

**EVALUATION REPORT FOR EVALUATION OF RESEARCH
ORGANIZATION IN THE SEGMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS IN YEAR 2025**

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION NAME:

University of Finance and Administration

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN): 04274644

THE LIST OF EVALUATION UNITS IN MODULE 3:

- 1) Faculty of Economics
- 2) Faculty of Law and Public Administration

CHAIRPERSON OF INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION PANEL

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Name and surname	Position in IEP	Current position
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In_Prague _____ date _ June 19, 2025__ Signature _____


(IEP chairperson)

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Economics

FORD: 5 - Social sciences

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary:

The Faculty of Economics (FES) positions itself as a forward-looking and innovative research institution devoted to economic research and development and is committed to integrating academic knowledge with practical application while actively promoting international cooperation. Through the establishment of strategic partnerships, FES aims at consolidating its research capacities and at serving as a recognized institution that upholds ethical standards in academic work and supports open access to scientific knowledge across the domains of fundamental, applied, and contract research.

The vision of FES is to be a dynamic, innovative research institute in economic R&D, integrating academic knowledge with practice and fostering international collaboration. Its mission is to develop and support high-quality, internationally recognized research in economics, management, finance, marketing, informatics, and related disciplines, contributing to societal, business, and public administration development. The research focus of the faculty is aligned with the fields of its accredited study programmes of the bachelor (Economics and Management; Finance; Marketing Communication, Applied Informatics), master (Economics and Management, Finance; Marketing Communication, New Media Communication, Financial Informatics and Blockchain) and doctoral (Finance) degree. All the programs, except for Applied Informatics and Financial Informatics and Blockchain, are offered in Czech as well as in English language. In economics, management, finance, informatics, and marketing, offered at all study degrees, and in Czech as well as English language. The close tie between the study programs and research topics enables more efficient utilization of research outputs in the pedagogical process.

The organizational structure of FES comprises the Dean, Vice Dean for Pedagogical Affairs, Vice Dean for Research and Publishing, Guarantors of Degree Programs, and academic departments (Economics and Management, Social Sciences, Finance, and Computer Science and Mathematics). The faculty provided instruction to approximately 1,400 students in 2023 (a noticeable decline until 2022, followed by a gradual increase). In terms of staffing, the FES had approximately 42 faculty members (FTE) in 2023, a decrease from 59 FTE in 2019. Academics in social sciences dominate the disciplinary capacity (82%, with 58% in Economics and Business), supplemented by natural sciences (17%) and humanities (1%).

The FES engages in both basic and applied research, with a growing predominance of applied research in recent years, conducted through externally funded projects, internal projects, and contract research. Among the principal research achievements are contributions to the fields of financial regulation and fintech, sustainable business and management strategies, digital

marketing and media ethics, macroeconomic policy design, and technological advancements in applied informatics such as blockchain and cybersecurity. These topics reflect a commitment to addressing contemporary economic and societal challenges through interdisciplinary and praxis-oriented inquiry.

It is also important to mention the efforts of the faculty to let its scientific journal Acta VSFS included in the WoS databases. The process was initiated in June 2024, and while it is not completely under control of the faculty, its successful conclusion could be a significant catalyst for further improving the quality of research outputs, as well as for developing new international collaborations.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:¹

The Faculty of Economics keeps on improving in position within the national and international research community. In the self-evaluation report, the faculty highlights numerous areas of engagement, including editorial roles in academic journals, participation in professional societies, and contributions to the evaluation of research programmes, etc.

Worth mentioning is the membership of several members of its academic staff in editorial boards of scientific journals, of international journals, five of which are indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus. Also the engagement in scholarly and professional societies is extensive, including memberships in the Czech Economic Society, American Economic Association, International Atlantic Economic Society, and System Dynamics Society, among others.

Faculty members have received various prestigious R&D&I awards, such as best scholarly papers at international conferences, recognition for editorial contributions to academic journals, and high-profile publishing awards. The institutional impact is also highlighted by FES's participation in national policymaking. Its academicians have served on strategic advisory bodies, such as the Council for Research, Development, and Innovation, and committees under the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Industry and Trade. A notable achievement is the faculty's representation on the Bank Board of the Czech National Bank, demonstrating high-level influence and expertise.

