



AMENDMENT FOR 2023

TO THE REPORT ON INTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL, CREATIVE AND RELATED ACTIVITIES 2022



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of Life Sciences Prague

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1 / Introduction

The Amendment for 2023 to the Report on Internal Evaluation of the Quality of Educational, Creative and Related Activities 2022 (hereinafter as the 2023 Amendment) was prepared by the Czech University of Life Sciences (hereinafter as the CZU) in accordance with Section 77b(3)(b) of Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions and on Amending and Supplementing Certain Other Acts (the Higher Education Institutions Act) as a summary of important changes accomplished in quality and management measures that occurred in 2023 and led to the fulfilment of objectives, mission and strategy of the CZU. The 2023 Amendment was prepared in line with the **Rules of Quality Assurance System of Educational, Creative and Related Activities and Internal Quality Evaluation of Educational, Creative and Related Activities of the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague.**

The 2023 Amendment assesses changes of the situation of quality assurance and evaluation of educational, creative and related activities at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague in connection with the Report on Internal Evaluation of the Quality of Educational, Creative and Related Activities 2022. Activities carried out by the CZU in 2023 were fully compliant with the **Strategic Plan of Educational, Creative and Other Activities of the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague for 2021**, and the document **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area**. In developing the system of quality assurance and internal evaluation, the Czech University of Life Sciences also takes into account the conclusions of feedback mechanisms, especially the conclusions of the IEP international evaluation (Institutional Evaluation Programme), which took place at the CZU in 2022.

The system of internal evaluation and quality assurance of the activities conducted, and the development of the above system are debated by the individual CZU boards on a continuous basis. The description of processes, results and information important with respect to the quality management system of the CZU is also provided in the relevant parts of the **Annual Report on Activities for 2023 and the Annual Report on Management for 2023**. Other important information related to the quality assurance system of the CZU activities is posted in the public section of the university's website.

2 / Changes accomplished in the management measures of the CZU

In the past year, the CZU, when developing its management measures, took into account the conclusions of the international evaluation within the **Institutional Evaluation Programme** (hereinafter as the IEP), which took place at the CZU in 2022; subsequently, the CZU was audited by the **National Accreditation Office for Higher Education** (hereinafter as the NAU). In the conclusions of both evaluations (both IEP and NAU), no major reservations or shortcomings in the setup of the management measures and the quality management and evaluation system were found. The evaluations carried out are perceived by the CZU primarily as **a valuable tool for its further development**.

The IEP evaluation committee provided the CZU with the **Final Report**, which summarises the evaluation completed, including recommendations for further development. The content of the report was first read by the university management, including the Deans of the individual Faculties; subsequently, the conclusions of the report were gradually discussed at the individual university's boards, and finally, the full text of the report was published on the CZU intranet, where it is accessible to all employees of the university. This transparency has been chosen deliberately to enable the report to be indicated as objective feedback, which might be built on by the university management, and also the partial conclusions of the report could be used and taken as a basis for further development at all leadership levels and the quality management system. The same is also true from the point of view that has been formulated in the evaluation conclusions to a significant extent, namely that it is necessary to carry out an objective and critical analysis of strengths and weaknesses of all faculties and to prepare a clear-cut and strategic plans to identify the problems that must be addressed as a whole. The CZU management is well aware that further development of the university in conjunction with feedback mechanisms must be initiated, first of all, by its own comprehensible measures and recommendations, as a result of the general debate. The conclusions of IEP evaluation are very broad and span over many areas, while one year after the evaluation is a very short time for all recommendations to be reflected upon. The focus of the Czech University of Life Sciences has been in particular on the **development of certain priority areas**.

At the beginning of 2024, the individual CZU faculties submitted documents which describe their **strengths and weaknesses** in the areas of educational, creative and related activities as well as the tools and methods they have selected for further development of the above areas (**Evaluation Reports of Faculties 2023**). Reflecting upon the prior period, these documents will continue to be submitted on an annual basis such that their conclusions become part of the formulation of the unified development strategy of the

whole university. It should be noted that the selected development methods, objectives and self-reflection of the individual faculties differ in some respects, a logical step for further discussion to be conducted towards a common **alignment of the overall university strategy**, as recommended by the IEP Final Report. Accordingly, the procedure should bring more coherence to the university's strategy and objectives in accordance with the IEP recommendation. However, an important point is that such development ought to be gradual.

Another impulse for the CZU lies in the recommendation to focus more on **building of trust among students** and to consider the introduction of student ambassadors. With respect to certain events (an active shooter at the University of Prague) that have recently taken place in the Czech Republic, the CZU endeavours to target more work at students, a concept of central counselling services, also aimed at students with specific needs, is under way, together with career counselling and psychological counselling in particular. As part of a newly emerging project, new premises of the counselling centre are planned, and **the involvement of ambassadors/mentors** is also considered.

Other activities mirroring the IEP conclusions include the development of a **higher correlation and interconnection of data from the university backbone system**. In the framework of the project funds provided by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, a requirement was made to create new analytical functions linking various data on education activities. The interface will be capable of analysing several causes, such as in the case of an early termination of studies, and in the quality management system, it will be able to prevent such events and build conditions to minimise them (if possible). In addition, efforts are directed at the interconnection of such analyses towards students with specific needs in order to utilise all available tools to support successful graduation.

The Czech University of Life Sciences Prague is well aware that to become a **modern educational and scientific and research institution**, the university must contemplate the changing external and international circumstances in detail and on a continuous basis and be able to respond to such changes in an unambiguous manner. The university further acknowledges that the rapidly evolving society and processes can be addressed in its conditions only if the feedback mechanisms have been set up correctly, especially in combination with the feedback from applicants and students, which is crucial for the university, along with the traditional values of university education.

In 2023 saw the CZU participate in a number of **Centralised Development Projects**, which lay great emphasis on the analysis of the

situation in the area of teaching quality, for instance in the project **Standards of Teaching Quality at Czech Higher Education Institutions**. The objective of the above project, which was coordinated by the Vice-Rector for Quality of Education Creative Activities on behalf of the CZU, was to analyse the current practice at the participating HEIs in the area of standards of teaching quality and methods of teaching quality evaluation. The Czech University of Life Sciences is also engaged in the project **National Renewal Plan for Higher Education Institutions**. This project pursues the objective of improving the permeability of education at the level of higher education institutions by way of micro-certificates as well as digitalisation of activities related to the provision of educational activities and administrative procedures associated with the administration of studies. Their cooperation will lead to mutual compatibility of solution methods in the area of micro-certificates and digitalisation of related activities. Last but not least, this cooperation will have a favourable impact on the economy, effectiveness and purposefulness of the use of funds.

