IRDE 2027

INTERNAL
RESEARCH AND
DOCTORAL STUDIES
EVALUATION



Guidelines for evaluators



Preface - Research evaluation in the Czech Republic

Ensuring quality is essential in scientific research and requires self-reflection, assessment, open discussion, and effective follow-up mechanisms. At the same time, there is growing awareness, both internationally and within the Czech academic community, of the unintended consequences of traditional metric-centred evaluation, such as narrow definitions of quality, increased pressure on researchers, and misalignment with institutional missions. Recent debates on research evaluation and science policy therefore call for approaches that better reflect disciplinary diversity, research culture, and societal relevance.

The National Evaluation system based on the 2025+ Methodology aims to mitigate some of the most problematic effects of indicator-driven evaluation by introducing peer review and aligning with CoARA principles. Despite these changes, the system's primary function remains funding allocation, and bibliometric indicators continue to play a relatively strong, if often implicit, role. In addition, the system is insufficiently responsive to disciplinary diversity and the formative needs of departments, research teams and individual doctoral study programmes.



Introduction of IRDE

The primary motivation for introducing Internal Research and Doctoral Studies Evaluation (IRDE) in 2022 was to address limitations of National evaluation system. The framework provides more detailed insight into scientific activity at the level of departments, research groups, and doctoral degree programmes (DDPs) through a formative, peer-review-based approach with no direct influence on budgeting.

The preparation of IRDE 2027 was guided by a methodological shift towards a values-oriented approach to research assessment. The redesign began with the articulation of core values in research that the evaluation aims to promote and protect, which were subsequently translated into a limited number of clearly defined evaluation dimensions forming the chapters of the self-evaluation report for research units.





Use of Evaluation Results



Faculties are expected to prepare strategic documents outlining how they will address the recommendations, including plans for the further development of doctoral programmes.

The faculty Strategic document

- contains a strategy for implementing the panel's recommendations at the faculty/institute level over the next five-year period,
- describes the way the faculty/institute will ensure the implementation of the panel's recommendations at the level of individual evaluated units through its internal management,
- contains a short reflection on the entire IRDE process.

The Doctoral Degree Program Development Plan:

- developed by the DDP guarantor and reviewed by the doctoral board members,
- may build on an existing plan, but should be updated to reflect the recommendations set out in the evaluation report,
- is continuously, at least once a year, evaluated and updated by the programme board or the doctoral board.



Key stakeholders

1	FACULTY LEADERSHIP	Involved in designing IRDE, configures the basic settings for IRDE at the faculty.
2	EVALUATED UNIT	Prepares self-evaluation report and participates in on-site visits.
3	EVALUATOR	Provides feedback and recommendations to the units being evaluated.
4	EVALUATION COORDINATOR	Oversees the evaluation process at the faculty/institute.
5	INTERNAL EVALUATION BOARD	Sets and approve key DDPs documents, ambassadors attend on-site visits.
6	RESEARCH AND QUALITY OFFICE	Design the IRDE, prepare key documents, methodological support.



Tentative schedule of activities

ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME
Structure of evaluated units, date of the on-site visit + composition of the evaluation panels/ISAB.	by 30 September 2026
Preparation of materials (dashboards, evaluation, self-evaluation and contextual repors forms, giudelines).	by 30 September 2026
Submission of the self-evaluation and contextual reports and supporting materials to the evaluation panel/ISAB. Review of the reports and supporting materials by panel/ISAB members.	2 months before the on-site visit
Kick-off meeting (online).	about 1 month before the on-site visit
Submission of supplementary questions from evaluators.	2 weeks before the on-site visit
On-site visit.	January-November 2027
Evaluation report + Summary report.	1 month after the on-site visit/ 2 weeks after the FEP meeting.



Evaluator workflow

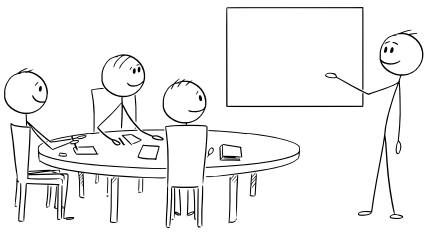
1. PREPARE FOR THE EVALUATION



2. PARTICIPATE IN THE KICK-OFF MEETING



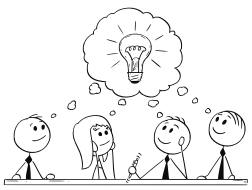
3. CONDUCT THE ON-SITE VISIT



4. DRAFT THE EVALUATION REPORT



5. JOIN THE FACULTY EVALUATION PANEL (IF APPLICABLE)



6. FINALIZE EVALUATION OUTPUTS





1

Prepare for the evaluation



The evaluation panel must receive self-evaluation reports no later than two months prior to the on-site visit.