FES enhances its international visibility also through faculty members who deliver invited lectures at prominent foreign institutions such as the University of Salerno, Opole University of Technology, the University of Córdoba, and various universities in India. Moreover, the faculty has hosted prominent international scholars from institutions such as the London School of Economics and University of Agder. Participation in the evaluation of project proposals for Czech and Slovak agencies further demonstrates the faculty's recognition as a competent evaluator of quality in R&D&I funding environments.

¹ Provide verbal assessment of the indicator and briefly comment on the reasons for awarding the specific rating. Follow a similar procedure for the other indicators.

As an important moment of academic distinction for the faculty can be considered the visit of Professor Anthony Giddens from the London School of Economics, who delivered a lecture on "Rethinking social theories and methods in a digital society" in 2023.

On the other hand, it is important to note that the institutional embeddedness appears heavily concentrated within domestic structures. The report also gives comparatively less weight to autonomous international academic networks or multilateral research platforms. This imbalance may limit the visibility and influence of FES research within the broader global scholarly discourse. While the membership of academicians in scientific journals is positive, the breadth and academic standing of these journals vary, and the report would benefit from a more differentiated account of the quality and reach of these engagements. Likewise, participation in the evaluation of research proposals at national and European levels is clearly established, though largely confined to Central European grant agencies.

In summary, the FES demonstrates a firm commitment to scientific relevance and public engagement, particularly within the national context. However, to consolidate its position as a research institution of international standing, a more balanced focus that extends beyond ministerial affiliations and embraces diverse transnational academic arenas would be both timely and strategic.

Recommendations:

1. **Expand participation in transnational research networks and consortia.** Engage more systematically in international research initiatives such as Horizon Europe, COST Actions, or UN-related academic platforms to diversify collaborative opportunities and increase interdisciplinary exposure.
2. **Develop strategic partnerships with leading international institutions** to enhance research collaboration and global visibility.
3. **Establish thematic research clusters focused on systemic critique.** Create dedicated internal research groups addressing topics such as political economy, digital capitalism, or sustainability transitions to foster more critical theoretical approaches to attract more international critical scholars.
4. **Prioritise publications in high-impact, critically oriented journals.** Encourage researchers to target journals with a clear critical orientation and robust peer-review standards and provide institutional support especially for PhD-students and young scholars, (e.g., mentoring, editorial feedback) to help navigate the publication process.
5. **Work on increasing the participation of the international lecturers and professors** giving lectures at VSFS, in the Acta VSFS Journal.
6. **The FES should each year establish a topic for international lectures to foster cooperation** in different fields (for example, one year to focus on inviting editors from different journals to strengthen the relationship with the journals, next year, to focus on examples of Horizon project, etc.).

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

During the 2019–2023 period, the Faculty of Economics undertook both basic research and applied research, with a predominance of applied research. Compared to the previous evaluation period, the faculty significantly expanded its research activities, completing or contributing to ten high-impact projects (compared to three projects during the 2014-2018 period). These projects not only reflect high societal relevance and application potential but also demonstrate the faculty's capacity for interdisciplinary collaboration and real-world problem-solving. It is important to note that the expansion of research project activities occurred despite the reduction in academic staff (from 59 in 2019 to 42 in 2023) which constrained the research capacity.

The key projects include the International Visegrad Fund project "Business Problems Interactive Web Portal" (2022–2024), coordinated by FES in partnership with institutions from Georgia, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. This project represents a model case of how interdisciplinary collaboration encompassing economics, marketing, management, and information technology can yield tangible outputs such as digital tools, including a chatbot-enabled platform for SMEs. This initiative led to the development of an interactive online portal and chatbot tools supporting sustainable entrepreneurship. The tools were successfully implemented in Georgia and adopted by other V4 countries, illustrating the project's international reach and utility.

Another example is the ÉTA-funded project "Internal and external peripheries in the regional development of the Czech Republic" (2020–2023), conducted in cooperation with the Faculty of Law and Public Administration. The research yielded a scholarly publication and an officially approved methodology for regional development, now used by the Ministry for Regional Development and the Association of European Border Regions.

