meeting per year is mandatory, though some councils meet more frequently by their own decision), the meeting minutes and on-site visits indicate that they serve as an active platform that is intensively engaged in the development

of the study program and ensuring its quality. A certain limitation on the councils' functioning is the natural turnover of student representatives resulting from the duration of the study program. In this regard, it would be advisable to ensure greater overlap in membership between students in lower and upper years, which would allow for more effective integration of new students into the activities of the program councils. Attention should also be paid to communicating the activities of the program councils to the student body—given the often limited participation of students in teaching evaluation surveys, direct communication between program council members and the student body appears to be essential and potentially the most effective.

Unlike program councils, the membership structure of doctoral program field councils lacks student and graduate representatives, as stipulated by the Higher Education Act. However, given that, according to Article 9 of the MU Study Program Quality Regulations, the role of discipline councils in the quality assurance process is similar to that of program councils, the absence of students and alumni may pose an obstacle to fulfilling this role. The issue of joint departmental councils and, in particular, “non-chairing” guarantors was discussed earlier in this report; however, based on the on-site visit, there is no indication that the actual implementation of doctoral study programs is experiencing problems or that conflicts are arising in this regard.

The academic senates and scientific councils of the individual faculties are directly involved in decision-making processes concerning study programs and quality assurance. Representatives of both groups agreed during on-site meetings, independently of one another, that during the assessment of study programs, academic senates focus primarily on compliance with strategic documents and the adequacy of resources for implementing study programs, while scientific councils focus on the quality of the faculty for study programs; this division of areas of interest can therefore be understood as established practice across the university. However, the level of detail in the assessment of study programs, and thus the overall quality of the decision-making process, is not centrally defined, and consequently, the quality of outputs varies among individual faculties. These differences sometimes complicate the deliberation of individual proposals by the Internal Evaluation Council. From this perspective, it would be appropriate for the Internal Evaluation Council to further specify and communicate its expectations, ideally by incorporating them into a document that could assist both academic senates and scientific councils in their decision-making processes. Meetings with many groups of respondents also revealed that when study programs are discussed in all bodies, the employability of graduates in the labor market is generally discussed, as well as societal need, or demand from the professional sphere, and economic sustainability. However, this is done on the basis of unsystematic and often unsubstantiated—or difficult to substantiate—information summarized in a SWOT analysis prepared by the program guarantor. The lack of specificity in the information also burdens the communication process in the opposite direction: some brief or not fully substantiated resolutions of the RVH may make it difficult for faculty bodies—academic senates and, in particular, scientific councils—to respond appropriately when study programs are reconsidered for accreditation in cases where the RVH issued a negative opinion during the initial review.

## Findings

The Evaluation Commission commends

- the management of faculties by high-quality academic-management teams of deans, which confirms both the university's strong position in the education market and the predominantly positive identification of staff and students with individual faculties and the university as a whole,
- the appointment of motivated academic staff to the positions of study program guarantors, who actively strive to further develop the study programs entrusted to them, and who also have a good understanding of how the university system functions and contribute to it from their positions,

- the successful establishment of program councils for bachelor's and master's degree programs at all faculties and the demonstration of their effectiveness as a support platform for the program director in the performance of their duties, particularly through the involvement of external experts and students.

The Evaluation Committee recommends

- to centrally strengthen the powers of the study program guarantor to enable the performance of their duties in ensuring the quality of the study program,
- to continue to purposefully foster two-way communication between the RVH and faculty stakeholders in the quality assurance system, to provide more consistent methodological support from the central level to faculty academic bodies and scientific councils in quality assurance processes,
- improve the system for integrating new student representatives into program councils and strengthen communication between program councils and students at the faculties in order to enhance feedback in quality assurance,
- continue efforts to involve students and graduates of doctoral study programs in the quality assurance of doctoral studies, particularly at the faculty level, i.e., not only through the RVH Student Advisory Panel.

## 2.3 Administrative and methodological support for quality assurance processes at the university and faculty levels

### Description

Masaryk University has established a very robust and comprehensive system of methodological and administrative support in the area of quality assurance. These activities have evolved over many years and demonstrate a clear emphasis on systematic approaches, functionality, and adequate staffing.

At the university level, a key element is the Quality Department of the Rector's Office at Masaryk University (OpK RMU), which is the primary unit responsible for activities in this area. As indicated by the self-evaluation report and structured interviews with individual stakeholder groups during the on-site visit, its main activities can be described as: administrative and substantive support for the activities of the MU Internal Evaluation Council, methodological guidance for individual MU units within its purview, ensuring the preparation of relevant methodological and supporting materials for individual stakeholders/elements of the quality assurance system at MU, identifying areas for the development and updating of relevant functionalities of MU's information systems and timely communication of these needs to the relevant department, and close cooperation and communication with faculty quality coordinators. One specific example of good practice that links these activities is the meeting of the MU Academic Council and the RMU Quality Committee with the guarantors of study programs (with the participation of the MU management member in charge—the Vice-Rector for Education and Quality), which are organized annually and during which current topics and needs in the area of quality assurance are discussed, and which also serve as a forum for the exchange of experiences and best practices among the various stakeholders in these processes. As stated in the self-evaluation report, within the MU Rector's Office, the closest partners with whom the OpK RMU actively cooperates in its activities are the Department of Doctoral Studies and Academic Qualifications of the RMU Research Division, the RMU Strategy Division, and the unit responsible for the development of the MU Information System. The RMU Quality Office is, of

course, also the primary administrative point of contact for communication with the National Accreditation Office for Higher Education and the relevant ministries in its area of responsibility.

At the level of individual faculties, the key elements of methodological and administrative support for the quality assurance system are the so-called faculty quality coordinators, whose positions were established as part of the process of preparing the application for institutional accreditation at MU. Their primary partners at the faculty level are the guarantors of the individual study programs implemented at the relevant MU unit (more broadly, the program councils as well), for whose activities they actively provide comprehensive administrative and methodological support: this includes, for example, cooperation in preparing the relevant documentation for the individual phases of the study program approval and evaluation process, ensuring that information and materials are up-to-date (communicating updates and changes from the university level), etc. Quality coordinators also serve as the faculty point of contact for the rector's office level of the quality assurance system: they ensure practical two-way communication between the faculty and university levels, facilitate the transfer of experience and best practices between individual faculties and RMU, identify suggestions and problem areas from the faculty's perspective, and guarantee the formal correctness of materials submitted by faculties to the relevant university bodies. Cooperation and communication between faculty quality coordinators and the RMU Quality Office is very intensive and effective. It utilizes both regular meetings and remote forms of exchanging and sharing information and materials (a platform for communication between the RMU Quality Office and the faculties via a network of faculty coordinators within the MS Teams tool). These elements serve not only for ongoing methodological alignment and the communication of planned changes and updates to the system, but also as a format for facilitating reflection on past RVH meetings and decision-making practices, as well as for highlighting any problematic aspects of the proposals under discussion.

The third fundamental element of methodological and administrative support for the quality assurance and evaluation system is MU's robust and comprehensive information system (the Garant application is key), which provides functional support for individual processes (including the submission of proposals for the approval of study programs), complete record-keeping and visualization of data related to study programs, and the sharing of current information and supporting documents. As evidenced by the self-evaluation report and the structured interviews conducted during the on-site visit, this system is reliable, generally user-friendly, and enables individual stakeholders within the entire quality assurance and evaluation system to appropriately carry out their assigned tasks. The system has appropriately configured access rights, ensuring that individual stakeholders have access only to the areas or specific study programs under their purview or responsibility. Individual pieces of information and supporting documents are well-structured within the system, and their accessibility and presentation meet the requirements for good user-friendliness. The system is continuously developed and updated based on gradual advancements in this field and feedback from individual user groups/bodies, with the RMU Quality Assurance Office collecting, evaluating, and forwarding these requests to the relevant department for subsequent implementation. At the same time, however, it is necessary to point out that the system's high robustness and complexity also represent a partial weakness. As stated in the self-assessment report (SWOT analysis) and as communicated to the evaluation committee during structured interviews, one potential threat is that the high robustness and complexity of the MU IS may limit its future development due to insufficient capacity (e.g., personnel) to implement new necessary functionalities. Similarly, insufficient capacity may also limit the speed of modifying existing functions if these are not given sufficiently high priority.

## Analysis

Based on the provided documentation, system access, and structured interviews conducted during the on-site visit, it can generally be concluded that the setup of methodological and administrative support within the quality assurance system is functional, comprehensive, and, for the most part, adequately

supported in terms of both personnel and technical capacity. It is evident that the system has been developed over many years, during which the roles of individual stakeholders have gradually been balanced: it currently represents a well-oiled machine with established practices. At the same time, however, individual stakeholders must constantly adapt to developments in the field, which presents a constant challenge for maintaining the system's current high standard.

