

"CONTRACT" - STRATEGY FOR RESEARCH AND DOCTORAL STUDIES (2022-2027)

FACULTY OF ARTS

The contract is a strategic document based on the Internal Research and Doctoral Evaluation (IRDE) carried out at Masaryk University (MU) in 2022. The content of the contract is linked to recommendations obtained from the IRDE, to MU's priorities and shared values, or to the faculty/institute's own strategies in research and doctoral studies. With this document, the faculty or university institute enters into an agreement with the Rector of MU and undertakes to implement the strategy for research and doctoral studies.

The contract contains the faculty's mission and a more detailed description of the implementation of the main goals by which the faculty wants to fulfill the individual strategies. Complementary materials are

- Annex 1: An overview of the objectives in the form of a table to serve as an action plan; and
- Annex 2. A strategy, a presentation that summarizes the MU management's statement on the IRDE recommendations and shared values in research and at the same time on the relevant benchmark.

1. MISSION AND MAIN OBJECTIVES

Our goal is to build a faculty that is able to respond to societal challenges in their entirety, contribute to their solution and attract research funding related to them. We want to build a faculty that is able to attract and retain top researchers capable of applying for prestigious European projects, and at the same time a faculty that motivates all existing workplaces to develop. We want to achieve these goals by fostering internationalization, supporting grant activities and, last but not least, by bringing the evaluation of science and research at the faculty closer to university-wide shared values. Our goal is to include doctoral students in research and to prevent fragmentation of research, using the principles of Rationalization and Quality Improvement of Doctoral Study Programs (hereinafter referred to as "DSP").

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAIN OBJECTIVES

Development of grant activities

The Faculty of Arts is made up of a wide range of departments differing in their level of research performance. The aim of the faculty is to support the development of research by linking it to grant activities across the entire institution so that the gap in scientific performance stops increasing. This is particularly important in view of the fact that participation in grant projects significantly affects the salaries of employees – participation in projects is an essential tool for the wage competitiveness of the Faculty of Arts compared to, for example, secondary schools.

Specific steps of implementation:

1. Creation of the document Grant Strategy of the Faculty of Arts. This strategy explicitly regulates the management of overhead funds of various project schemes and guarantees appropriate remuneration of employees active in the submission of grant applications. The aim of the strategy is to contribute to the motivation of every workplace (even the less efficient ones) to submit grant applications.
2. Support for smaller projects with significant social relevance from the Dean's Grant Fund. Continued financial support for applied research projects (TA CR).
3. Establishment of support in Open Science and Data Management.
4. Development of the Project Support Department, development of tools for strategic management of project activities, designation of key project schemes.

Obstacles: Stimulation of grant activities through support programs requires funds and depends on the budgetary situation of the faculty. The faculty's priority must be to support and develop workplaces where grant activity is weaker.

Indicators and benchmarks: Growing trend in the volume of grant funds, the number of submitted projects, success in grant competitions, position in the QS Ranking for humanities (currently comparable to the University of Tartu).

Implementation: 1. 1Q 2025, 2. 3Q 2024 with an annual periodicity, 3. from 2024, 4th continuous.

Development of internationalization, reduction of inbreeding

Inbreeding is a source of restrictions in the development of science, research and doctoral studies. The aim of the management is to remove internal administrative barriers (e.g. the language barrier) and to motivate workplaces to internationalize.

Specific steps of implementation:

1. Maximum use of grant schemes supporting the arrival/return of researchers from abroad: support for return grants (e.g. PIF Outgoing), arrival of postdocs for MSCA Postdoc Fellowships, linking the transformation of DSP to projects such as Twinning or MSCA Doctoral Networks, support for longer-term foreign internships at DSPs.
2. Within the DSP, the faculty will strive to provide maximum support for internationalization and interdisciplinary cooperation.
3. Maintaining open selection procedures, introducing the condition of a minimum six-month internship abroad for academic positions from the level of assistant professor.

4. Internal communication in Czech and English, strengthening teaching in English, increasing the number of doctoral theses in English.

Obstacles: Relatively low attractiveness of the Faculty of Arts MU and the Czech Republic in general for foreign experts (especially from the West), inadequate financial remuneration compared to abroad.

Indicators and benchmarks:

Ad 1) Increasing number of foreign workers, number of staff with foreign PhDs, number of staff with at least six-month internships abroad, number of long-term foreign internships of doctoral students (3-6 months), application for MSCA Doctoral Networks in 2024, submission of two Twinning applications in 2025, increasing involvement in PIF Incoming/Outgoing and in the MSCA Postdoc Fellowship.