FES also contributed to the project "How to achieve good governance in collective rights management" (2020–2022), focusing on the cultural and creative industries. Its outcomes included legal and taxation policy recommendations adopted by public institutions and cultural sector stakeholders. Other projects included government-supported initiatives addressing copyright regulation in cross-border music distribution (2023–2027), the development of re-use centres for the circular economy (2023–2026), and methodologies for valuing family businesses during succession (2019–2022), the latter adopted by the Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Crafts. These projects highlight the faculty's commitment to interdisciplinary research and its responsiveness to contemporary socio-economic and environmental challenges.

In addition to grant-funded projects, FES successfully implemented four contract research initiatives, including ICT system development, media data processing, and product life-cycle evaluations. The revenue from contract research has increased markedly since the previous evaluation, indicating the growing market demand and practical relevance of FES expertise.

However, a closer examination reveals a gap in the critical dimensions of the research agenda. While the projects convincingly target structural and operational problems, they tend to refrain

from engaging more explicitly with systemic critiques. Issues such as gender inequality, racial disparities, or broader social justice concerns—frequently foregrounded in internationally leading research—remain largely absent. A stronger integration of such critical perspectives could significantly enhance the international visibility and scholarly resonance of the FES’s research portfolio. Embedding themes like equality, inclusion, and power asymmetries into ongoing and future projects would not only broaden the scope of inquiry but also align the faculty with global academic currents that emphasise reflexivity and (structural) critique.

Overall, these projects align closely with the faculty’s mission and demonstrate a robust ability to translate academic research into actionable insights and solutions. The faculty’s increasing participation in interdisciplinary collaborations, including joint efforts with other VSFS units, signals its maturity as a research institution. Yet, to fully realise its international potential, a more explicit incorporation of critical frameworks—especially concerning social inequality and cultural politics—would be a valuable and timely extension of its existing strengths

Recommendations:

1. **Develop interdisciplinary research frameworks with reflexive components.** Encourage the formation of research teams that combine applied disciplines (e.g., economics, marketing, IT) with critical social sciences (e.g., sociology, cultural studies) to ensure analytical depth and multidimensional perspectives.
2. **Host thematic workshops on ethics, inclusion, and social responsibility in applied research.** Organise internal seminars or international symposia that integrate the ethical, social, and political dimensions of applied research, thereby creating space for dialogue on systemic challenges and responsible innovation.
3. **Create funding incentives for research projects with strong societal impact and critical orientation.** Introduce internal grants or seed funding for pilot projects that explicitly engage with underexplored social dimensions or marginalised communities, encouraging innovation in both topic selection and methodology.
4. **Reduce the teaching time for project managers** so that they can devote more time to apply for projects or hire a project manager (at least part time) that can help to identify calls where the application could be more successful.
5. **Encourage structured mentorship schemes between senior researchers and early-career academicians** or doctoral students to build future project leadership capacity.
6. **Create a centralized knowledge-sharing platform for project results and methodologies** to promote internal learning and inspire new initiatives.
7. **Create standardized stakeholder engagement protocols** throughout the project lifecycle to ensure impact and continued relevance.
8. **Conduct regular internal reviews of research projects** to ensure alignment with strategic goals and to capture best practices for future use.

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

FES presents a diverse and impactful array of research and application-oriented projects developed within the faculty, showcasing a coherent strategy that merges theoretical innovation with practical relevance. These ten initiatives span critical domains—from economic modelling, health systems and financial markets to media theory, cultural policy, digital security, and sustainable development—each contributing distinctively to pressing societal and global challenges.

Probably the most significant research output is the publicly accessible software application "Determination the value of family businesses in the succession process" (2022), stemming from project TL02000434. This tool aids entrepreneurs and advisors in the process of business succession management and strategic planning by enabling owners and advisors to estimate the value of the business. The application also incorporates some gender-sensitive parameters which should help to avoid gender biases. The application contributes to business continuity, regional employment, and the sustainability of family-run enterprises.

High impact on society has also the "Interactive web portal to promote sustainable business" (2023), developed within the Visegrad Fund project No. 22210127. The platform incorporates interactive learning modules and a chatbot, offering practical guidance to SMEs on sustainable entrepreneurship. It has been successfully adopted in Georgia and V4 countries, enhancing SME resilience, innovation, and international integration. The application promotes the ESG issues which is one of the hottest topics of recent years.