The evaluation of the RMU's OpK activities is highly positive among the various collaborating stakeholders. As specific examples regarding the RVH, it can be noted that RVH members highly evaluate the precise preparation of the content, processes, and methodology for individual RVH meetings, the existence of a comprehensive set of guidelines and materials for the effective "onboarding" of new RVH members, and the good communication between the RMU Quality Office and the faculty administrative level. Similarly, as specific examples regarding the relationship between the RMU Quality Coordination Office and faculty quality coordinators, it can be noted that faculty coordinators positively evaluate the structure and functionality of mutual communication (organization of regular meetings, existence of a shared environment), systematic information sharing regarding planned adjustments to the quality assurance system, and the facilitation of reflection on past RVH meetings. The activities of the RMU Quality Office are currently adequately supported in terms of both personnel and funding (according to statements, funds from the program to support strategic management of higher education institutions are involved, among other sources; this program is currently allocated until the end of 2025). Regarding the RMU Quality Assurance Office's cooperation with other RMU departments, it was reported during on-site interviews that regular monthly (informal) meetings are held with the Strategy Department and the Research Department, during which information is exchanged, positions are clarified, all with the aim of reaching a majority consensus on the next steps. The frequency and format of these meetings were evaluated as sufficient. During a more detailed discussion regarding the cooperation between the RMU OpK and the Quality Department, it was reported that responsibilities for certain activities/processes are currently being reassigned. A specific example is that the RMU Quality Office will now be responsible for the content of the course survey—previously, the Strategy Department was responsible for this area, and the RMU Quality Office subsequently worked with the results. The RMU Quality Office anticipates that certain content modifications will be made.

During the structured interviews, two challenges for the current activities of the RMU OpK were also discussed. These relate, on the one hand, to the robustness and complexity of the MU Information System (IS MU) described above, where the trade-off for this state is the partial rigidity or inflexibility of the system. The RMU OpK would appreciate greater flexibility in its operations to implement requirements arising from the needs of stakeholders at both the university and faculty levels. The second point was the need for adequate and timely preparation for the period around 2028, when the authorization to implement the majority of study programs approved under the new structure in 2018 will expire (this concerns approximately 250 programs). Current preparedness for this period was assessed by OpK RMU staff as significantly better than it was in 2018, as over the past years of operation, the entire quality assurance and evaluation system has balanced out, stabilized, and undergone a significant qualitative shift at all its levels: the roles of individual stakeholders have been clarified and refined; the decision-making practices of the MU Academic Council have stabilized; and internal evaluation processes for study programs have been routinely conducted for several years. Preparations for this "reaccreditation" period include setting a timely schedule and providing appropriate communication of information to the faculties; furthermore (according to the interviewees), there are plans to potentially strengthen personnel capacities in the area of methodological and administrative support; strengthening these positions is absolutely crucial, particularly for faculties with a high number of study programs.

The evaluation of the roles and activities of the faculty quality coordinators is very positive for the various stakeholders. As specific examples related to the activities of study program guarantors, it can be noted

that guarantors across MU's individual faculties highly value the professional expertise of faculty quality coordinators, the timeliness and reliability of the information they provide, and generally the fact that they serve as a functional support in the processes that must be carried out from an administrative and technical standpoint. In the structured interviews, it was noted, for example, that faculty quality coordinators create a "safe" environment for program guarantors and that they effectively assist with the necessary procedural tasks so that guarantors can focus primarily on the academic parameters of the study programs. The financial support for the activities of faculty coordinators was also discussed during the structured interviews. It was reported that the central level contributes to their funding (with different faculties receiving varying amounts of funds for their activities, e.g., based on the size of the faculty or the number of study programs offered), and also that the funding for faculty coordinators' activities is covered, among other sources, by funds from the program to support strategic management of higher education institutions, which in its current form is allocated until the end of 2025; it will therefore be necessary to secure adequate financial resources for the subsequent period. Coordinators generally responded positively to questions regarding conditions for further professional growth; it is clear that what were originally project-based positions have become a natural part of the university environment.

However, there are differences in how faculty quality coordinators are involved in the discussion of relevant materials within faculty bodies (Faculty Academic Councils and Faculty Boards). The text above describes in detail the variability in these bodies' approaches to accreditation issues, and notes that a higher degree of standardization of outputs from individual units would be desirable in the future (also included in MU's self-evaluation report). During interviews conducted during the on-site visit, it was confirmed that the forms of cooperation between coordinators and faculty self-governing bodies also vary (e.g., the presence of a coordinator at Academic Senate discussions is not common). It is therefore recommended that, in the future, processes be clarified, a higher degree of standardization be achieved, and best practices be shared among faculties. This approach is also one of the proposed measures within the SWOT analysis prepared in MU's self-evaluation report, including the possibility of involving faculty quality coordinators in addressing this weakness of the system.

It can therefore be concluded that both main elements of the personnel, administrative, and methodological level of quality assurance are functional, continuously respond to the system's development—including preparation for future challenges—and simultaneously provide their own initiatives for the further development and refinement of the system.

With regard to the third backbone element of methodological and administrative support—namely, MU's information system—the key facts have already been detailed above. At this point, it can be summarized that the relevant technical elements and functionalities provide functional and highly comprehensive support for individual user groups throughout the quality assurance and evaluation system and clearly fulfill their role. The system functions as a central database covering a significant amount of data and supporting materials for individual study programs. However, one cannot overlook the fact that has been repeatedly mentioned, namely that the system's high robustness and complexity also represent a partial weakness—particularly for its flexible development in the future. Likewise, it is necessary to continue carefully monitoring which positions require what specific information, as during the interviews, some program directors expressed a desire to expand the current view in the Garant application.

## Findings

The Evaluation Committee commends

- the comprehensive and functional system of methodological and administrative support for quality assurance processes at both the university and faculty levels, with currently sufficient personnel, material, and technical resources,

- the clearly positive evaluation of the setup of methodological and administrative support by academic stakeholders—namely the RVH, guarantors, program and field councils, faculty leadership, and self-governing bodies,
- active and regular cooperation between the RMU Quality Coordination Office and other relevant RMU departments in addressing related or associated matters,
- highly positive evaluations of the activities of faculty quality coordinators by study program guarantors and their natural and full integration into the organizational structure of the faculties,
- the MU IS (Garant application) as a central integrated database providing specifically targeted functional support to all user groups involved in quality assurance processes.

The Evaluation Committee recommends

- ensuring the maintenance of high-quality staffing for methodological-administrative support at both the university and faculty levels, and to take active steps at both the university and faculty levels to prepare for the period starting in 2028, when, according to current regulations, the authorization to offer a significant number of study programs will “expire,” including securing adequate funding for administrative and methodological activities as early as 2025,
- ensure a higher degree of standardization of outputs/documentation from the relevant bodies (Academic Senate and Scientific Board) of various faculties—refining the process, form, and content of outputs—consider the possibility of involving faculty quality coordinators in addressing this area, and share examples of best practices among faculties,
- actively take steps to increase the flexibility and speed of implementing changes planned within the IS MU for the needs of the quality assurance system, including taking into account the real needs of study program guarantors as its key actors and end users.

## 2.4 Student involvement in the quality assurance system (beyond the evaluation of teaching in study programs)

### Description

The quality assurance process, including student involvement in the educational quality process, is defined in the university’s internal regulations, particularly in the Rules for Internal Evaluation and the Study Program Quality Regulations. These regulations define procedures for teaching evaluation in study programs and, not least, for student involvement in decision-making processes and the collection of feedback. Students participate in the process at several levels, through both formal and informal mechanisms. Formal structures include program councils, which have been established for bachelor’s and master’s degree programs. They serve as an advisory body to the program guarantor and discuss changes to the degree program; they also evaluate the program’s development plan. Student nominations take place via the IS information system, so each study program at the university has its own student representative.

A significant step is the establishment of an informal Student Panel within the RVH as an advisory body to the student member. Although not yet formally established, this panel allows students from various faculties to informally comment on key materials and strategic issues related to the accreditation of study programs and the quality of teaching; at the same time, it incorporates the voices of doctoral students, who, as a matter of principle, cannot serve on the disciplinary councils of doctoral study programs. Panel members currently rely on the personal sharing of documents, as they do not have formal access to materials in the university’s information system. Last but not least, it is necessary to mention feedback in the form of surveys, where the long-term challenges to be addressed include both their low response rates

and students' concerns about the impact of open feedback on their relationships with instructors. Feedback also takes place informally through student meetings, personal surveys, or focus groups. Some faculties (FSS) publish survey results, which increases students' motivation to complete them.

## Analysis

Based on an on-site visit and an examination of the course survey structure, it appears that providing feedback is time-consuming for students, especially during the evaluation of a large number of courses; in some cases, formulating quality feedback can take up to 3 hours. The current state of the surveys leads students to focus only on extremely positive or negative experiences, which can affect student motivation and, consequently, survey response rates. Students also worry about maintaining their anonymity when providing detailed evaluations, especially regarding more sensitive experiences. This issue is partly linked to instructors' willingness to accept constructive and critical feedback. At some faculties, students have direct insight through the information system into how their feedback is addressed, which strengthens trust in the established mechanisms. Elsewhere, faculty compensation is tied to survey results, which encourages a focus on high-quality feedback. Discussions with students also revealed a strong need for the introduction of timely, ongoing feedback during the semester, which would allow students to respond more quickly to potential issues and enable faculty to adjust their teaching to meet students' current needs.

