

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

FACULTY OF SOCIAL STUDIES

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

In accordance with its strategic plan, the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University (FSS) develops areas of excellence that enable it to be an important Czech and Central European centre of social science research and education, which at the same time actively formulates social goals and enters the public debate. The basic objectives of FSS are to consolidate this excellence and set out on the path to achieving the level of a solid European respected workplace. Therefore, the main goals in the field of science and doctoral studies for the period 2022-2027 are to eliminate gender imbalance and strengthen the internationalization of research and doctoral studies. The other objectives are important, but complementary.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAIN OBJECTIVES

(1) Reducing the gender imbalance in the positions of associate professors and professors

To achieve this goal, we will map the experiences of assistant professors, associate professors and researchers in the form of an anonymous questionnaire that will reveal obstacles preventing them from faster career growth. There will also be a change in the evaluation period after returning from parental leave from the standard annual to two or three years, with a brief and realistic commitment between the employee and the manager(s) to be achieved in the evaluation period upon return. FSS will support part-time work in parallel with taking parental leave tied to a specific task. FSS also supports the effort to obtain funds from the [GAMU restart project](#) by ensuring that the workplace does not pay contributions for employees employed in this way.

The indicator is the achievement of a ratio of 50 percent of newly launched "domestic" habilitation procedures and procedures for the appointment of professors, which also represents **a benchmark**.

The measures will be implemented from the 2024/2025 academic year.

(2) Strengthening internationalisation

To achieve the goal, individual departments and research institutes will better define their strategic goals and strengths with regard to the development of cooperation with existing and new research partner institutions from abroad and will actively seek such partners. We will also support increasing the number of cotutelles and other forms of international doctorates, using the new framework set by the currently adopted MU regulations. In the field of doctoral studies, we integrate (formally and informally) students in doctoral programmes carried out in Czech and English. Under the circumstances set by MU regulations and external regulations, we will abolish the collection of tuition fees, which will make programmes conducted in English more attractive. At the level of follow-up master's studies, we will set up one or two other double degree programs. We will monitor and, if necessary, strengthen the capacity of the International Relations Office and the Student Affairs Department in accordance with the development of the number of students.

An indicator is the growing number of English MA study programmes increased by 2 double degrees and an increase in the proportion of international doctoral students towards one third of students.

These measures are already being implemented on an ongoing basis, as they fully correspond to the existing FSS development policy.

(3) Limitations of inbreeding

To achieve this goal, a strictly open and internationalised tendering process has already been introduced. The FSS management supports departments and institutes to accept applicants outside MU and ideally outside the Czech Republic. The need to teach in Czech or Slovak often remains a limit, as well as salary conditions that can be advertised. Removing these limits is beyond the possibilities of FSS, but we are also trying, in accordance with the [HR Award policy](#), to increase the attractiveness of workplaces with vouchers for excellent science and high-quality administrative facilities of the faculty. We will also prepare a new career code that will introduce a standard of 6 months at least at a foreign institution before being accepted for an assistant position.

The indicator is the proportion of people with a PhD outside MU in the category of academic staff member or with a postgraduate job abroad before joining FSS, with the fact that we want to gradually reach **a benchmark** of 30 percent of newly filled academic positions by non-FSS applicants by 2028.

(4) Strengthening the involvement of the FSS in international grant projects

FSS already supports the training of administrative staff and academics in the submission of international projects. We will motivate individual departments to make more active use of university schemes that prepare the conditions for success in large international projects, i.e. to actively seek out candidates for MASH, MASH Junior Star, etc. We are currently working on a strategy to support the preparation of ERC projects: the parent workplace will not pay levies for employees who have been preparing an ERC project for a long time, there will be administrative and financial support if such an employee is released from teaching and other activities so that he/she can devote up to 100 percent of his/her work capacity to the preparation of the project. In the future, we will also think about how to support involvement in the MSCA and H2020 projects.

The indicator is the number of international projects obtained over a set period, the benchmark is an average of at least one such project submitted to FSS per year in the academic years 2026/2027 and 2027/2028.

We are working on measures on an ongoing basis, as well as strengthening workplace incentives and capacity building.

(5) Increase in the allocation of funds for doctoral students

The tool for FSS is to increase the involvement of doctoral students in the work of research institutes and, where they do research, also in departments, or to consider funding opportunities outside projects. Another measure is to reduce the number of doctoral study programmes by one to three, which also rationalises their operation.

The indicator is the share of doctoral students with project or teaching part-time jobs at FSS, **the benchmark** is the 50 percent threshold. Such a benchmark may seem to be not very ambitious, but it is based on the specific nature of typical projects solved in the field of SHV, which do not count on the building of large research teams. Another **indicator** is the one to three lower number of accredited programmes with an admission procedure in the 2027/2028 academic year.

The schedule is yet to be determined, in connection with the validity of the amendment to the Higher Education Act, as we will adapt the practical implementation to the specific conditions for financing doctoral studies when they are known.

(6) To stimulate publications in prestigious types of outputs

FSS has and fulfils this measure in accordance with the principles of LCDRO distribution, where we have strengthened the weight of excellent publications this year, as well as with [the grant strategy](#) until 2025, which will be amended accordingly. The implementation is therefore continuous, we are modifying the grant strategy (a new one will be adopted in 2025), adjusting the parameters of the LCDRO division, discussing the goals of individual workplaces and pushing the workplaces to take greater account of excellence in internal incentive reward programs, while respecting their different current financial condition.