Ad 2) The number of DS under dual supervision, the number of foreign DS, the number of foreign experts participating in the DSP, the number of publication outputs and projects submitted in cooperation with foreign countries.

Ad 3) Modification of the conditions for admission to academic positions.

Ad 4) Number of courses and SP in English, number of doctoral theses defences in English.

Implementation: 1. continuous, 2. continuously, 3. Q4 2025, 4th continuous.

Effective evaluation and financing of science and research

The panel of evaluators calls for clear criteria for the evaluation of science at the Faculty of Arts. An internal analysis found that in the evaluated period there was a significant difference between the evaluation of science at the Faculty of Arts and how science is evaluated at the university level. The most striking is the fact that the faculty's budget methodology lacks a fixed part, while all funding at the faculty is distributed according to performance. The analysis showed that this leads to an unhealthy pressure to perform "at all costs" (i.e. even at the cost of overproduction of the least demanding results).

Specific steps to change:

1. Change in the methodology for the division of LCDRO and its approximation to the university system: introduction of a fixed component (approx. 70%) and a performance component (approx. 30%), linking the performance component to the modules of evaluation of the M17+ methodology with an emphasis on publications in prestigious scientific publishers/journals (Q1, Q2).

2. Financial reward for authors of publications with grades 1 and 2 in the evaluation of Module 1 within the M17+.

Obstacles: The methodology for dividing LCDRO is voted on in the Academic Senate of the Faculty of Arts, which does not necessarily share the vision of the faculty management. The aim of the leadership is to convince the Senate and the academic community of the meaningfulness of the chosen strategy.

Indicators and benchmarks: Increasing number of publications in Q1/Q2 in Scopus/WoS, maintaining and improving the rating in M17+, number of books and chapters in prestigious publishing houses (Level 1, 2).

Implementation: 1. 4Q 2025, 2. Continuously.

Rationalization and improvement of DSP quality

Within doctoral studies, the considerable diversity of scientific areas covered by the Faculty of Arts is reflected in a large number of specifically focused study programmes. The aim of the faculty is therefore to rationalize and restructure the DSP with an emphasis on the quality of study, internationalization, interdisciplinary cooperation and social relevance.

Specific steps to change:

1. Restructuring of the DSP (languages and literatures in the 1st phase), initiation of the establishment of PhD Schools.
2. Creation and implementation of DSP quality standards at the faculty, changes in the admission procedure, support of study success.
3. Increasing information support for DSP students, development of scientific and pedagogical competencies.
4. Support for the internationalization of doctoral studies, support for publication and project activities of doctoral students, systematic support of conditions for obtaining a European doctorate.
5. Monitoring the employment of graduates, involving graduates in the role of consultant/mentor of doctoral students.

Obstacles: Most existing DSPs have been granted accreditation for a period exceeding the duration of the contract. The establishment of new DSPs and PhD Schools must therefore be based on meaningful needs and intentions as well as academic discussion "from below", not mandated. The doctoral boards of the existing DSP are responsible for the implementation of the proposed changes, and they do not have to align with the position of the faculty.

Indicators and benchmarks:

Ad 1) Restructuring philological DSPs, initiating the preparation of the restructuring of other DSPs to the FORD 2/3 level, initiating an academic discussion on the establishment of PhD Schools, supporting the resulting plans (15 DSP 4Q 2028, 1 PhD School 4Q 2028).

Ad 2) Introduction of the DS Standard at the faculty, the Supervisor's Standard and the Student Standard, implementation of changes in the admission procedure, setting up a system for working with academic failure in the DSP.

Ad 3) Innovation of the handbook for new DS, introduction of a mandatory block for familiarization with library services, foreign and project departments for incoming DS, introduction of the obligation to complete the online course FRESHERS: Skills for Research Careers, setting up familiarization with regulations in the IS MU for DSP students.

Ad 4) Increase in the number of dissertations under dual supervision, increase in the number of long-term stays abroad (3–6 months), publication outputs and submitted projects with foreign participation, increase in foreign doctoral studies and foreign experts involved in the implementation of doctoral studies, increase in the number of European doctorates.

Ad 5) Involvement in the pilot phase of Alumni/Career tracking at MU, subsequent involvement in the ALUMNI university network.

Implementation: 1. 1. Phase 4Q 2026, then continuously, 2. 2Q 2025, then continuously, 3. 1Q 2025, then continuously, 4. continuously, 5. 4Q 2024, and continuously.