Program Councils (PR) allow students to provide feedback on the content and teaching of individual study programs through nominated representatives. The Evaluation Committee has also encountered situations where a student was nominated without their knowledge; however, it believes that the intention to nominate someone should naturally be communicated within the student community, and it is not necessary to create a formal workflow in the information system for this purpose. Program councils meet at varying frequencies; according to internal regulations, at least once a year, and in some cases twice a year or even more frequently. While there was a demand during meetings with students to standardize the minimum frequency of meetings, concerns were also raised that standardization might cause the feedback to lose its informal character. At some faculties, PRs are convened regularly, and students appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on teaching through this alternative method in addition to surveys; at other faculties, awareness of PR activities is clearly insufficient, which limits their effectiveness. A typical problem is the turnover of student representatives, as there is no systematic onboarding or transfer of experience between incoming and outgoing students. Based on the PR's operational experience to date, students in combined-form programs bring practical experience to the discussion, while full-time students focus more on day-to-day operational matters.

The Student Panel at the RVH functions as an advisory body to the student representative on the RVH; it meets one week before the RVH meeting, and the student representative presents its comments at the RVH session. Panel members are not members of other university bodies, which allows them to maintain their independence regarding the issues under discussion; some students believe that formalizing the panel could lead to influence or the need to be accountable; in an informal setting, they feel its members have greater freedom to share their own opinions or those of other students. Given the Student Panel's current status, its members are not permitted to access data directly through the university's information system. Various meetings with groups of respondents revealed that the Student Panel's involvement—judging by the pilot phase—is effective and is welcomed and highly valued by RVH members.

Based on the analysis conducted, it can also be concluded that the student support system at Masaryk University encompasses a wide range of services provided through several key departments. The university strives to adapt to new challenges associated with the diverse needs of students and is expanding the range of services offered to them, such as the Counseling Center and the Career Center. The Teiresiás Center is also highly effective, significantly easing matters related to studies for students with specific

needs. Students can thus fully devote themselves to their studies, and faculty members are also made aware of their specific needs. A positive step is the introduction of the ombudsman position, which addresses violations of rights on campus—within the student community, the academic community, and the broader employee community. Student support services also communicate in foreign languages and address the needs of international students.

Despite the highly professional provision of academic support services, there are several areas that require improvement. The meeting revealed that some departments face insufficient awareness of their existence, activities, and the type of services they provide. Students may thus have difficulty identifying the correct department to contact in the event of specific problems. However, this is not a major issue, as the departments share information with one another, which indicates good communication between them. A problematic element, however, is the persistent downplaying of specific needs encountered by the Teiresiás Center, and the Career Center also faces this downplaying; for example, its activities were not reflected in the 2023 annual report.

## Findings

The Evaluation Committee commends

- the multi-level involvement of students in quality assurance mechanisms, both through the primary collection of feedback and, in particular, through membership in program councils (where student representatives participate in the annual small-scale internal evaluation) and through standard participation in the large-scale internal evaluation (once every 5 years),
- the diversity of methods for gathering student feedback, which allows for faculty-specific characteristics and needs to be taken into account within a unified system best practices: in addition to using surveys with transparent sharing of results in the IS, which motivates students to complete surveys and subsequently encourages instructors to adjust teaching methods or content (FFS), this includes, for example, the option to use custom questionnaires with specific questions “tailored” to the course (Faculty of Pharmacy), or ongoing reflection on teaching during the semester (Faculty of Education – special education, MOS),
- examples of informal student gatherings and onboarding into program councils (FSS, FF), which ensure continuity and enable new members to quickly adapt to the processes and context of the program council
- open and informal discussion within the student panel at the RVH, whose outputs are taken seriously and considered in a spirit of partnership during meetings of the Internal Evaluation Council,
- an extensive student support system demonstrating effective cooperation among individual departments, consideration of the needs of international students through multilingual communication, and the Teiresiás Center’s ability to tailor the study program to students with specific needs to the greatest extent possible.

The Evaluation Committee recommends

- shortening centrally administered surveys and offering an optional option for greater personalization so as to reduce the time burden of completing them while more clearly reflecting the specific characteristics of individual faculties and courses,
- consider introducing ongoing feedback during the semester, which would help to better and more promptly monitor any academic difficulties on the part of students and identify teaching methods that are not fully effective on the part of instructors,

- Strengthen support for new students' participation in program councils through timely information campaigns, orientation, and, where appropriate, more intensive support from faculty quality officers;
- In connection with the composition of the RVH, consider increasing the number of student members to two; given the very short term of membership (2 years), it appears highly desirable to ensure the sustainable presence of a student voice with certain expertise and institutional memory (the evaluation committee is also aware that, given the nomination process, this recommendation may constitute a significant legislative change; it therefore formulates it as a suggestion for the longer term);
- continue to raise awareness of the activities of student support services and give due attention to the issues they address, which are currently still perceived as marginal.

## 2.5 Teaching Competencies and Their Development and Evaluation

### Description

The university has been engaged in the development of teaching competencies on a long-term and systematic basis; this topic is mentioned in strategic plans and their updates, and is subsequently reflected in annual activity reports. Centralized formative tools for improving the quality of teaching through the development of pedagogical competencies include both specialized internal project competitions and educational activities for academic staff.

Internal project competitions are organized in two categories: a call for proposals titled "Support for Innovation in the Teaching of Core Subjects at MU" is issued regularly (twice a year); in 2023, an additional call for proposals titled "Support for Excellent Study Programs at MU" was also issued. These initiatives focus on the qualitative development of teaching, the introduction of new educational methods, and the support of faculty professional growth. One of the key elements is reflective meetings of research team members, which provide a platform for sharing experiences, building community collaboration, and addressing challenges related to teaching innovation.

Educational activities focused on the pedagogical development of academic staff are centrally coordinated and implemented through the Center for Competence Development (CERPEK), which offers a wide range of workshops, specialized courses, and seminars focused on various aspects of teaching. Available documents indicate that plans also include the creation of so-called faculty-level CERPEKs, which are intended to provide more specialized support to instructors and address faculty-specific needs in the area of pedagogical competency development. An important component of this plan is also the development of online methodological tools and the training of new instructors specializing in higher education pedagogy.

A related tool for ensuring the required teaching competencies is the planned completion of a competency framework for university instructors adapted to the MU environment. This framework will anchor the establishment of teaching quality support at the institutional level and is intended to ensure the comprehensive development of a system of educational programs and activities (experience sharing, peer visits), which will most likely be mandatory to varying degrees for instructors at different stages of their careers.

### Analysis

Based on available materials and information gathered during the on-site visit (where the topic of pedagogical competencies and their development was one of the themes of approximately half of the

panel sessions and discussions), it appears that MU devotes adequate attention to this area, initiated by the university's central structures. The key sources of data on the quality of teaching and, to a certain extent, on the pedagogical competencies of faculty members are primarily course- and surveys, as well as the conclusions of regular program council meetings (feedback from students and employer representatives). MU management has declared its intention to create an evaluation tool for the assessment of instructors' pedagogical competencies, which should subsequently be incorporated into quality assurance efforts.

CERPEK is responsible for the development of MU faculty members' pedagogical competencies. However, the RMU Quality Department collaborates with CERPEK on this matter (the RMU Quality Department develops the system, while CERPEK provides the service), and the collaboration between the RMU Quality Department and CERPEK is gradually deepening. CERPEK's activities are currently funded through project grants; however, stakeholders are aware of the need to transition to institutional funding. Courses and activities organized by CERPEK are currently voluntary or recommended; however, the introduction of certain mandatory training, primarily for beginning academic staff, is being considered for the future. At the RVH level, there is also discussion about linking documented course completion, for example, to the evaluation and approval of new study programs; of interest is the relatively dynamic evolution of opinions regarding the appropriateness of such a system within the RVH itself, shifting from initially negative, emotionally charged individual attitudes to an increasingly supportive institutional stance.

According to available information and statements from relevant stakeholders, CERPEK is currently working on finalizing a competency framework for academic staff with a focus on teaching skills (specifically, this involves adapting other competency frameworks to the conditions at MU). It is precisely this competency framework for university teachers that should become one of the pillars of high-quality teaching at MU and should be incorporated as a mandatory component into the career development system for academic staff. However, interviews conducted during the on-site visit revealed somewhat differing attitudes, evaluations, and expectations regarding the benefits of the competency framework being developed among various groups of respondents. While high expectations and a well-thought-out integration of the competency framework with specific types of activities leading to improved teaching quality were evident among MU leadership, central bodies, CERPEK staff, and the RMU Quality Department, some respondents from the faculties (across all levels and individual faculty bodies) expressed a certain skepticism and even concern about a further increase in the workload of academic staff without adequate benefit.

