

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

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND ADMINISTRATION

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 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

ECON MUNI strives for a high international reputation in the fields of economics, finance and management by publishing research papers in leading professional journals and by providing internationally competitive education.

ECON MUNI strives to maintain a balance between basic and applied research. Basic research conducted at ECON MUNI adheres to the standards recognized by the best international scientific journals. The aim of applied research at ECON MUNI is to provide relevant knowledge and methods for policy-making at the global, national or local level, for business or management of profitable or non-profit activities. In both cases, research must be conducted according to recognized ethical standards and independently of the interests of specific interest groups.

To achieve this ambition, ECON MUNI wants to create a stimulating and inclusive environment for employees and students in which they feel free, can develop their ideas and are supported in collaboration with colleagues within and outside ECON MUNI.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAIN OBJECTIVES

Objective: To build strong scientific teams capable of achieving scientific excellence and/or high social relevance

The proposed steps are based on the IRDE evaluation, which pointed out the excessive fragmentation of research areas. Based on a discussion with the heads of individual departments, approximately 5 priority research areas will be defined. The implementation of the new budgetary rules will overcome sectoral fragmentation and allow development funds, including external financing, to be directed primarily to strengthening capacities within these strategic areas. Building strong scientific teams is a prerequisite for applying a competitive ERC grant. The research potential of individual priority areas will be regularly evaluated in 5-year periods during the internal evaluation. Regular evaluation will enable the gradual development of the research direction. The biggest obstacle to implementation is the competitiveness of the faculty in the international academic labour market and the ability to attract top researchers. A relevant model for the organization, structure and interdisciplinarity (not necessarily content) of research topics is the School of Economics, Universitat Barcelona.

Objective: To achieve publication performance and quality at the level of good European universities

The proposed steps are based on the premise that for the creation of quality publications, researchers must be adequately motivated, have the ability to conduct quality research and be able to allocate enough time to research. Therefore, the essential steps include: i) setting up a unified system for rewarding publication performance that motivates publishing in quality journals (Q1 according to AIS or level 3* and higher according to AJG); ii) competitive and internationally advertised selection procedures; iii) rationalization of the pedagogical burden at the faculty, especially for research-oriented academics. An obstacle to implementation is the relatively narrow market of academic economists able to participate in high-quality international research and at the same time teach in the Czech language. The key point for implementation is the development of teaching in English (and in Czech study programmes). The relevant benchmark is the University of Innsbruck (QS ranking 500 in economics).

Goal: To increase the quality of PhD studies and PhD graduates

The proposed steps aim to improve the quality of PhD studies by improving the quality of continuous feedback provided to students on their research and more selective selection of applicants. The basic tool to increase the quality of PhD studies is the unification of 6 existing PhD programs into 1 program called "Economics, Finance and Management". The unification of PhD programs will unify the requirements for applicants, ensure a more competitive admission process and the selection of the best applicants from one cohort divided by field. The next step is the implementation of the so-called thesis advisory committee (TAC), which provides regular feedback from a wider range of people. The assumption is that at least one employee of a foreign university (outside Slovakia) will always be a member of the TAC, which will lead to the completion of the transfer of PhD studies exclusively into English. A fundamental indicator of the quality of PhD studies is the career placement of graduates with a preference for top foreign universities. Employment of PhD graduates at the faculty is not expected. Similarly broadly oriented economic programmes in Europe (e.g. Milan Bicocca University) serve as a model for the organisation of studies.

Goal: To create an open and international research environment at ECON MUNI

A crucial step towards creating an open research environment is the implementation of a career system that clearly anchors the expectations of academics regarding their future career at ECON MUNI through the introduction of postdoc and tenure positions. The creation of an international research environment will be further supported by a set of measures aimed at supporting the short- and medium-term activities of external researchers: i) organization and financial support of a series of research seminars; (ii) the introduction of the institute of visiting professors; (iii) the establishment of a programme to support long-term research internships.