The CZU Career Code, which took effect on 01 May 2023, constitutes a very important document also with respect to the quality management of activities. The Career Code **lays down the rules and the obligation to develop career plans as well as the rules and criteria for regular evaluation of employees' performance**, the quality of activities carried out and the ongoing implementation of the career plan. Once the Career Code took effect, the CZU commenced work on digitalising the employee evaluation process such that the evaluation interview itself is preceded by automatic completion of the achieved level of evaluation criteria, already set out in other systems of the CZU, with the aim of simplifying and automating the preparation for the evaluation to the utmost extent. In 2023, in connection with the effect of the new Career Code and the introduction of a new process of employee evaluation, the CZU placed great emphasis on the training of management members, entitled **Recruitment and Selection and Employee Evaluation**.

Moreover, the Czech University of Life Sciences has prepared the **Gender Equality Plan for 2022–2024**, in which the university committed to ensure that the newly set mechanisms and systems meet the gender equality requirements (opportunities, treatment, evaluation) – “gender mainstreaming”. The objective of the plan, which has been conceived as a plan for gender equality and gender mainstreaming, is to help minimise undesirable social and economic differences between the genders, and, on the other hand, to encourage the differences between the genders from which not only the university but also the whole society will benefit (diversity principle). The Czech University of Life Sciences is open to all age, ethnic and gender groups. Accordingly, issues of gender equal opportunities have been addressed for many years at the CZU also in the context of social responsibility strategy.

The CZU International Scientific Council, which provides the university management and the Internal Evaluation Board of the university (RVH) with regular feedback on decisions also related to management measures, met in September 2023. The board members also visited the CZU organisation Lesy [Forests], where the interconnection between university activities and practice was one of the topics of the discussion.

Assessment of the situation in comparison with 2022: The effectuation of the IEP international evaluation constituted a long-strategic plan in the area of development of management measures and development of the quality management system at the CZU. The period following the evaluation brought a number of new stimuli and suggestions debated in the previous period, which will enable the university's future growth in the upcoming years. The CZU Career Code has been established together with the regular evaluation of the university's staff, including the obligation to develop career plans. The management measures have also been affected by a gradually introduced emphasis on security aspects, necessary both in terms of physical security of the academic community on the CZU campus as well as in terms of cybersecurity. Based on the experience gained, other changes incorporated in the university's internal regulations have led especially to minimisation of the administrative intricateness of processes related to the quality management system at the CZU.

EVALUATION

Strengths: Introduced processes and procedures in relation to the quality management system at the CZU and their ability to respond to external stimuli, without reducing the defined quality of activities carried out; The completed IEP international evaluation and its deliverables; Definition of current priorities within the Strategic Plan of Educational, Creative and Other Activities of the CZU.

Weaknesses: Reduced efficiency of certain employees in the course of work outside the workplace (home office work has become part of a number of positions at the CZU due to Covid-19 pandemic).

Opportunities: New suggestions arising from the completed IEP international evaluation; Setting up an employee evaluation as part of the implementation of the Career Code; Establishment of university-wide priorities within the institutional development; Further systematic development of educational areas (e.g. Informatics, Engineering, Technology and Materials, Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Hygiene).

Threats: : Formalisation of the introduced procedures and processes also with the view of hybrid/online elements in the management area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To set up a functional form of career plans and criteria for regular employee evaluation in the individual components of the CZU.**
- **To digitalise the evaluation process of individuals to the full extent.**
- **To develop the defined strategic areas of the CZU on a consistent basis.**
- **To continue to develop the information systems of the CZU and digitalisation of individual activities.**



3 / Changes accomplished in the quality assurance and internal evaluation system at the CZU

In the previous period, the CZU continuously developed the system of quality assurance and internal quality evaluation especially with respect to a long-term **analysis of feedback mechanisms**, which mirror the quality of activities. Based on the aforesaid analysis, new internal regulations of the university are constantly innovated or created.

During 2023 new texts of internal regulations that affect the set-up of the quality system were approved:

- Innovation of the internal regulation **Rules of Quality Assurance System of Educational, Creative and Related Activities and Internal Quality Evaluation of Educational, Creative and Related Activities of the CZU** – the new, modified text of the document primarily facilitated the administrative process of the evaluation of study programmes, and in general, the administrative demands of the evaluation of educational, creative and related activities at the CZU, without imposing less demanding requirements on the evaluation level. The need for changes emerged from a throughout analysis of the setup processes (mainly at the level of the individual components of the CZU).
- Innovation of the regulation **Rules of the Habilitation Procedure or the Appointment Procedure** – criteria for candidates have been adjusted in a way ensuring that emphasis is placed on greater quality and complexity of candidates' results in habilitation and appointment procedures.

In 2023 several internal regulations were developed or updated that are generally linked to quality assurance processes. These regulations include:

- Rector's Directive No. 8/2023 **Rules for the prevention of conflict during habilitation procedure and procedure for appointing professors at the CZU** – this Directive has enshrined the recommendations previously approved by the Internal Evaluation Board, describing the assurance of objectivity during the habilitation procedure and appointment
- Amendment of Directive No. 5/2019 **Rules for assigning, preparing, submitting, archiving and publishing Bachelor and Master's theses at the CZU** – the definition of the option to use artificial intelligence in the processing of final theses, computerisation of signatures appended to opinions of opponents and supervisors of theses in university systems, was added to the Directive.

- Rector's Directive No. 7/2023 **Rules of Procedure of the Boards of Doctoral Study Programmes of the CZU** – this Directive superseded and expanded the previously valid Directive.
- Rector's Directive No. 6/2023 **Rules for awarding the Rector's Prize for publication outputs of employees of the CZU** – this Directive sets forth new rules for awarding the Rector's Prize for employees' publication outputs listed in the Nature Index, and the Rector's Prize for publication outputs of the CZU employees in journals included in the first decile in the WoS.
- Rector's Directive No. 5/2023 **Rules for awarding the Rector's Prize for best publication outputs from doctoral students' research activities** – new rules were established for awarding the Rector's Prize, which is conferred as part of a contest announced annually by the Rector. The Directive defines the eligible participants, enrolment procedure, deadlines, other rules of the contest and winners' awarding procedure.
- Rector's Directive No. 11/2023 **Safe behaviour of users of information systems and computer technology** – this Directive introduces the basic obligations of users of information systems and computing technology at the CZU with the aim of ensuring a minimum standard of information and cybersecurity. In addition, the Statute of the Cybersecurity Management Committee was established by Rector's Directive No. 10/2023.
- Rector's Directive No. 6/2021 **Rules for awarding the Rector's Prize for best publication outputs from doctoral students' research activities** – the new text of the Directive places an even stronger emphasis on the resulting quality of doctoral students' publications, and doctoral students' articles are ranked according to the AIS percentiles in FORDs where the respective journal is located.