At a time when the competency framework has not yet been finalized, individual CERPEK courses are created based on requests and specifications from the faculties, or they are initiated by CERPEK staff. Once the competency framework is established, additional courses will also be developed that are directly targeted at specific required competencies. The evaluation of the quality and value of the courses offered and conducted by CERPEK was mostly positive, both based on the personal experiences of interview respondents during on-site visits and on the shared experiences of other colleagues. As reasons for this markedly positive feedback, respondents mentioned, for example, the voluntary nature of course attendance and the efforts of CERPEK and its instructors to make the courses as engaging as possible; however, there was also concern that once course completion becomes mandatory or universal, it will lead to a routine approach by CERPEK and a decline in quality. One of MU's long-term goals—specifically, the consideration of the continuous improvement of teaching competencies as a sub-indicator in habilitation and appointment procedures—is perceived by a portion of the academic community across various hierarchical positions as a form of formalism, and in extreme cases, even as unnecessary. For example, according to informed respondents, mandatory training at the Faculty of Medicine already takes the form of e-learning; however, data on its effectiveness and evaluation are not known to the committee.

Across all surveyed groups of respondents, it was repeatedly noted that while the courses offered by CERPEK are beneficial and generally well-evaluated, the current workload of academic staff is too high for them to be sufficiently motivated to pursue further self-education and self-development in the area of pedagogical competencies. There was also mild criticism, for example, that it is difficult to gain admission to some very popular and in-demand courses due to the high number of applicants. According to available data, interest in CERPEK courses varies significantly across faculties, though the exact causes are unknown.

Another topic that requires further discussion and resolution is the creation of so-called “faculty CERPEKs,” as declared by MU and CERPEK leadership, which is also met with some skepticism at the faculties, including concerns about an unnecessary increase in bureaucracy. The evaluation committee cannot assess the actual extent of these uncertainties and doubts; however, it is clearly necessary to openly address this issue with the relevant stakeholders at the faculties and find an optimal model for the functioning of a university-wide unit that extends to individual faculties according to their specific needs and requirements. It would also be desirable to streamline certain communication channels regarding CERPEK’s activities and the upcoming competency framework to its end target group.

Internal project competitions, which are announced periodically and aim to support the teaching of specific courses, also serve to improve the quality of instruction and develop pedagogical competencies. Many of the respondents had positive experiences with this mechanism, although specific responses expressed a desire for greater support not only for the preferred plans to create entirely new subjects but also for projects focused on innovating existing subjects.

Although the synthesis of information obtained from available source materials (the self-evaluation report, MU’s strategic plans and their updates, the CERPEK website, and the RMU Quality Department) and from interviews conducted during the on-site inspection revealed certain specific risks and differing evaluations of the benefits and effectiveness of the declared objectives (e.g., competency framework, faculty CERPEK, mandatory training), it must be noted that MU’s objectives and actions regarding the development of pedagogical competencies are certainly moving in the right direction and will lead to improved teaching quality. A certain degree of individual and, to some extent, institutional conservatism is evident in the discussions held regarding the development of pedagogical competencies, most likely stemming from the long-term prioritization of creative (i.e., research) quality over pedagogical quality. To successfully and consensually achieve the set goals, it would therefore be desirable to collaborate even more intensively with the faculties and their governing bodies on the risk areas identified above, to reflect on their relevant feedback, and to subsequently incorporate it into the implementation steps. A change in the mindset of key stakeholders and rank-and-file academic staff will undoubtedly also contribute to the successful achievement of the goals, which can be partially achieved through natural generational turnover on the one hand and economic incentives on the other. The Evaluation Committee believes that the prerequisites for success in this matter are patience, the sharing of best practices that take into account feedback from satisfied academic staff and students—and, above all, time.

## Findings

The Evaluation Committee commends

- the well-thought-out and gradually implemented university-wide conceptual strategy for the development of teaching competencies, with adequate reflection on both successful and unsuccessful steps and subsequent adjustments to the next steps,
- the existence and operation of the university-wide CERPEK center, with a generally well-received offering of educational courses tailored to the needs, requests, and requirements of the faculties,
- the implementation of a project competition focused on teaching innovation primarily through newly introduced courses.

The Evaluation Committee recommends

- conducting a thorough discussion on the purpose, content, and, in particular, the realistic future use of the planned competency framework for university teachers, and the mandatory completion of courses linked to it,
- clarify the division of roles in the development and subsequent implementation of the strategy related to the development of teaching competencies (currently, the delineation of responsibilities in strategy development appears to be undefined and shifts between the Quality Department, MU management, and CERPEK), and consequently clarify the role of the planned faculty-level CERPEKs,
- Extend support for project calls to include the innovation of existing courses.

## 3 Quality Assurance of Masaryk University Study Programs

The second part of the evaluation report addresses issues covered in Section VI of the Government Regulation on Institutional Accreditation.

- VI. Processes for the approval, management, and regular evaluation of the quality of study programs
  - VI.2. Set of internal requirements for study programs
  - VI.3. Monitoring compliance with internal requirements and corrective action
  - VI.4. Evaluation of the Quality of Study Programs

Both the Evaluation Commission and the university agreed that the external evaluation is not focused on re-assessing the study programs themselves in terms of content or staffing, but rather on the processes established at the university for this assessment during the accreditation procedure and during the internal evaluation of study programs, and on their comparability both across faculties and within the RVH's own decision-making practice.

### 3.1 Approval of study programs (granting of authorization), including control measures during accreditation

#### Description

The study program approval process at MU was established in 2017 by the internal regulation *Approval, Management, and Evaluation of the Quality of Masaryk University Study Programs* (amended three times, most recently in February 2022). The assessment of sub-processes related to the approval of study programs is based on this internal regulation. Effective May 1, 2024, the *Masaryk University Study Program Quality Regulations* came into force, replacing the original regulation and integrating continuing education programs into the quality assurance and evaluation system.

The process begins with the preparation of a proposal for the establishment of a study program, which is drafted by the future authorizing body (faculty), typically the future guarantor. The proposal includes a description of the study program, a feasibility study, and a nomination of two external evaluators for expert assessment. The dean submits the proposal for the establishment of the study program to the RVH, which conducts the assessment of its alignment with the strategy of the given field of education and with the strategic plan for MU's educational and creative activities.

After the proposal for the establishment of the study program is approved, the proposed guarantor prepares a complete draft of the study program (application for approval, self-evaluation report on compliance with MU quality standards, list of faculty and staff), which serves as the basis for the preparation of evaluation reports by approved external evaluators. The proposal for the establishment of the program is discussed at an evaluation meeting attended by the dean, the proposed program guarantor, at least one program evaluator (usually a member of the RVH), and, if necessary, other members of the faculty or MU administration. The program guarantor incorporates the evaluators' reports and the minutes of the evaluation meeting into the proposal for the establishment of the study program. The completed proposal is discussed by the faculty's Academic Senate and submitted to the faculty's Scientific Council for approval. The proposal for the establishment of the study program, approved by the faculty's Scientific Council, is submitted by the rector to the RVH. A rapporteur is appointed from among the members of the RVH, who, after reviewing the supporting documents, formulates an opinion; a similar procedure is applied to proposals for the expansion, modification, or extension of a study program. The RVH subsequently discusses the proposal for the establishment of the study program in the presence of the proposed guarantor and the dean's. The RVH may approve the proposal and grant authorization to implement the program for a period of up to seven years. The RVH has the option to reject the proposal to establish a study program, return it for revision, or request an audit report.

A program council is appointed for each bachelor's or master's degree program; this council serves as an advisory body to the program guarantor (Article 9 of *the Masaryk University Study Program Quality Regulations*). In the case of doctoral study programs, this is a field council (Article 10 of *the Masaryk University Study Program Quality Regulations*), which is appointed by the dean following approval by the Academic Senate (at least 2 academic staff members from MUNI and at least 2 experts from outside MUNI). The Program/Departmental Board discusses proposals for the expansion, modification, and extension of the authorization to offer a study program.

Proposals to expand the authorization to offer a study program or to make changes to the study program are discussed by the program/departmental board of the study program. Subsequently, the guarantor prepares a complete draft application for the expansion of the authorization to offer the study program, which is submitted to the faculty's Academic Senate for comment and to the faculty's Scientific Board for approval. The proposal, supplemented by the minutes of the Faculty Academic Senate and the Faculty Scientific Council, is then submitted to the RVH, which, with the participation of the program guarantor and the dean, decides whether to approve it or return it for revision.

In the event of a substantial change defined in *the Study Program Quality Regulations* as a "deviation from the existing characteristics of the study program," the guarantor prepares a proposal containing a justified request for the substantial change and other relevant documents. It is submitted to the RVH, which decides whether to approve it or return it for revision, with the participation of the dean of the faculty and the guarantor of the study program.

The intention to extend the authorization to offer the study program, including any substantial changes, shall be discussed by the program/field council of the study program no later than one year before the expiration of the authorization to offer the study program. The guarantor then prepares a proposal for extension, which includes the application, program data exports from the MU Information System (IS MU), and, in particular, documents from internal evaluations that are key to the assessment of the program's performance to date. This complete proposal is submitted to the Academic Senate for discussion and to the Faculty Scientific Council for approval. The proposal to extend the study program, approved by the Faculty Scientific Council, is submitted by the Rector to the RVH. The RVH conducts the assessment of the proposal and, if approved, may extend the authorization to offer the study program for up to 10 years.

In the event of approval of a proposal to establish a study program or a proposal to extend a study program that MU is not authorized to offer under institutional accreditation, the outcome of the RVH meeting is the approval of the intention to submit an application for accreditation or the intention to submit an application for the extension of accreditation validity pursuant to Section 80(3) of the Act; The Rector shall immediately forward this application to the NAB.