In addition, the evaluation panel will be provided with:

- faculty-level contextual report,
- supporting data in the form of a Power BI dashboards,
- evaluation reports from the IRDE 2022.

These materials constitute the main basis for the evaluation and should be carefully reviewed prior to the on-site visit. They are intended to support the panel's understanding of the evaluated units, their development, and their institutional context, and to serve as a basis for discussion during the visit. The evaluation panel also uses these materials to prepare questions for the on-site visit.

Questions by email

The evaluation panel is expected to send questions to the evaluated unit two weeks prior to the on-site visit, thus enabling the evaluated unit to prepare more efficiently.

Information and instructions for working with the Power BI dashboards will be provided together with the dashboards. These data serve as a core analytical input for the evaluation; however, their interpretation within the self-evaluation report is of key importance.



2

Participate in the kick-off meeting



As part of the evaluation panel's preparation for the on-site visit, at least one online kick-off meeting should be held among the evaluation panel, the evaluation coordinator, and faculty representatives.
This meeting should take place about one month prior to the on-site visit.

The kick-off meeting serves for several purposes:

- it allows panel members to get to know each other,
- it enables the faculty management to present the faculty and outline the specifics of the Czech higher education system, including its funding mechanisms (context),
- it allows faculty management to brief the evaluation panel on the evaluation process, its purpose, and its relation to the national evaluation framework in the Czech Republic,
- it gives the evaluation panel the opportunity to decide whether they want to invite additional people for interviews during the on-site visit,
- it allows the evaluation coordinator opportunity to provide organizational information (and answer various questions regarding the logistical arrangements for the on-site visit).

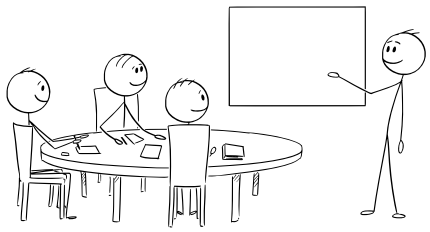


3

Conduct the on-site visit

The faculty leadership drafts the schedule for the on-site visit in consultation with the evaluation panel chair. The on-site visit usually lasts 2-3 days and is chaired by the chair of the evaluation panel/ISAB.

The on-site visit is an important formative part of the evaluation. Building on the self-evaluation report, it provides space for an open discussion about the unit's strengths, areas for improvement, barriers to further development, and possible ways forward. It also allows the panel to clarify information provided in the self-evaluation report, raise additional relevant issues, and become familiar with the organisational environment and research infrastructure.



Interviews

During the on-site visit, the evaluation panel conducts interviews with representatives of the evaluated unit and other relevant stakeholders.

The interviews should complement the self-evaluation report and, above all, support a constructive discussion about the unit's current situation and future development.

The evaluation panel will also interview a selection of PhD candidates. These interviews must be held without representatives of the evaluated unit present.



3

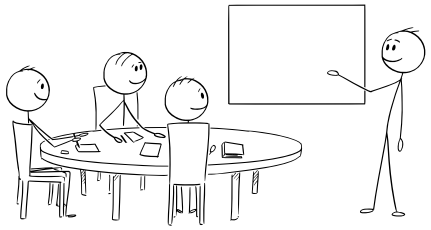
Private interim meeting(s)

In order to safeguard the quality of the evaluation, the evaluation panel must be given sufficient time to engage in private discussions. These meetings should be included in the programme schedule.

Tour (optional)

Where appropriate, the evaluated unit can organise a tour of its premises for the evaluation panel as part of the on-site visit.

The evaluation coordinator prepares a brief report on the on-site visit, including the attendance lists. The report will be stored in the document server (IS).



Private final meeting

The evaluation panel holds a final private meeting prior to the conclusion of the on-site visit programme. During this last meeting, the evaluation panel discusses its findings, exchanges arguments and formulates a provisional judgement on the evaluated unit.

If time constraints do not allow for this meeting to take place during the on-site visit, it may be held online after the conclusion of the on-site visit.