Every year, **Evaluation Reports of Faculties** are prepared and submitted by the individual faculties of the CZU for further debate. These reports have analysed the situation of the individual activities, i.e. educational activities for the academic year 2022/2023 and creative and related activities for the calendar year 2022, specifically in the view of the individual educational areas in which the CZU components carry out educational activities. In addition to the summary of the achieved situation as such, the reports provide an annual self-reflection of the management of the individual faculties in relation to the status of specific activities and their quality, outlining the further development and plans of the faculties in the short and long term.

The **Panel of Educational Areas** took place on 27 November 2023 in the CZU Auditorium – the representation of educational areas (hereinafter as the “EA”) at the CZU is shown in Chart 1. The discussion was attended by more than 50 participants from the university management, faculty management, study programme guarantors, academic staff and students. The lecturers and participants of the panel discussion included representatives from practice: Ing. Tomáš Lukeš (Association of Czech Furniture Manufacturers – EA Engineering, Technology and Materials, EA Agriculture), Ing. Robin Ambrož (Forestry Administration Zbiroh – Collredo-Mannsfeld – EA Agriculture, EA Forestry and Lumber Industry), Ing. Jaromír Tesař (Škoda Auto, a. s. – EA Informatics, EA Economic branches, EA Engineering, Technology and Materials) and Ing. Tomáš Kapalín (Seznam.cz – EA Informatics, EA Economic branches).

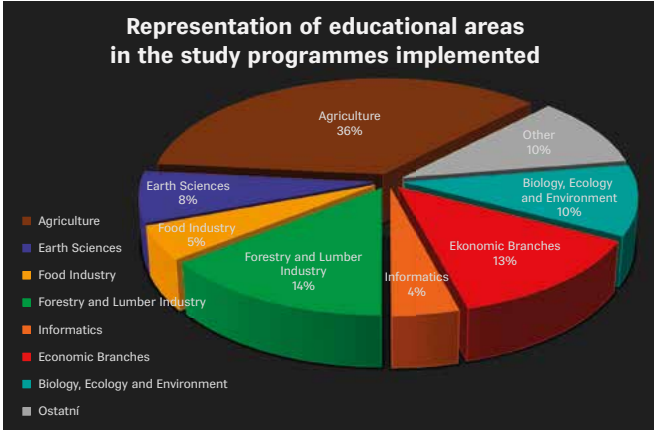


Chart 1 – Representation of educational areas in the study programmes implemented

3.1 / Internal Evaluation Board of the CZU

Pursuant to Section 12a(1) of Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions and on Amending and Supplementing Other Acts, as amended, the **Internal Evaluation Board** (hereinafter as the RVH) is the CZU central authority responsible for quality assurance. In the current form of the study programmes implemented, the CZU is active in **15 educational areas (seven of which are covered by institutional accreditation)**. The largest share of study programmes and management fields is included in the educational area Agriculture. In 2023, the **RHV met six times**, as many as six applications for accreditation were considered in the calendar year 2023, four of which were debated as part of institutional accreditation and the remaining two outside the institutional accreditation. Moreover, 18 applications for reaccreditation were examined within institutional accreditation (an application for extension of the implementation of a study programme). All study programmes (hereinafter as the SP) were approved/submitted to the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (NAÚ) (see Charts 2 and 3).

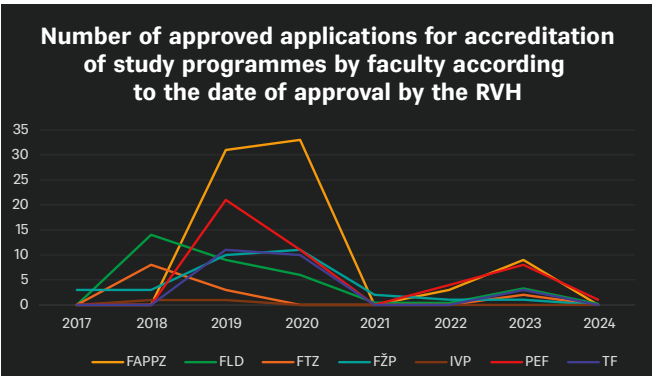


Chart 2 – Overview of applications for accreditation of study programmes

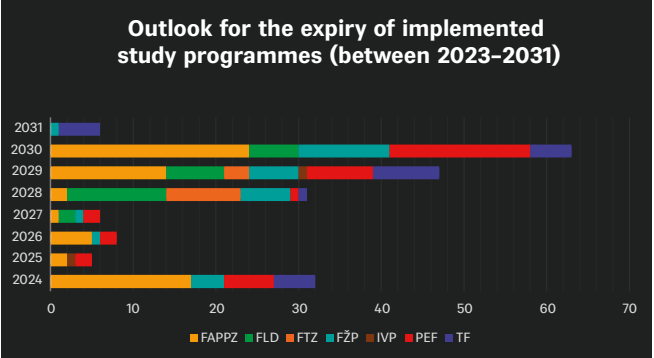


Chart 3 – Outlook for the expiry of implemented study programmes (reaccreditation submission period)

Notes:
FAPPZ = Faculty of Agrobiobiology, Food and Natural Resources, FLD = Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences,
FTZ = Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, FŽP = Faculty of Environmental Sciences,
IVP = Institute of Education and Communication, PEF = Faculty of Economics and Management, TF = Faculty of Engineering

In 2023, the RVH considered a proposal to **extend the institutional accreditation of the CZU** to include a doctoral degree in the **educational area 05 Economic Branches** (see Chart 4 for an overview of the educational areas at the CZU). In the past year, the RVH also revisited the conclusions and recommendations based on the IEP international evaluation.

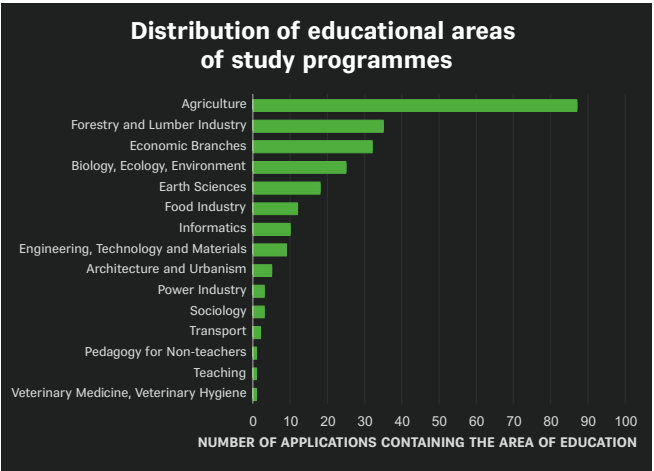


Chart 4 – Overview of the distribution of educational areas in the implemented study programmes

Each year, study programme guarantors submit to the RVH the reports of the **study programme panels**. These reports consist in the annual evaluation of study programmes. For 2023, the RVH

was presented the total of **174** of such **partial evaluation reports on the quality of study programmes** (study programme panel report – see charts 5 and 6).