## Analysis

The process for preparing and approving study programs at MU is thoughtfully designed with the aim of identifying potential issues right from the start. The future guarantor of the study program plays a key role, as they both prepare the proposal for the study program and nominate two external evaluators who will conduct the assessment of the final draft of the application. The support of the faculty quality coordinator is utilized as early as the preparation of the study program proposal, and as emerged from meetings with study program guarantors, this position and support are highly valued. Requirements for professional quality and expertise, including international experience of external evaluators, are clearly defined. In the files from the sample of 17 selected study programs, it was possible to verify that this principle was fulfilled to the greatest extent possible in the proposals for the establishment of these study programs. Primary responsibility for the quality of the study program evaluation is thus delegated far more to the faculty level and the future guarantor. The role of the RVH at this stage of the approval process is primarily for the assessment of compliance with MU's strategy and direction. From a systemic perspective, it is well established that in the event of a recommendation by the RVH to revise the proposal or even in the event of a negative opinion, the faculty/future guarantor can respond at this early stage, and the effort that would have been expended in preparing a complete application is not wasted.

To develop a comprehensive proposal for a new study program, the prospective program director may utilize methodologies (e.g., *the Guide to Developing Study Program Specifications*), outputs from the MU information system, collaboration with the quality coordinator, and consultations with the Quality Department and the RVH (particularly with a member from the relevant faculty). The evaluation of the study program proposal by external evaluators is designed to be formative, with the aim of improving the proposal; therefore, even in the case of an unambiguously positive evaluation of a specific standard (the "YES" box checked), it would be appropriate to require at least a brief written statement confirming compliance with the standard; In fact, within the submitted sample, the evaluation committee encountered a wide range of approaches among evaluators, ranging from merely formal approval, through explicit collegial and even friendly support, to substantive critical reflection with specific and highly relevant suggestions. An evaluation meeting organized by the future guarantor, attended by the dean, evaluators, and possibly a member of the RVH and other faculty or MU leadership, is a very effective tool for the final preparation of the proposal. During this meeting, the evaluators' reviews and recommendations are discussed (at least one external evaluator must attend the meeting; remote participation is also permitted), and the study program proposal may be further updated following the meeting. This procedure contributes to the preparation of the highest-quality proposal for the establishment of a study program, which is subsequently discussed by the faculty's academic senate and scientific council and forwarded to the RVH.

As emerged from discussions with members of the academic senates and scientific councils of the faculties, the form, scope, and content of the deliberations (extensive discussion versus formal voting) vary from faculty to faculty. The fact that there is no standardized form for these deliberations is also reflected in the level of detail in the minutes of these bodies; differing practices were also confirmed by materials from a sample of study programs (e.g., minutes of the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Economics and Administration at Masaryk University or the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University containing only approved resolutions; the Faculty of Arts at Masaryk University using per rollam voting; minutes of the Academic Senate of the Faculty of Medicine at Masaryk University

containing only resolutions; and minutes of the Academic Senate of the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University containing a more detailed description of the deliberations).

From the perspective of discussing a proposal to establish a study program at the RVH, the key figure is the rapporteur selected from among the Council members. The Evaluation Committee was also informed of a previous plan to assign specific study programs to specific RVH members to ensure their ongoing monitoring; however, given the Council's operating procedures and workload, such an ambitious systematization appeared—and continues to appear—completely unrealistic. The selection of the rapporteur falls under the purview of the Vice-Chair of the RVH and is not strictly tied to their expertise regarding the study program under assessment. After reviewing all available materials related to the proposal, including the conclusions from the evaluation meeting, the rapporteur prepares a statement for the RVH in which they justify why they recommend or do not recommend the proposal for approval. It is clear that the rapporteur can assess compliance with quality standards, but from the perspective of professional expertise, the opinion is based on the conclusions of external reviews. The established practice of mandatory participation by the program guarantor in RVH meetings, where matters related to the proposal to establish a study program or its changes are discussed, contributes to the transparency of RVH proceedings and can also be seen as immediate feedback to the guarantor. Moreover, the Commission appreciates the internal document “Decision-Making Practices of the MU RVH,” which is a very good tool not only for maintaining consistency in the RVH's decision-making but, above all, provides detailed information for guarantors when preparing applications for study program accreditation.

As emerged from the meeting with study program guarantors, they feel that they are often constrained by the conflict between the high level of responsibility placed on them by virtue of guaranteeing the study program and the lack of authority, e.g., regarding staffing the study program or remuneration. However, this situation is general and stems from the Higher Education Act. A very useful tool for program guarantors is the Garant application, which not only aids in preparing new accreditation applications but also provides basic information and data on the program that can be used in the event of an expansion, modification, or extension of the program; however, it was also noted in the discussion that there is sometimes an issue with the scope of information available to guarantors, and there is a demand for greater ease of use when working with the system.

When preparing a proposal to expand, modify, or extend a study program, the key body is the study program's program council (or joint program council, as applicable), or the field council for doctoral study programs. A methodological guide titled “RVH – Guide to Changes in Study Programs” has been prepared for program coordinators. To support the study program's program council, a Brief Guide for Program Councils (2024) has been developed; similarly, for members of the study program's field council, a Brief Guide for the Field Council on Study Program Quality Assurance (2024) has been created.

Finally, it is necessary to mention a topic that regularly came up during a number of meetings as part of the on-site visit. There remains ambiguity or uncertainty regarding whether and how to take three parameters into account when approving study programs: economic feasibility (or sustainability), social demand (or the needs of the professional sphere), and the employability of graduates in the field (or their employability; at the same time, however, it is worth noting that “employability in the field” is increasingly being questioned as a concept, as the definitions and boundaries of fields are changing and shifting very rapidly in the professional sphere). The evaluation committee, moreover, encountered a unique case of a study program that was only recently accredited but is currently being phased out, with no plans for its continuation; Discussions indicate that the reasons for this decision are not so much economic as they are content-related, specifically that the study program does not fulfill the original vision regarding students' expectations or the labor market's demand for the declared competencies. It is clear that the current MU leadership approached the RVH with a request to place greater emphasis on the economic aspects of the educational offerings; at the same time, past minutes reveal that the RVH lacks both the

data and the appropriate methodology for this expertise and therefore leaves this evaluation to the faculties. Furthermore, during the meeting, there was a passing mention of so-called “excellent fields of study” (though without specifying particular study programs), which are exceptional in their focus and staffing and are supported by the university or faculties; it is therefore unclear whether there is a “typology” within which, for example, the parameter of prestige or significant social benefit would play an explicit role. The aforementioned parameters are currently a topic across the entire higher education sector in connection with university funding, the increase in student numbers demanded by political representatives, and finally the dynamic transformation of the labor market related not only to technological development. It is therefore positive that this discussion is taking place openly at MU and that ways are being sought to take into account the broad range of educational offerings, which cannot always be “squeezed” into clear quantitative indicators.

The Commission concluded that the process for approving study programs is set up in a transparent and functional manner and is also implemented in accordance with applicable external and internal legislation.

## Findings

The Evaluation Commission commends

- the functional setup of the entire process for establishing a new study program, in which the intention to establish a study program is first discussed at the RVH, followed by a discussion of the complete, finalized proposal for the study program,
- the establishment of the process for selecting evaluators for the study program proposal and the framework for preparing the evaluation report (formative evaluation) already at the faculty level, including the institute’s evaluation meeting; based on the evaluators’ recommendations, this process allows for updating/improving the prepared study program proposal, while leaving the expert assessment of the SP proposal to the faculty,
- data and information integration of the MU information system with targeted support for the creation of the accreditation dossier for the study program guarantor – the *Garant* application,
- Establishing a support system for the development of a plan or proposal for a new study program, including a faculty quality coordinator and centrally developed methodological materials from the Quality Department.

The Evaluation Committee recommends:

- standardizing the content of discussions regarding proposals for the establishment of study programs at meetings of the Academic Senate and the Faculty Scientific Council, and ensuring that the conclusions of these discussions are reflected in sufficient detail in the minutes of these bodies,
- when conducting the assessment of a proposal for the establishment of a study program, to continue seeking appropriate mechanisms for evaluating its financial demands and the sustainability of securing resources, while also supporting the managerial responsibility of faculty bodies in this area of strategic decision-making; In addition to the proposed content of the study program (including the declared competencies of graduates), take into account other sources of information regarding the necessity of the study program to supplement the opinion of the academic supervisor;
- amend the requirements for the external evaluator’s assessment of the study program proposal so that the evaluation of compliance with a specific standard is always accompanied by a written commentary.

## 3.2 Evaluation of study programs (during implementation), including periodic (comprehensive) and regular (annual) processes

### Description

For many years, the University has been conducting internal evaluations of study programs, which form a key pillar of educational quality assurance. The entire process is clearly defined in the Masaryk University Study Program Quality Regulations. This process includes two main levels of evaluation. The first is a *minor internal evaluation*, i.e., an annual process carried out by program councils, focused on current results and development plans for the study program; the program council evaluates key indicators such as the results of the admissions process, state exams, surveys, and internationalization, with the evaluation records archived in the MU Information System. The second is a *major internal evaluation* conducted once every five years, which provides comprehensive feedback from students, employers, and academics; the main output is a program development plan for the next period.