4

Draft the evaluation report



The evaluation report is based on the self-evaluation report, supporting data, and the meetings held during the on-site visit. In its assessment, the report reflects the MU research values underpinning the evaluation and translates them into findings and recommendations relevant to the further development of the evaluated unit. Detailed instructions for preparing the evaluation report are included in the evaluation report form.

The evaluation report is prepared for each evaluated research unit and doctoral degree programme (i.e. one self-evaluation report corresponds to one evaluation report).

A draft version of the evaluation report should be completed within 2 weeks of the on-site visit. Then it is made available to the evaluated unit so that they can check for any factual inaccuracies.

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide expert feedback on diverse research activities of the evaluated units to foster healthy research culture(s) and an environment conducive to excellent research. The main objective is to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for future development.

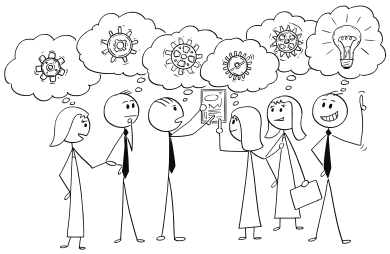


5

Join the faculty evaluation panel (if applicable)

In cases where more than two evaluation panels are involved within a faculty or institute, their findings need to be consolidated into a single faculty-level perspective to enable the preparation of the Summary Report. This is ensured through the establishment of a Faculty Evaluation Panel (FEP).
This step is not required if all evaluated units within the faculty or institute are assessed by the same evaluation panel or ISAB.

The FEP is composed of the Chairs of the individual evaluation panels. The meeting is held online after all on-site visits have been completed.



The primary purpose of the FEP meeting is to align the key recommendations directed at the faculty or institute leadership. It provides a platform to synthesise the conclusions of individual evaluation panels and to identify common themes, strengths, and proposed recommendations, which will form the basis for the Summary Report.



6

Finalize evaluation outputs

The evaluation outputs include two types of documents, each serving a different purpose.

The evaluation report provides formative feedback to each evaluated unit, supporting its further development.

The summary report synthesises the key findings across all evaluated units within the given faculty or institute.



A final version of the evaluation report should be completed within 1 month of the on-site visit. The summary report should be submitted together with the evaluation report within the same timeframe. If a Faculty Evaluation Panel (FEP) is convened, the summary report should be delivered no later than two weeks after the FEP meeting.

The evaluation panel strives to reach a consensus on the evaluation output's findings. If a consensus cannot be achieved on specific points, this will be explicitly noted in the report.



Context for the Evaluation

I. Czech Higher Education System

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Czech Republic are governed by Act No. 111/1998 Coll. and play a key role in education, research, and regional development. The system includes public, private, and state institutions, with public universities forming the dominant part.

HEIs are divided into university-type institutions, which offer doctoral programmes and conduct habilitation and professorship procedures, and non-university institutions, which provide bachelor's and master's programmes only. Study programmes are accredited by the National Accreditation Bureau and follow the three-cycle structure (bachelor's, master's, doctoral) within the Bologna framework. Czech higher education is characterised by a strong integration of education and research, with most academic staff involved in both activities. Universities cover a broad range of disciplines and are actively engaged in international cooperation.

A distinctive feature of the system is the high level of autonomy of faculties and other units. Faculties have their own governance structures, budgets, and academic profiles, enabling flexibility but also resulting in significant diversity across institutions and units.



Public universities are primarily funded from the state budget, with funding based on educational activities, research performance, and strategic priorities defined by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS). Additional funding comes from institutional research support, which is partly linked to national evaluation outcomes. The results of national evaluation (Methodology 2025+) play an important role in determining research funding.

Universities also receive targeted funding through competitive grants and projects, primarily from national agencies such as the Czech Science Foundation (GA CR) and the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA CR), as well as from EU programmes.

These funding sources support both basic and applied research and play a significant role in shaping research priorities and capacities.

Overall, the Czech higher education system combines a high degree of institutional autonomy with strong reliance on public funding and evaluation-based resource allocation, which may result in significant diversity in research performance, strategic focus, and organisational practices across faculties and units.





II. Czech Doctoral Education Framework Reform and Modernisation

1. System Foundation and Legal Governance

The Czech doctoral landscape is currently undergoing a fundamental structural realignment, moving away from a post-communist institutional legacy characterised by hierarchical academic structures and fragmented faculty autonomy. Governed by the Higher Education Act No. 111/1998 Coll., doctoral programs leading to the Ph.D. degree are nominally designed for three to four years of intensive research. However, national legislation permits extensions up to an eight-year legal ceiling, a duration that recent reforms seek to curtail.