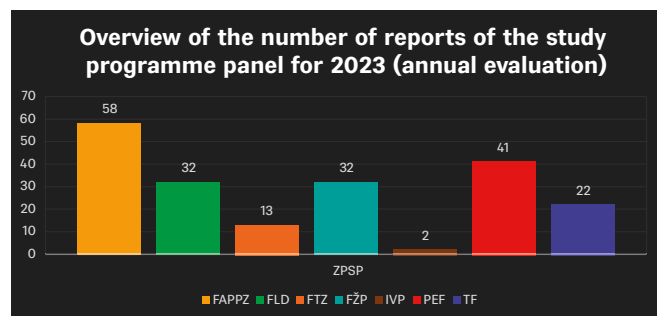


Chart 5 - Overview of reports of the study programme panel for 2023

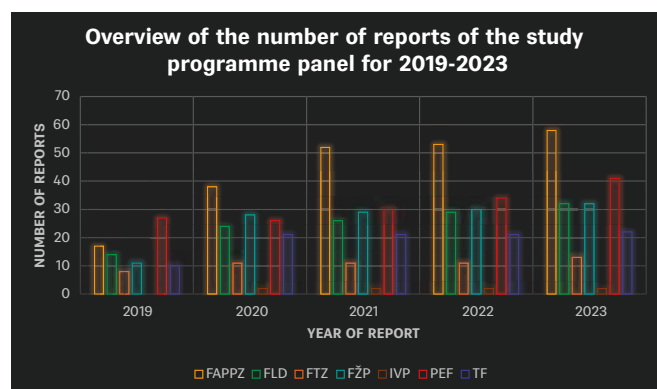


Chart 6 - Overview of reports of the study programme panel for 2019-2023

Catering to the needs of the RVH as well as the management of the individual faculties, these reports provide a summary of quality indicators and comments of the study programme guarantors as to the present situation, changes and corrective measures for the specific academic year. However, it is necessary to reflect upon a period exceeding a mere year for the processes of quality assurance and evaluation of accredited study programmes. Accordingly, when approving study programmes, the RVH at all times requires a **summary report summarising the development of the accredited study programme from the grant of accreditation**, with regard to the assurance of the given study programme at the time of its accreditation/approval. As a rule, the above evaluation is required by the RVH at the mid-point of the accreditation period, unless the RVH has found objective reasons for the submission of the summary evaluation earlier. Through the Quality Assurance Office, attached to the Rector's Office, the **RVH invited 33 study programme guarantors to submit these summary evaluations in 2023** (see Chart 7 of the study programme evaluation report – summary evaluation for the period from 2021 to 2024).

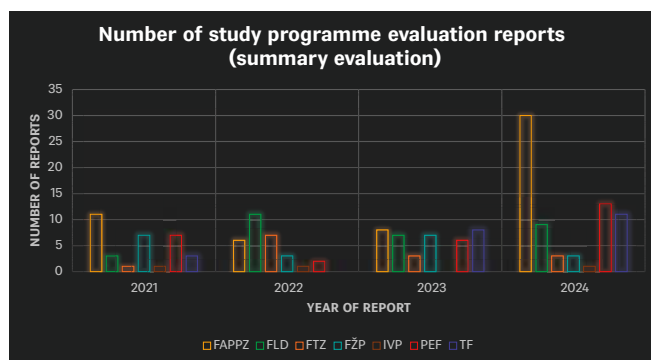


Chart 7 - Number of implemented and planned summary evaluations of study programmes

The RVH focuses on the quality of accredited study programmes also when discussing any required **control reports**, which generally provide the description of a specific quality indicator that must be further developed and monitored in terms of quality assurance according to the resolution of the RVH. In 2023, the RVH was submitted 14 control reports (see Chart 8). The Internal Evaluation Board was also informed of the results of the summary **Evaluation of Teaching in the Academic Year 2020/2021** and the ensuing recommendations.

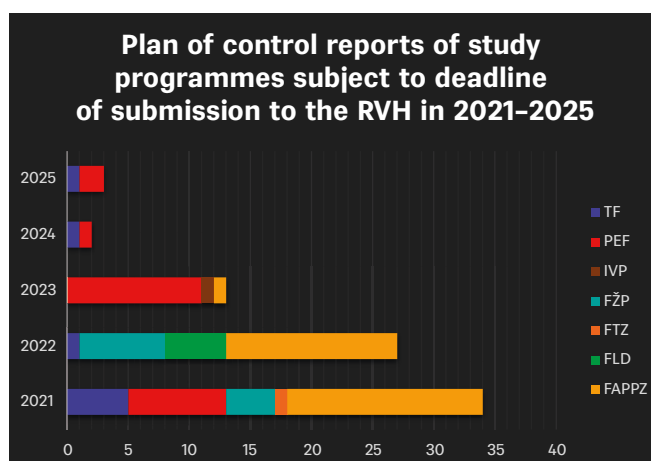


Chart 8 - Plan of the submission of control reports for study programmes in 2021-2025

Assessment of the situation in comparison with 2022: In 2023, the RVH meetings began to discuss reaccreditation of the study programmes that were accredited for a shorter period to allow the development of such programmes. In addition to accreditation activities, the previous year saw the RVH focus, by tradition, on the assessment of quality assurance of the implemented study programmes. On a continuous basis, the RVH has reflected upon the IEP international evaluation, perceived by the RVH as a tool for the future development of quality assurance at the CZU. At the end of 2023, the implementation of the Accreditation Module in the University Information System was completed, and the electronic preparation and administration of accreditation files was launched at the onset of the calendar year 2024. Moreover, the Power BI reporting interface has been continuously improved to provide the study programme guarantors with analyses related to the implemented study programmes, whereby the above-mentioned data and information are also used by the RVH for the evaluation of quality assurance of educational activities.

EVALUATION

Strengths: Ongoing analyses of the setup of the quality management system which mirror the need for the monitoring of the implemented evaluation aspects; Transparency and objectivity of the work of the RVH; Traditional preservation of uniformity of the requirements placed by the RVH evaluation committees; Completed IEP international evaluation; Completed implementation of the Accreditation Module.

Weaknesses: Great workload of the RVH members; Great workload of internal evaluators, especially in certain educational areas.

Opportunities: Setup of the evaluation of academic and non-academic staff in connection with the implemented Career Code.

Threats: Satisfaction with the achieved status quo and the workload of evaluators, which may formalise evaluation processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To recommend that study programme guarantors prepare summary study programme evaluations also at the moment the programmes are reaccredited.
- To work on the expansion and regular updates of the list of internal and external evaluators.
- To continue to initiate the reflection on the achieved status quo in the area of quality assurance and internal evaluation.
- To continue to develop the implemented Accredited Module, to enable the users to generate partial parts of files.
- To develop reporting systems (Power BI) and data analyses mainly from the University Information Systems.
- To set up an evaluation process of academic and non-academic staff as part of the implemented Career Code.