The university is constantly improving its internal evaluation processes, both in terms of organization and content. For example, since 2022, evaluations have placed greater emphasis on distance learning, and the methodology for evaluating doctoral programs has been revised; these programs are now linked to research evaluations. In all evaluation processes, key support is provided by program management data available through the Garant application and the MU Employee Portal.

The self-evaluation report indicates that in 2023, a major internal evaluation of undergraduate programs was conducted at five faculties. The results showed that the process is effective, efficient, and, most importantly, positively evaluated, particularly by the program directors. At the meetings, many participants appreciated the fact that this is not a formal procedure but a professional discussion about the status and needs of study programs, which gives this mechanism a developmental and formative character. Based on feedback, the documents were streamlined and simplified, which allows for better data usability and user support.

### Analysis

To begin with, it should be noted that although the quality management system at MU appears quite extensive at first glance, it functions relatively flexibly and without the major complications that such large-scale processes often entail. The entire system is based on two types of evaluations with different frequencies, which include a number of analyses of individual segments of the SP, ranging from the workload of academic staff to course evaluations.

The annual small-scale internal evaluation is conducted entirely under the auspices of the faculties, and its structure and scope appropriately reflect the fact that it is a review of the academic year just concluded. Each undergraduate study program has a program council, which includes student representatives and meets at least once a year. For doctoral study programs, these are the departmental councils. Although the discussion regarding the development of a study program often takes place continuously throughout the year, a uniformly structured annual checkpoint is a suitable tool for monitoring the “life” of a given program. Many program directors view the requirement to prepare a report from this evaluation as beneficial for themselves (broader discussions lead to a number of useful clarifications and the identification of problems and needs, both short-term and long-term). A possible improvement from the perspective of the overall system, however, is clearer communication from the faculty or university administration to the program directors regarding how these annual reports are specifically used, or who else works with them and at what points in time; In response to a question from committee members, the program directors stated that they either did not know or assumed that further work on the small-scale internal evaluation falls to the faculty administration, typically under the purview of the relevant associate

deans; however, they do not routinely receive active feedback on it. Student representatives on program councils also play a significant role in this annual evaluation. Their role across the university is formally the same, but their actual level of engagement varies significantly. The evaluation committee agreed that, in principle, a certain diversity in the conception and functioning of program councils does not constitute a weakness. There are faculties where student participation is very active; students feel they are genuine representatives, are able to gather input from other students, and pass on necessary information when a council member changes; on the other hand, however, there are also study programs where such mechanisms do not function or function unevenly. Therefore, it would be beneficial to introduce an onboarding process for students nominated to the program council that is not strictly institutional but rather informative. The Evaluation Committee also notes that while clear and, above all, ongoing communication about the principles of student engagement is primarily the responsibility of the university, the faculty, and the study program, success and effectiveness also depend significantly on a proactive, responsible, and sustainable approach on the part of students; the presence of more students from different years of study—and thus with a gradual turnover—could help in this regard.

At least once every five years, every study program at MU undergoes a comprehensive internal evaluation. This process involves necessary and robust feedback mechanisms, which are subsequently incorporated into the development of the study program. The evaluation itself is largely the responsibility of the faculty, typically with the participation of a member of the RVH (the Study Program Quality Regulations use the phrase “usually participates”). The Evaluation Committee views positively the fact that the RVH does not need to be the sole evaluating authority, but that within the university hierarchy, it wants the faculties themselves to conduct evaluations of their study programs; the RVH itself then only performs an assessment of the adequacy of this evaluation and the measures taken. The Committee also notes that it would be appropriate for the RVH to engage in reflection on past study program evaluations at longer but regular intervals (typically once per academic year), for example by discussing summary results (see also above). Furthermore, it would be appropriate to explicitly define and delineate the involvement of RVH members in the context of major evaluations. Given the number of study programs being evaluated, it is currently difficult to guarantee that an RVH member will be present for every evaluation; it therefore seems appropriate to frame their presence more as monitoring the comparability of these processes across the entire university rather than as an assessment of a specific study program, and to communicate this transparently. At this time, the evaluation committee is unable to assess whether the optional involvement of RVH members is yielding the results originally intended.

However, transferring responsibility for the internal evaluation of study programs to the faculties in no way affects the self-governing status of the RVH, which clearly declares its standards for the quality of study programs and exerts either informal pressure in the form of applying established and university-wide comparable practices, or, if necessary, may also choose formal tools supported by legislation to address complications in problematic study programs.

A very positive aspect of the entire evaluation process is the standard involvement of external experts, both from academic circles outside MU and from the professional world. Two external members are direct members of the RVH. External stakeholders such as employers or external academics are present in the major evaluation process, and an external perspective is also present in the minor evaluation, as program councils typically include graduates and/or employers. External feedback on study programs has proven to be a very valuable element, highlighting issues that may not be immediately apparent in a purely academic setting. The Evaluation Committee notes that all these mechanisms are highly appropriate from the perspective of quality management systems and are actively utilized, and the university itself is well aware of their benefits.

In general, it can be stated that the system of internal evaluations of study programs is well-established at MU; decentralization and a multi-tiered approach have proven to be effective principles over the duration

of the institutional accreditation. This is evidenced not only by the outputs of this system in the form of study programs themselves, which generally meet higher than minimum standards both in terms of content and the quality of internal assessment processes, but also by the relatively positive reception of the quality assurance system across the entire university: despite some of its procedurally and administratively demanding aspects, it is understood as an opportunity for the growth and development of the university's core mission, namely the education and training of high-quality graduates.

## Findings

The Evaluation Committee appreciates

- both small-scale and large-scale internal evaluations of study programs as primarily collegial and developmental mechanisms, rather than as formal steps relying on mechanical data analysis,
- the multi-tiered external perspective applied throughout the entire evaluation system (members of the RVH, members of program councils, evaluators outside the Ministry of Education within the framework of the large-scale internal evaluation) as a functional mechanism for ongoing feedback from diverse stakeholders,
- anchoring primary responsibility for the internal evaluation of study programs at the faculties and, in connection with this, defining the position of the RVH as a guarantor of fairness and equal treatment across the university, or, where necessary, as an authoritative arbiter,
- robust data support for the IS system, which provides program coordinators with up-to-date information about the study program in all processes, in an appropriate structure and scope.

The Evaluation Committee recommends

- to continue improving student awareness through close collaboration with students during their nomination to program councils, during the onboarding process, and throughout their subsequent membership, including by utilizing examples of best practices across faculties,
- to enhance the awareness of study program guarantors regarding the purpose of the annual minor internal evaluation, particularly with regard to the faculties' further work with its results and their utilization over the long term (typically when submitting applications for the extension of study program authorizations, expansion to include additional specializations, or forms of study),
- conduct a conceptual debate within the RVH focused on evaluating the effectiveness of the current involvement of RVH members in the major internal evaluation, particularly with regard to its frequency across the university, and any subsequent adjustments to this role.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that the SWOT analysis prepared by Masaryk University as part of the self-evaluation report confidently identifies strengths and opportunities, but also objectively and openly describes weaknesses and threats. The Evaluation Committee considers this to be evidence of self-reflection on the part of the university and ongoing work to cultivate the internal environment; however, in the coming period, timely and clear two-way communication remains crucial so that a highly centralized—albeit sensibly and functionally designed—system implementing a range of centrally adopted decisions continues to take into account the specific characteristics of the faculties and the natural diversity of the university's internal environment.

## Summary of Good Practice Examples and Recommendations for Further Development

Area evaluated	The Evaluation Committee commends:	The Evaluation Committee recommends:
2.1. Quality assurance system and functioning of the Internal Evaluation Council	the long-term consistent, conceptual, and cohesive functioning of the Internal Evaluation Council, made possible, among other things, by the gradual phasing in and subsequent renewal of terms	Consolidate the rules governing the participation of Internal Evaluation Council members in major internal evaluations and give explicit attention to the results of these evaluations during Internal Evaluation Council meetings in separate, pre-announced agenda items
	Defining the position of the Rector as Chair of the Internal Evaluation Council as the primary guarantor of the university's strategic direction, with an appropriate degree of detachment from operationally discussed matters	consider a clearer framework for the functioning of the Student Advisory Panel so that it provides sufficiently authoritative and robust support to the sole student representative on the Council (apparently due to the non-trivial composition of the RVH and MU's internal decision to have two external members and only one student member on the Council, in a manner that preserves the legally mandated nomination ratios); it is also desirable that, through appropriate formalization, the sustainability of the panel's operations and its "institutional" memory be ensured
	Appropriate handling of conflicts of interest, with a corresponding separation of the university's management from the area of quality assurance governance and oversight, specifically, for example, by excluding vice-rectors from the RVH	analyze the actual necessity of all evaluation processes enshrined in the current version of the Internal Evaluation Rules, and take the results of this analysis into account in any future update of this regulation, including with regard to the RVH's now relatively well-tested operational and time capacity
	ensure the transparency and predictability of decisions, among other things through the ongoing publication of the RVH's evolving decision-making practices as a methodological guide for the faculties	particularly in the area of internal legislation concerning doctoral studies, complete the alignment of programs with the law in accordance with the resolution of the NAB Council and address the competencies of program guarantors much more effectively and robustly in a binding university-wide regulation, especially in connection with the activities of field committees (for specializations) and the activities of DSP guarantors (within joint field councils); no legally defined body may transfer responsibility to another
	the quality, specificity, and overall culture of the minutes of RVH meetings, reflecting the Council's work ethic throughout the entire period under review, i.e., from the granting of IA to the present	
	Effective and supportive onboarding of new members, enabling a quick	