While the National Accreditation Bureau for Tertiary Education maintains regulatory oversight, the system increasingly leverages "Institutional Accreditation." This mechanism grants universities significant autonomy to manage their programmes while mandating strict adherence to national quality standards regarding creative activity and the efficacy of departmental Doctoral Boards.[1]

[1] Third-cycle (PhD) programmes



2. Legal Status of PhD Candidates

The professional standing of doctoral researchers in the Czech Republic is defined by a critical distinction between academic status and labour participation. This framework is rooted in national legislation rather than institutional preference, shielding universities from unilateral shifts in employment policy.

Student Status:
Legally, the primary status of a candidate is that of a "student." This classification dictates that primary funding is scholarship-based, resulting in social security, health insurance, and taxation arrangements that differ fundamentally from standard employment law.



Optional Employment:
Candidates may engage in "hybrid" arrangements, that combine their student status with employment contracts for creative activities. These roles are typically facilitated through university research projects, institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences, or specific industrial partnerships, though such employment remains secondary to the candidate's primary study obligations.



3. Funding Reform in 2025: Minimum Income Guarantee

The 2025 reform represents a definitive shift in the fiscal philosophy of Czech higher education, moving from a volume-based subsidy to a model centred on financial sustainability and student retention.

1.2x Minimum Wage Mandate: Effective September 2025, every full-time doctoral candidate within the standard duration of study (3–4 years) must receive a minimum monthly income of at least 1.2 times the national minimum wage. Currently, this equates to approximately 1,030 EUR.



This guaranteed income may be comprised of a doctoral scholarship, a salary under an employment contract for creative activities related to the dissertation, or a combination of both.

Under this framework, Masaryk University maintains a baseline by awarding a minimum doctoral scholarship of approximately 500 EUR to each eligible candidate, which serves as a core component of the total 1,030 EUR income requirement.[2]

[2] Doctoral study income



4. Academic Framework: The ISP and Internationalisation

The modernisation of the Czech PhD curriculum focuses on individual accountability and professionalising the research phase through three core pillars.

1. The Individual Study Plan (ISP):

As the binding roadmap for the degree, the ISP now integrates structured training and "transferable skills" as mandatory curricular elements. Its fulfilment is subject to thorough, regular evaluation by the supervisor and the Doctoral Board.

2. Mandatory International Mobility:

To mitigate historical isolationism, candidates are



required to complete a research stay abroad, typically lasting at least 30 days, to foster global networking and scientific exposure in different cultural environments.

3. Efficient Completion:

The system is transitioning toward a more streamlined graduation process, increasingly integrating the State Doctoral Examination with the dissertation defence to focus on high-quality research outputs rather than administrative milestones.



5. Strategic Shift: Quality-Based Funding and Institutional Accountability

The transition to a performance-oriented model incentivises universities to prioritise graduation rates and scientific excellence over mere enrolment figures.

Feature	Pre-2025 Funding Logic	Post-2025 Reform Logic
Primary Metric	Per-capita state subsidy (volume-based).	Quality of science and graduation rates.
Student Volume	Higher intake with lower per-capita funding.	Selective intake with a higher guaranteed income.
Success Criteria	Enrolment and registration numbers.	Completion within the standard 3–4-year period.
Supervision	Heterogeneous expectations and individual variance.	Structured training and thorough evaluation of fulfilment.



6. Summary of reform objectives

The modernisation framework aims to resolve long-standing systemic inefficiencies through three strategic objectives.



1. Reducing Dropout Rates:
By ensuring a 1.2x minimum wage income guarantee, the reform reduces the financial pressure on students to seek external, non-academic employment, which has historically hindered degree completion.

2. Increasing International Competitiveness:
Through mandatory mobility and standardised funding levels, the Czech system is positioned as an attractive destination for global talent, overcoming the legacy of low institutional mobility.

3. Professionalising the PhD Experience:
Shifting from a "vocational" perception to a structured research phase ensures that doctoral education produces highly skilled researchers equipped with both specialised and transferable expertise.

The Czech Association of Doctoral Researchers summarized the PhD Reform in the Czech Republic in a detailed and comprehensive document: PhD Reform+ in a Nutshell.

MASARYK
UNIVERSITY