4 / Changes accomplished in the internal evaluation of educational activities

Evaluation of educational activities constitutes important regular feedback effectuated at the CZU in accordance with the Strategic Plan of Educational, Creative and Other Activities of the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. The implementation and methodical management of the **extended evaluation of educational process**, which extends the general evaluation of study subjects across all parts of the CZU, falls within the authority of the Institute of Education and Communication (hereinafter as the IVP), which, during the academic year, closely cooperates with the Quality Assurance Office attached to the Rector's Office as well as Vice-Deans for the quality of educational and creative activities of the individual faculties. In the light of internationalisation of higher education, evaluation processes and tools have been implemented also in English. With their opinions, students and teachers of the relevant subjects included in the extended evaluation of teaching of the period under review, contribute to the continuous improvement of quality of the educational process at the Czech University of Life Sciences. In the academic year 2022/2023 a similar periodicity in submitting the results of the summary evaluation reports and a similar distribution of partial results to the Quality Assurance Office and Vice-Deans for the quality of educational and creative activities of faculties were preserved. This is based on the completion of data collection in the University Information System. Basic results (values of questionnaire items – averages – and open comments of students and teachers) were sent to the aforesaid departments after the end of the semester and processing of data (April 2023, August 2023).

In the previous period, **the summary report on evaluation of educational activities** was as usual presented to the Rector's Advisory Board and management members of the university's individual components. Results of the summary report and especially those of partial reports were communicated to study programme guarantors, study subject guarantors, heads of the respective departments and other directly involved stakeholders.

In 2023, **the extended evaluation of teaching** was conducted for 50 subjects of full-time and combined forms of studies, and as part of the evaluation, both full-time and combined study students gave their opinions (number of respondents: 1301), as well as teachers (number of respondents: 34). The following Table 1 and Chart 9 detail the involvement of students and teachers within the educational process evaluation.

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents of the evaluation in teaching carried out by the IVP in the academic year 2022/2023 by the CZU components

Faculty	Number of involved teachers (with answers)	Number of involved students (with answers)
Faculty of Agrobiology, Food and Natural Resources	4	767
Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences	6	31
Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences	3	29
Faculty of Environmental Sciences	4	21
Institute of Education and Communication	2	64
Faculty of Economics and Management	13	357
Faculty of Engineering	2	32
Total	34	1301

Based on analyses of the data collected, the following conclusions and recommendation may be formulated:

- Overall, the university maintains a high level of teaching quality, however, there still exist areas for further improvement. The analysis and implementation of recommendations may be instrumental in further strengthening of the academic environment and improving teacher/student experience. The finding that certain subjects were evaluated by students as difficult might lead to efforts to improve support measures for students who are often unsuccessful in such subjects. Creating more opportunities for consultation and provision of supplementary study materials may contribute to the improvement of success rate and reduced mental stress in students.
- It will be suitable to carry out an analysis of the differences in evaluations among the different university components. The analysis ought to include the examination of teaching methods, content of subjects and feedback from students as to the individual components. These findings would make it possible to apply measures directed at aligning teaching standards across the university. Since students view the suitable interconnection of lectures and practicals as a positive aspect of teaching, it is recommended that the practical aspects of teaching and their application in all subjects be emphasised. This step may boost students' practical preparedness for their future careers. In addition, the university should ensure that lectures and practicals are interconnected such that students can observe the connection between theoretical and practical learning contents. Such measures may lead to an increase in effectiveness of teaching and a deeper understanding of the concepts studied.

- **Enhancing the contribution of subjects to students' future professional careers** should remain a priority. Interactions between teachers and students should be encouraged, together with sharing of practical examples to enable students to develop their practical skills and knowledge for future career. It is recommended to provide support to those teachers who should work on their ability to design teaching content independently and thus ensure a high quality of their teaching.
- It is desirable to **improve the availability of foreign language literature** to promote internationalisation and to increase the attractiveness of study programmes. Where relevant, an analysis of the reasons for low student attendance should be carried out, and measures must be adopted to raise their active participation in subjects. Regarding the development of teaching skills of academic staff, teachers should be offered to attend educational events aimed at the development of their teaching skills, primarily when it comes to students' motivation, effective feedback and innovative teaching methods. Teachers should be encouraged to share their tried-and-tested teaching methods so that they can inspire each other and improve their teaching skills as a result.

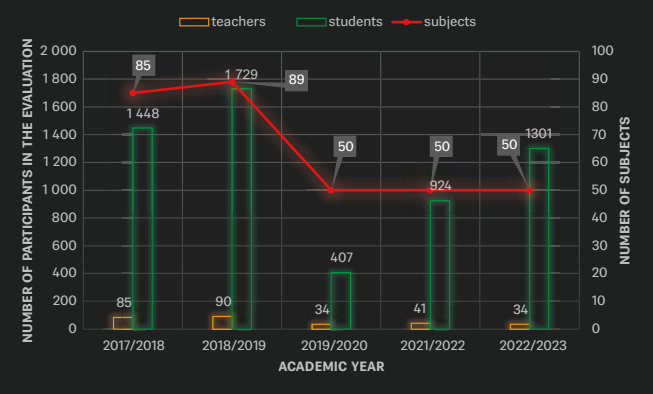


Chart 9 - Characteristics of respondents of the extended evaluation of teaching activities

Also in 2023, all aspects related to the situation and quality of educational activities constituted the topic of continuous discussions at the individual boards of the CZU, including the Rector's Advisory Board. As every year, the **Alumni Questionnaire** was evaluated. The number of **respondents in 2023 stood at 1360 for the whole CZU**, an increase of almost 13% compared to the previous year (in 2022, the questionnaire was filled in by 1204 respondents, see Chart 10).

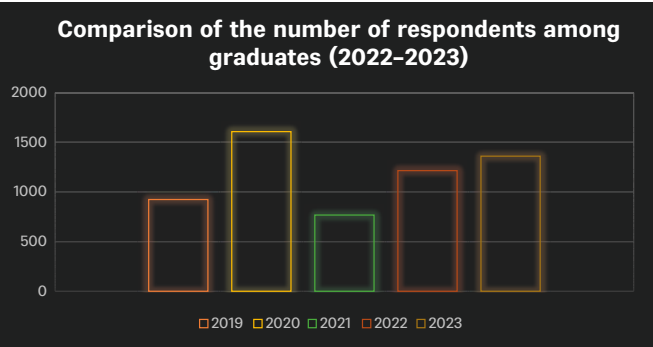


Chart 10 - Comparison of the number of respondents among graduates

Assessment of the situation in comparison with 2022: Educational activities were no longer affected by restrictions in 2023. The Internal Evaluation Board as well as the individual university's boards regularly discussed the evaluation of educational activities at the CZU. The quality of implemented study programmes is annually monitored on the basis of a set of indicators, available to guarantors in the Power BI environment. Each year, study programme guarantors evaluate the development of study programmes in a form of annual reports, regularly consulted by the RVH. The year 2023 marked broad discussions of the academic community regarding the phenomenon of artificial intelligence, which spans over many aspects of educational activities.