	<p>and smooth transition into their roles</p> <p>A regular mechanism for RVH meetings with study program guarantors, supported by the Quality Department, to address specific topics</p>	<p>body in a manner that involves curtailing, removing, or relinquishing statutory rights and obligations, and any potential conflicts of competence should be minimized to the greatest extent possible in favor of the actual program guarantor</p>
<p>2.2 Quality assurance bodies and processes at the faculties, taking into account faculty-specific characteristics</p>	<p>Faculty management by high-quality academic-management teams of deans, which is evidenced by the university's strong position in the education market, as well as the predominantly positive identification of staff and students with individual faculties and the university as a whole</p>	<p>centrally strengthen the powers of the study program guarantor to enable the performance of their duties in ensuring the quality of the study program</p>
	<p>Fill the positions of study program guarantors with motivated academic staff who actively strive to further develop the study programs entrusted to them, while also having a good understanding of how the system operates within the university and contributing to it from their positions</p>	<p>continue to purposefully foster two-way communication between the RVH and faculty stakeholders in the quality assurance system; provide more consistent methodological support from the central level to faculty academic senates and scientific councils in the quality assurance process</p>
	<p>Successfully establish program councils for bachelor's and master's degree programs at all faculties and demonstrate their effectiveness as a support platform for the program guarantor in the performance of their duties, particularly through the involvement of external experts and students</p>	<p>improve the system for integrating new student representatives into program councils and strengthen communication between program councils and students at the faculties in order to enhance feedback in quality assurance</p>
		<p>continue efforts to involve students and graduates of doctoral programs in the quality assurance of doctoral studies, particularly at the faculty level—that is, not only through the Student Advisory Panel of the Research and Quality Assurance Board</p>
<p>2.3 Administrative and methodological support for quality assurance processes at the university and faculty levels</p>	<p>A comprehensive and functional system of methodological and administrative support for quality assurance processes at both the university and faculty levels, with currently sufficient personnel, material, and technical resources</p> <p>a clearly positive evaluation of the setup of methodological and administrative support by academic stakeholders—namely the Academic Senate, program directors, program and field councils, faculty leadership, and self-governing bodies</p>	<p>ensure the maintenance of high-quality methodological-administrative support at the university and faculty levels, and take active steps at the university and faculty levels to prepare for the period starting in 2028, when, according to current regulations, the authorization to offer a significant number of study programs will “expire,” including securing adequate funding for administrative and methodological activities after 2025</p>

	Active, regular cooperation between the MU Quality Department and other relevant MU departments in addressing related or associated matters	Ensure a higher degree of standardization of outputs/documentation from the relevant bodies (Academic Senate and Board of Trustees) of various faculties—refine the process, form, and content of outputs; consider the possibility of involving faculty quality coordinators in addressing this area; and share examples of best practices among faculties
	highly positive evaluation of the activities of faculty quality coordinators by study program guarantors and their natural and full integration into the organizational structure of the faculties	Actively take steps to increase the flexibility and speed of implementing modifications planned within the IS MU for the needs of the quality assurance system, including taking into account the real needs of study program guarantors as its key actors and end users
	IS MU (the Garant application) as a central integrated database providing specifically targeted functional support to all user groups involved in quality assurance and evaluation processes	
2.4 Student involvement in the quality assurance system (beyond the evaluation of teaching in study programs)	multi-level student involvement in quality assurance mechanisms, both through primary feedback collection and, in particular, through membership on program councils (where student representatives participate in the annual small-scale internal evaluation) and through standard participation in the large-scale internal evaluation (once every 5 years)	shortening centrally administered surveys and introducing an optional feature for greater personalization, thereby reducing the time burden of completing them while more effectively reflecting the specific characteristics of individual faculties and courses
	diversify the methods of obtaining feedback, allowing for faculty-specific characteristics, needs, and best practices to be taken into account within a unified system: in addition to using surveys with transparent sharing of results in the IS, which motivates students to complete surveys and subsequently encourages instructors to adjust teaching methods or content (FFS), this includes, for example, the option to use custom questionnaires with specific questions “tailored” to the course (Faculty of Pharmacy), or ongoing reflection on teaching during the semester (Faculty of Education – special education, MOS)	Consider introducing ongoing feedback during the semester, which would help to better and more promptly monitor any potential academic difficulties on the part of students and identify teaching methods that are not fully effective on the part of instructors
	examples of informal student gatherings and onboarding into program councils (FSS, FF), which ensure continuity and enable new	Strengthen support for new students’ participation in program councils through timely information campaigns, orientation, and, where

	members to quickly adapt to the processes and context of the study program	appropriate, more intensive support from faculty quality officers
	Open and informal discussion within the student panel at the RVH, the outcomes of which are seriously and collaboratively taken into account during meetings of the Council for Internal Evaluation	continue to raise awareness of the activities of student support services and give due attention to the issues they address, which are currently still perceived as marginal
	an extensive student support system demonstrating effective cooperation among individual units, consideration of the needs of international students through multilingual communication, and the Teiresiás Center's ability to tailor studies to students with specific needs to the greatest extent possible	in connection with the composition of the RVH, consider increasing the number of student members to two; given the very short term of membership (2 years), it appears highly desirable to ensure the sustainable presence of a student voice with certain expertise and institutional memory ( <i>the evaluation committee is also aware that, given the nomination process, this recommendation may constitute a significant legislative change; it is therefore formulated as a suggestion for the longer term</i> )
2.5 Teaching Competencies and Their Development and Evaluation	A well-thought-out and gradually implemented university-wide strategic concept for the development of teaching competencies, with adequate reflection on both successful and unsuccessful steps and subsequent adjustments to the next steps	Conduct a thorough discussion on the purpose, content, and, in particular, the realistic future application of the planned competency framework for university instructors, as well as the mandatory completion of courses linked to it
	the existence and functioning of the university-wide CERPEK unit, with its generally well-received offering of educational courses tailored to the needs, requests, and requirements of the faculties	clarify the division of roles in the development of a strategy related to the development of pedagogical competencies (currently, the definition of responsibilities in strategy development appears to be undefined and oscillates between the Quality Department, MU management, and CERPEK), and subsequently clarify the position of the intended faculty-level CERPEK units
	Implement a project competition focused on teaching innovation, primarily through newly introduced courses.	Extend support for project calls to include the innovation of existing courses
	Establish a functional framework for the entire process of creating a new study program, whereby the intention to create a study program is first discussed at the RVH, followed by a discussion of the fully developed proposal for the study program	Standardize the content of discussions regarding the proposal for a new study program at meetings of the Academic Senate and the Faculty Scientific Council, and ensure that the conclusions from these discussions are reflected in sufficient detail in the minutes of these bodies

3.1 Approval of study programs (granting of authorization), including control measures during accreditation	Establishing the process for selecting evaluators for the proposal to establish a study program and the framework for preparing the evaluation (formative assessment) at the faculty level, including the institute’s evaluation meeting; based on the evaluators’ recommendations, this process allows for updating/improving the prepared proposal to establish a study program, while leaving the expert assessment of the study program proposal to the faculty	when conducting the assessment of the study program proposal, continue to seek appropriate mechanisms for evaluating its financial demands and the sustainability of securing resources, while also supporting the managerial responsibility of faculty bodies in this area of strategic decision-making; In addition to the proposed content of the study program (including the declared competencies of graduates), take into account other sources of information regarding the need for the study program to supplement the opinion of the academic supervisor
	Ensure data and information interoperability between MU’s information system and the study program guarantor, with targeted support for the creation of the accreditation dossier—the Garant application	
	Establishing a system of support for the preparation of a plan or proposal for the creation of a study program, in the form of a faculty quality coordinator and centrally developed methodological materials from the Quality Department	amend the requirements for the external evaluator’s assessment of a study program proposal so that the evaluation of compliance with a specific standard is always accompanied by a written commentary
3.2 Evaluation of study programs (during implementation), including both periodic (comprehensive) and regular (annual) processes	Small and large internal evaluations of study programs as primarily collegial and developmental mechanisms, not as formal steps relying on mechanical data analysis	in close collaboration with students, continue to improve student awareness during their nomination to program councils, during the onboarding process, and during their subsequent membership, including by utilizing examples of best practices across faculties
	a multi-level external perspective applied throughout the entire evaluation system (members of the RVH, members of program councils, evaluators outside the university within the large internal evaluation) as a functional mechanism for ongoing feedback from diverse stakeholders	Strengthen the awareness of study program guarantors regarding the purpose of the annual small-scale internal evaluation, particularly with regard to the faculties’ further work with its results and their use over the long term (typically when submitting applications for the extension of study program authorizations, or for the addition of new specializations or forms of study)
	Establishing primary responsibility for the internal evaluation of study programs at the faculties and, in connection with this, defining the role of the RVH as a guarantor of fairness and equal treatment across the university, or, where necessary, as an authoritative arbiter	Conducting a conceptual debate within the RVH focused on evaluating the effectiveness of the current involvement of RVH members in major internal evaluations, particularly with regard to their frequency across the university, and

	robust data support for the IS system, which provides guarantors with up-to-date information on the study program in an appropriate structure and scope throughout all processes	any subsequent adjustments to this role
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## List of Attachments