EVALUATION

Strength: Portfolio of accredited study programmes.

Weaknesses: High failure rate, especially in doctoral study programmes, but also in certain study subjects.

Opportunities: To use reaccreditation to innovate study programmes based on experience in their implementation (e.g. to minimise overlaps in study programmes and thus reduce their number); To motivate faculties to reduce the ratio of students per teacher; To continue to encourage and broaden the cooperation with practice.

Threats: High failure rate of students in certain study programmes and specific study subjects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **To continue to work with artificial intelligence, integrating its issues into internal regulations.**
- **To continue to focus on the setup of the quality evaluation system of lifelong learning – e.g. with respect to micro-certificates.**
- **To continue to evaluate feedback mechanisms from students and graduates, to use objective facts to search for new solutions to problems, if any, related to the quality of teaching.**
- **To evaluate the quality of theses in relation to the individual study programmes and educational areas.**
- **In the combined form of study, to monitor the quality of teaching, to place emphasis on quality also in programmes instructed in English and in lifelong learning.**
- **To monitor the quality of teaching in study programmes provided outside the seat of the CZU.**
- **To continue to analyse reasons for early termination of studies.**

5 / Changes accomplished in the internal evaluation of creative activities

The Czech University of Life Sciences has supported, long-term and conceptually, quality outputs of creative activities of its employees and students, especially in doctoral study programmes. The support is primarily directed at the outputs indexed in the **first decile** and the **first quartile** according to AIS in the Web of Science (hereinafter as the WoS) or published in journals included in the **Nature Index**. In 2023, the CZU employees published the total of **1053 articles with IF and AIS**, which are registered in WoS (Chart 11), a slight increase compared to 2022 (1038 articles). The number of articles in Q1 (442 in 2023) is comparable to the number of articles in 2022 (443 articles) and in 2021 (412 articles, see Chart 12). This is an increase by 146 percent compared to 2017.

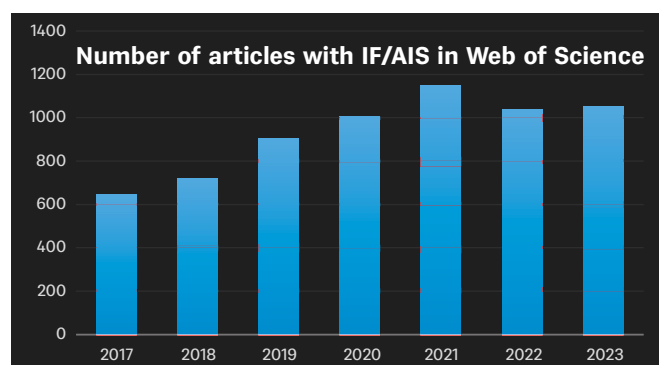


Chart 11 – Number of articles with s IF/AIS published by the CZU employees during 2017–2023, and registered in the Web of Science database

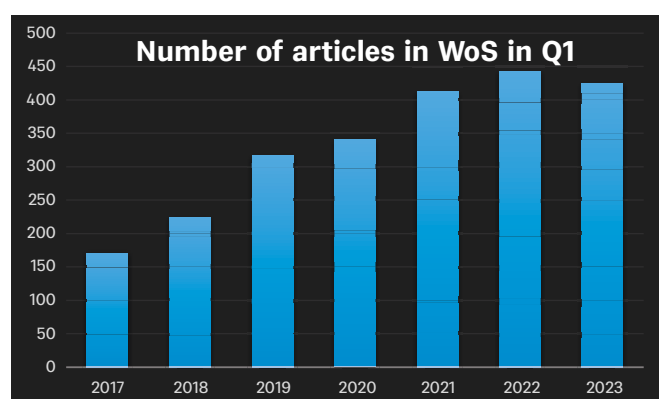


Chart 12 – Number of articles by the CZU employees in Q1 category (according to AIS) in the Web of Science in 2017–2023

The CZU directs its efforts at reaching **excellence** in the international and important national creative activities in the long term and thus improve the quality of creative activities on a continuous

basis (see Table 2), which is also necessary for the appropriate assurance of accreditation standards. Among other projects, **eight new international consortium projects** were launched in 2023 at the CZU, supported from the Horizon Europe programme, including one **ERC Consolidator Grant**.

Table 2: Number of projects researched at the CZU in 2022 and 2023

	Implemented projects		Submitted projects		Obtained projects	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
Domestic projects	217	161	263	338	58	50
International projects	80	70	115	92	36	22
Operational programmes	21	11	1	22	1	2

The year 2023 saw the start of a project from the European Twinning scheme. The objective of the **EarthBridge project**, coordinated by the CZU, is to develop cooperation with Technische Universität Dresden in Germany and Università di Bologna in Italy, resulting in the increase in the research capacities of the CZU in the field of environmental remote sensing of the Earth. Other major projects launched in 2023 include, inter alia, the **DALIA** project (supported from the European Missions scheme - Healthy Oceans, Seas, and Coastal and Inland Waters), which addresses the protection of the Danube basin ecosystems. The main objective of the LIFE Adapt Brdy project is to adapt forest stands to climate change in the area of Brdská vrchovina, and the AGRIGEP project delves into the problems of gender equality in the university environment.

The scientific excellence is highlighted by the CZU as part of the Top Research Call (OP JAK [Programme Johannes Amos Comenius]), specifically by the project AdAgriF – Advanced methods of emission reduction and sequestration of greenhouse gases in agricultural and forest landscapes for climate change mitigation, as well as by the project Natural and Anthropogenic Georisks, in which the CZU acts in the position of a co-initiator. In addition, the major project METROFOOD-CZ - Modernization of Research Infrastructure was awarded under the Research Infrastructure Call (OP JAK).

Other projects aimed at the structurally scientific excellence include: Development of infrastructure background of doctoral study programmes at the CZU (OP JAK: PhD Infra), Support for the Development of International Mobility of Researchers II and the Inter-Excellence/Inter-Inform project (Office for Support of Inter-

national Projects in Life Sciences III), which ended as of 31 December 2023. The data summarised above show that the CZU heads for the most prestigious sources of support for creative activities, in terms of projects supported by national entities.

International research, development and creative activities are centred at projects supported from the Horizon Europe programme. As many as 32 projects from the Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe programme were solved by the CZU in 2023, in addition to 24 cooperative projects of the Erasmus programme and other 16 projects from other schemes, such as Interreg, COST, LIFE, etc.

Assessment of the situation in comparison with 2022: The Czech University of Life Sciences continues to strive to achieve the balance of results in the key groups of disciplines in which its activities are carried out. In particular, certain groups of disciplines offer an increasing potential for the university to achieve high quality outputs. It may be stated that the CZU has been successful in increasing the quality of publication outputs and implemented projects, a fact that has been reflected for many years especially in the number of articles in Q1 of WoS according to AIS, also in the number of international projects awarded.