- 1) Statement from the decision on the granting of institutional accreditation to MU
- 2) Selected sample of study programs
- 3) Evaluation of responses to research questions

## Appendix No. 1

The decision on the granting of institutional accreditation to MU was issued by the NAB on May 24, 2018. Pursuant to Section 81b(1) of Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Other Acts (the Higher Education Act), the NAB granted MU institutional accreditation for the following fields of study:

- a) the field of *Security Studies*, including bachelor's degree programs,
- b) the field of *Biology, Ecology, and the Environment*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral study programs,
- c) the field of study *Economic Disciplines*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral study programs,
- d) the field of *Philology*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs,
- e) the field of *Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Theology*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs,
- f) the field of *Physics*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs,
- g) the field of *Historical Sciences*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral study programs,
- h) the field of *Chemistry*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs,
- i) the field of *Computer Science*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs,
- j) the field of *Mathematics*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs,
- k) the field of *Media and Communication Studies*, including bachelor's and master's degree programs,
- l) the field of *Non-Teaching Education*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs,
- m) the field of *Political Science*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs,
- n) the field of *Law*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs,
- o) the field of education in *Psychology*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs,
- p) the field of *Social Work*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs,
- q) the field of *Sociology*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs,
- r) the field of *Physical Education and Sport; Kinesiology*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs,
- s) the field of *Teacher Education*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs,
- t) the field of *Arts and Culture Studies*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs,
- u) the field of *Earth Sciences*, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs,
- v) the field of *General Medicine and Dentistry*, including master's and doctoral degree programs,
- w) the field of *Health Sciences*, including bachelor's and master's degree programs.

## Appendix No. 2

Legend: P – full-time study; K – part-time study; D – distance learning; Field of study – the number refers to the field of study as defined in Annex No. 3 to Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Other Acts (the Higher Education Act)

Part of the university	Program type	Program profile	Form of study	Duration of study	Program Name	Field of study	Partner Institutions
Faculty of Economics and Public Administration	Bachelor's	Professional	K	3	Business Data Analytics	5	
Faculty of Medicine	Master's	Professional	P	5	Bioanalytical Laboratory Diagnostics in Healthcare - Embryologist	36	
Faculty of Arts/Faculty of Social Studies	Bachelor's	Academic	P	3	Culture, Media, and Performing Arts	12 (25%), 18 (25%), 25 (25%), 32 (25%)	
Faculty of Informatics	Master's Degree Program	Professional	P	2	Software Engineering	14	
Faculty of Sports Studies	Bachelor's	Academic	K, P	3	Physical Education and Sport	28	
Faculty of Law	Bachelor's	Academic	D, K	3	International Business Law Studies	22	
Faculty of Science	Bachelor's	Academic	P	3	Mathematics	17	
Faculty of Education	Master's Degree	Academic	K, P	2	Special Education	19	
Faculty of Arts	Master's Degree Program	Academic	K, P	2	Teaching of German Language and Literature for Secondary Schools	9 (25%), 30 (75%)	
Faculty of Medicine	Master's Degree	Professional	P	2	Optometry	19 (50%), 36 (50%)	
Faculty of Science	Master's Degree Program	Academic	P	2	Biochemistry	13	

Faculty of Arts	Bachelor's				Comparative World Literature		
Faculty of Social Studies	Master's Degree Program	Academic	P	2	European Governance	20	
Faculty of Science	Doctoral		K, P	4	Molecular and Cell Biology and Genetics	3	Institute of Biophysics of the Czech Academy of Sciences
Faculty of Social Studies	Doctoral		K, P	4	Psychology	23	Institute of Psychology of the Czech Academy of Sciences
Faculty of Arts	Doctoral		K, P	4	Ethnology	12	Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences
Faculty of Pharmacy	Doctoral		K, P	4	Pharmacology and Toxicology	8	

## Appendix No. 3

Although the purpose or goal of the external evaluation of Masaryk University was not a strict assessment of standards in terms of their fulfillment, it is nevertheless useful and fair to the university to return to the research questions that preceded the external evaluation and fundamentally shaped it, and with which the university was acquainted in this sense as a sort of paradigm for the entire process. As part of the triangulation of sources, the evaluation committee reached the following conclusions regarding the research questions. At the same time, however, it emphasizes that a comprehensive external evaluation cannot be reduced to dichotomous answers to the specified questions. On the contrary, an in-depth analysis of its aspects, carried out in the individual chapters of this report, is key to understanding the functionality of the internal quality assurance system at Masaryk University.

### **Standard V: Questions regarding the quality assurance system as a whole and the functioning of the RVH**

- Is the university's internal quality assurance system aligned with its strategy and concepts across all activities, namely educational, research, and related activities?
  - YES
- Are the relevant internal regulations and standards interconnected and mutually consistent, and do they form a logical, functional whole in accordance with which the university proceeds during assessment of its own study programs?
  - YES
- Does the RVH fulfill all key functions—namely, coordination, oversight, and methodological functions—in both its conceptual work and day-to-day operations?
  - YES
- Are the powers and responsibilities of the RVH structured in such a way as to realistically enable it to fulfill the functions entrusted to it? Is an external voice adequately represented within the RVH alongside the university's internal staff and students?
  - YES
- Is the RVH's shared responsibility with other bodies reflected in internal quality assurance, both at the university-wide level and at the faculty level, or at the department/institute level?
  - YES, with a recommendation for further development and standardization, particularly at the faculty level
- Does the composition of internal quality assurance bodies ensure professional qualifications, sufficient time commitment, the avoidance of overlapping roles within academic self-governance, and the elimination of conflicts of interest in the performance of assigned quality assurance tasks?
  - YES
- Does the RVH's meeting and decision-making process, along with the communication of its resolutions and related justifications, ensure sufficiently clear feedback to the faculties regarding their own processes and educational content?
  - YES, with a recommendation to continue patient top-down communication as well as to collect feedback from faculties in a bottom-up manner
- Does the extent and manner of student involvement in internal quality assurance processes allow for their perspectives to be taken into account within the framework of the quality assurance system as a whole, i.e., not just at the level of a single program?
  - YES
- Does the university have a system for developing the teaching competencies of academic staff that takes into account the diverse life situations of individuals (onboarding and support for new faculty members, ongoing competency development linked to academic career advancement) while also supporting a learning community, for example through mentoring and reflection?
  - YES, with the recommendation to strategically clarify and carefully communicate on an ongoing basis the role and authority of the rector's office and the faculties

- Can the university assess which study programs its authorization resulting from institutional accreditation applies to for specific fields of education, and which it does not?
  - YES
- Does the university continuously engage in critical reflection on its own quality assurance system and, in the event of identified shortcomings or emerging new needs, develop and adapt the system?
  - YES

## **Standard VI: Questions regarding the internal evaluation processes of study programs**

- Can the university adequately ensure that the study program proposal complies with the Government Regulation on Accreditation Standards as well as its own quality standards, including the ESG if the institution explicitly adheres to them?
  - YES, with the caveat that aligning the university's interpretation of standards with that of the National Accreditation Office will significantly contribute to building a long-term consistent and predictable environment
- Does the study program assessment system primarily ensure that established standards are met, or does it continuously lead to improvements in their quality?
  - YES, the system has the potential to lead to quality improvement
- Is the university able to conduct internal quality evaluations of the implementation of study programs that identify their strengths and weaknesses, realistically and concretely reflect the actual implementation, and lead to the improvement of study programs?
  - YES
- Does the internal evaluation include monitoring of teaching (including grading methods, use of teaching materials, organization of internships, etc.), and does student evaluation provide useful feedback that is incorporated into teaching practices, with students informed of how their feedback is taken into account?
  - YES
- Are academic staff and other employees directly or indirectly involved in teaching included in the internal evaluation of study programs, and are their needs and suggestions taken into account?
  - YES
- Are external stakeholders, whether graduates of the study programs and/or representatives from the professional sphere, involved in the internal evaluation of study programs, and is the regularity of these processes ensured?
  - YES
- Are there other periodic or ad hoc evaluation procedures and associated development mechanisms that, in addition to having a direct impact on teaching, also demonstrate the institution's active commitment to quality education and emphasis on pedagogical competencies?
  - YES
- Is the university able to identify shortcomings in study programs, conduct an assessment of their severity, take appropriate corrective measures, and retrospectively evaluate their effectiveness, or, based on the experience gained, prevent shortcomings in educational activities?
  - YES