EVALUATION

Strengths: The long-term trend of improving quality of publication outputs and the increasing share of project activities with an international overlap.

Weaknesses: Disproportionality of quality outputs of creative activities between the individual components of the CZU and the individual organisational units.

Opportunities: To increase the number of excellent international scientific projects, to raise the share of quality outputs (Q1 and Q2) compared to other results in the educational areas in which the CZU implements its study programmes, in particular in certain groups of disciplines; To continue to support the internationalisation of quality research teams at the CZU.

Threats: Competition in the field of grant support, instability in the rules and conditions of grant agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To provide targeted and effective support to quality creative activities at the individual faculties and thus balance the disproportion of quality outputs among certain components of the CZU and scientific branches taught at the CZU (e.g. by incorporating creative activities in academic staff's career plans).
- To continue to support the development of the university's groups of profile disciplines.
- To attract promising scientists from abroad and to encourage their long-term career growth at the CZU.



6 / Changes accomplished in the internal evaluation of related activities

In a long-term perspective, the **modernisation of premises and equipment together with the sustainable development** and the management of the CZU campus form basic pillars of the development of related activities. Needless to say, **security**, not only physical security, which concerns members of the academic community, but also cybersecurity, constitute an important aspect of related activities. As part of preventive measures, security aspects have been developed at the CZU for many years, and the academic community of the CZU has gradually become acquainted with various issues related to security (e.g. through training).

Traditionally, the **CZU Library** has also contributed to quality assurance of related activities. In 2023, all library services were rendered without any major unforeseen restrictions.

The Czech University of Life Sciences understands **sustainability and social responsibility** as an integral part of the quality of its activities, and the university's activities in the area of social responsibility are summarised every year in a **non-financial CSR Report**. In 2023, the CZU again became the top-ranked university in the environmental pillar in the Czech Republic in social responsibility and sustainability rankings. In **UI GreenMetric Ranking 2023**, the CZU ranked the 36th out of the total of 1183 universities and higher education institutions the world over in the evaluation of sustainability. In QS World University Rankings, the CZU gained the 323rd place in the evaluation of fulfilment sustainability principles (the 183rd in the environmental category) out of the total of 1403 institutions evaluated. THE Impact Ranking, which monitors the fulfilment of the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda, ranked the CZU in the 201st to 300th positions out of the total of 1591 participants evaluated.

In 2023, the CZU hosted a two-day interdisciplinary **CSR Conference subtitled Together for a Sustainable Future not only for Universities**. The focus of the conference was on Digitalisation, Energy Sustainability and Food Waste.

The 6th year of the student competition the **CZU Campus Sustainability Challenge** was announced in 2023, with the aim of strengthening the sustainability of the CZU campus. In this context, a fixed topic Design of an Educational trail through the CZU sustainable campus was introduced. The sustainable trail should promote the awareness of the sustainability of the CZU campus among its students, employees as well as visitors to the CZU, and should serve as educational and teaching material.

The year 2023 saw the CZU move up significantly in all prestigious rankings monitoring the quality of higher education institutions. Times Higher Education: 4th place in the Czech Republic out of 18 ranked universities in the Czech Republic; QS Top Universities: 7th place in the Czech Republic out of 14 ranked universities in the Czech Republic (QS Top Universities: 6th place in the Czech Republic out of 15 ranked universities – regional ranking Europe with a modified methodology compared to the global methodology); Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai ranking): 3rd – 4th place in the Czech Republic out of six universities ranked in the Czech Republic; CWTS Leiden Ranking: 4th – 7th place in the Czech Republic (according to the criteria) out of nine ranked universities in the Czech Republic; Center for World University Rankings: 6th place in the Czech Republic out of 11 ranked universities in the Czech Republic. In the subject areas concerned, the CZU is the first in the Czech Republic in the evaluation of the subject area Agriculture and Forestry (the 62nd place worldwide out of five ranked universities). For the first time ever, the CZU was ranked in one of the five main subject areas (in this case, Life Sciences and Medicine), specifically in the shared 3rd – 4th place out of four universities in the Czech Republic (together with Palacký University Olomouc), In the subject area Environmental Sciences, the CZU is ranked in the same position in the world (250th – 300th) as Masaryk University in the context of the Czech Republic, i.e. in the 1st – 2nd place in the Czech Republic.

Many years' experience has proven that without study programmes taught in English, to develop internationalisation of a higher education institution would not be possible to a greater extent. Instruction in English has opened the CZU to the world. After a dynamic increase in the number of students studying in English especially in 2020-2022, the first reduction in the history has been recorded in comparison with 2022 and 2023 (a decrease of 6% compared to 2022). This development has been caused by a response to Putin's aggression against Ukraine, as a result of which no new study visas are issued to Russian students. However, the University Information System shows that after the two previous years of decline, a number of self-paying students has increased again, representing a source of potential income. In 2023 (as of 31 October 2023), foreign regular students of bachelor's, master's and doctoral study programmes represented 92.3 percent of all regular students in English study programmes (39% of whom are women). In these programmes, the share of regular students in all regular students at the CZU has also been on the increase, since it stood at almost 15 percent of all students at the CZU in 2023 (not including lifelong learning and exchange students). In total (English and Czech study programmes), as many as 4699 regular

students from 107 countries studied at the CZU as of 31 October 2023. Regular foreign students have long signified an important source of the number of regular students at the CZU (their share in all students has reached 24.7%). Even though the number of regular foreign students at the CZU has decreased by approximately 800 compared to 2023, their share in the total number of students has not changed to a considerable extent and oscillates around one quarter.

The post-Covid-19 period is marked by re-emergence of great interest of foreign students in short-term stays at the CZU (mobility). In 2023, 1159 foreign students (exchange students) were enrolled at the CZU for at least fifteen days. In terms of incoming students, the CZU was ranked 5th in the Czech Republic in 2023, with 117 032 student-days (by approximately 5,000 more than in 2022). The CZU was preceded by Charles University (501 427), Masaryk University (339 528), Czech Technical University (205 206) and Palacký University Olomouc (124 869). The CZU was followed by the Prague University of Economics and Business (114 811), Brno University of Technology (103 906) and other universities. Student-days (i.e. days when foreign students study in the Czech Republic) are used to calculate the budget chapter K of the budget of public higher education institutions.

Obviously, in 2023 the pandemic no longer affected the number of incoming students. The same applies to study stays abroad of the CZU students. The total 816 students left the country during the year (for at least 15 days). The year 2023 marked the second highest number of outgoing students in the history of the CZU. In 2023, the CZU was ranked 8th in the Czech Republic in terms of students' study stays abroad (7th in 2022). When calculated to student-days, the ranking ahead of the CZU in 2023 was as follows: Charles University (308 525), Masaryk University (215 591), Prague University of Economics and Business (124 860), Palacký University Olomouc (102 405), Czech Technical University (76 456), Brno University of Technology (66 275) and the University of Hradec Králové (57 575). The Czech University of Life Sciences recorded 54 725 student-days for outgoing students (about 1 000 student-days fewer than in 2022; this is the only decrease in the case of the aforesaid universities). With 42 340 student-days, the University of West Bohemia in Plzeň is one place behind the CZU.

In 2023 the number of mobilities of the CZU staff with the support of the Erasmus programme increased considerably compared with the "strong Covid years", approaching the highest number from 2019 (the second highest number – 317). STT (staff training) mobility contributes to the number of outgoing events to a large extent.

In the period under review, the CZU continued to utilise the benefits of work in university networks. First and foremost, this concerned the transfer of information, sharing of good practices from abroad and introducing the same into the CZU environment and vice versa, and building trust between partners. The most important activities in this area have long been the work within the Euroleague for Life Sciences (ELLS). In 2023, an application was prepared and submitted within the above network, in the direction of "European University Initiative" (development of a European University). The application was unsuccessful; however, the ELLS

resolved to submit a new, improved application in 2024. In the long term, the CZU has participated in a joint degree programme (Faculty of Agrobiological Sciences, Food and Natural Resources – BOKU Vienna and Lincoln University in New Zealand). Needless to say, the CZU has implemented a total of 14 dual, multiple or joint degree programmes (one doctoral, ten master's, three bachelor's) with students or graduates during the period under review. The CZU staff are proactively involved in activities of the ELLS subject areas. Eleven representatives of the CZU work in eleven subject areas out of 13 (of which two subject areas are managed by the CZU), in supporting areas (five representatives of the CZU; two of which are managed by the CZU) and in governing bodies (the Rector in the Council and the Vice-Rector in the "task force"). Two students from the CZU are members of the ELSA study organisation, which operates within the ELLS. An ELLS annual conference was held in 2023 at the University in Hohenheim, Germany. More than 80 persons from the ELLS (19 from the CZU) debated the transformation of the ELLS into a European University as part of the above-mentioned initiative. As a rule, the meeting of staff of ELLS member universities is followed by an ELLS student conference. Its 14th year took place with the participation of approximately 130 students (34 from the CZU) under the title The Power of Science – Many Perspectives on Our World. Two students from the CZU won the award for the best poster presentation and one student was conferred an award for the best oral presentation (the total of 14 winners in six groups).

The CZU is represented in the international organisation Association for European Life Science Universities (ICA) by its Vice-Rector, who is active in the organisation's Board. The organisation continued to work on increasing its participation in EU activities (promotion of visibility of the universities associated in the ICA network in the EU bodies). The ICA also organised the first year of a competition which took the form of a biodiversity challenge in university campuses (the CZU participation was the fifth highest). In 2023 the Czech University of Life Sciences also provided secretariat work of this organisation (the secretariat is based at the CZU). At the ICA conference in the French city of Lille, the participants debated artificial intelligence issues as well as those of one health tirade in the framework of "One Health Approach" (healthy people, healthy nature, healthy animals). The discussion was preceded by webinars focused on the two themes mentioned above. In 2023 the CZU also hosted a secretariat that administratively arranged for activities of the international organisation The European Alliance on Agricultural Knowledge for Development (AGRI-NATURA). Working under the ICA, this organisation is engaged in research and education in tropics and subtropics. A representative of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences served on the Board of the above organisation. The annual conference of the organisation took place at the CZU. Within the ICA standing board titled The ICA Regional Network for Central and South Eastern Europe (CA-SEE), in which the CZU has served as the chair since 2018, the CZU co-organised an annual conference titled Smart Life Sciences and Technology for Sustainable Development in Chisinau, Moldova, in 2023 (over 50 participants, chiefly budding scientists and doctoral students). Since 2022 a consortium of universities associated in the above organisation has implemented a Joint Master Degree project titled Sustainability in Agriculture, Food Production and Food Technology in the Danube Region (Danube AgriFood Master

– DAFM). This is a joint Erasmus-Mundus programme, coordinated at the CZU by the Faculty of Agrobiological Sciences and Natural Resources. Another international organisation under the umbrella of the ICA association in which the CZU is active is International Relations Officers' Network of the Association of European Life Science Universities (IROICA). One staff member of the CZU became a member of the executive board of this organisation, which held its meeting in Austria. The name is explanatory: this is an organisation of persons active in the area of university international relations.

Assessment of the situation in comparison with 2022: The Czech University of Life Sciences has continuously improved the level of quality of related activities. Unlike in previous years, the issue of security has become more and more important issue and is thus addressed across the academic community of the CZU. Compared to 2022 and previous years, there is a gradual increase in mobilities, the number of which begins to approach the pre-Covid period. In the last years, the CZU has been ranked excellently in significant international rankings that evaluate the quality of higher education institutions, an important aspect for the objective national and international comparison of education institutions.

EVALUATION

Strengths: Facilities and compactness of the campus; Modern premises and equipment and their incessant development; A number of annual activities aimed at development of competences of the staffs and students; In a long-term perspective, very good positioning of the CZU in significant rankings that evaluate the quality of higher education institutions; Instruction of study programmes in

English carried out for many years, with substantial visibility; Offer of summer schools (mainly abroad for the CZU students).

Weaknesses: : Still a lower level of frequency of international mobilities; A lower number of students going on long-term mobilities.

Opportunities: Development of the concept of work with graduates in the university's general strategy; New themes of the campus development, including security aspects; In the case the project is awarded, work on the European University.

Threats: A lower level of funding for internationalisation (the budget of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports no longer contains the fund D).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To continue to develop CSR activities at the CZU.
- To increase the international impact of accredited study programmes and activities at the CZU.
- To attract quality teachers and scientists from abroad, to encourage the involvement of foreign teachers in educational and creative activities at the CZU.
- To continue to use data from international rankings of higher education institutions in order to analyse the positioning of the CZU and to develop mechanisms of the university's administration and management.



7 / Final summary

At the CZU, the principle of quality assurance and internal quality evaluation has long relied on targeted feedback mechanisms of the implemented processes, analyses of the undertaken activities and the setup of management mechanisms. The completed IEP international evaluation (Institutional Evaluation Programme) may be perceived as the key feedback since it provides a source of other suggestions and arguments for the university's improvement and continuous development. On a long-term basis, the Czech University of Life Sciences has placed great emphasis on the quality of all of its activities, a fact that is regularly reflected in very good positioning of the CZU in most international evaluations and rankings, which may be considered to be an objective tool for comparing the quality of higher education institutions at the national and international levels alike. Nevertheless, it is necessary to pay attention to other challenges in the future, including the issue of artificial intelligence.





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