The scientific papers produced by the faculty members also cover a wide range of contemporary issues, with high potential to reach significant societal impact. For example, the study by Malovaná, Frait, and Hodula, *"What Does Really Drive Consumer Confidence?"*, offers a nuanced examination of the psychological and macroeconomic forces shaping household indebtedness. It illustrates how consumer sentiment—shaped by constrained rationality—can lead to unsustainable financial decisions in the face of cyclical growth, raising pertinent questions about the ethics and consequences of economic optimism. The contribution is particularly relevant in light of ongoing debates about financial regulation and socio-economic inequality in post-crisis economies. The study named *"Media and Culture: From Primary Oral Culture to the Construction of Cyber-Spatial Identities"* by Maiello and Roubal is focused on a comprehensive cultural-historical analysis of communication technologies and their transformative impact on identity and social interaction. Its contribution lies in uncovering the ambivalence of technological advancement: while digital media foster connectivity and immediacy, they simultaneously risk fragmenting cognition, weakening critical reflection, and destabilizing social cohesion. The authors compellingly argue that what is often framed as human "progress" must be interrogated in light of potential regressions in autonomy, culture, and collective memory. And, finally, in response to the mounting urgency of the global climate crisis, the chapter by Fiala and Majovská, *"Modeling the Design Phase of Sustainable Supply Chains"*, provides an analytically rigorous and timely intervention. By emphasizing systemic design, flexibility in allocation mechanisms, and the integration of sustainability at the inception phase, the study offers both theoretical advancement and concrete

tools for mitigating ecological degradation through responsible economic planning.

Further notable outputs include the monograph "Media and Culture" (2020), offering a critical and interdisciplinary examination of media evolution and its role in shaping social identities in the digital age; and the IEEE Access article "Deep Learning-Based Intrusion Detection Systems" (2021), a systematic review cited in the top 10% of its field for its contribution to cybersecurity.

Additional outputs cover financial decision-making, sustainable supply chains, and cultural economics, such as chapters in peer-reviewed volumes and monographs on Czech health system financing and copyright-related public services.

Research results of the faculty have demonstrated tangible societal impact, particularly in supporting SMEs, informing public policy, and advancing financial literacy. Tools such as the family business valuation application and methodologies for regional development have been adopted by ministries and industry associations. To maximize impact, further dissemination and implementation of research results, especially internationally, should be pursued, along with systematic tracking of societal outcomes.

Recommendations:

1. **Integrate critical social dimensions into future research projects.** Systematically incorporate themes such as gender equity, social inequality, and inclusion into research agendas to reflect broader global research priorities and increase relevance in international academic discourse.
2. **Develop mechanisms to track and communicate societal impact** and engage more actively with stakeholders outside academia. For example, conduct annual surveys to assess how research findings have influenced policy decisions or business practices, and use the results to inform future research directions. Or have annual or biannual meetings with researchers and representatives from local businesses, government agencies, and non-profit organizations to identify areas of common interest.
3. **Implement gender-sensitive and sustainability-focused indicators** in impact assessments.
4. **Establish feedback mechanisms from stakeholders** who use the research outcomes.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The cooperation with major public institutions and economic actors constitutes the foundation of the faculty's transfer strategy and, from the standpoint of practical applicability, this focus is both understandable and effective. These partnerships ensure that research outputs reach decision-making centres where they can inform policy, regulation, and entrepreneurial innovation, especially in areas such as finance, regional development, and public administration. By aligning

with ministries, financial authorities, and leading corporations, the faculty positions itself as a credible actor within the national innovation and governance landscape.

The most prominent users of FES research results include:

- Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Crafts of the Czech Republic (AMSP) – Long-term cooperation through projects, assessments, and workshops, focusing on the succession and sustainability of family businesses.
- Association of Family Businesses (ARF) – Joint research and professional education activities that have enhanced practical understanding of family business dynamics.
- Czech Economic Society (CES) – Faculty participation in expert debates, school outreach, and policy forums on macroeconomic issues.
- Deloitte Czech Republic – Strategic cooperation on innovation and corporate culture, providing analytical tools and project opportunities for FES students.
- Czech Banking Association (CBA) – Joint research on banking sector dynamics and financial literacy programs contributing to public policy discussions.

The transfer of research results into praxis is further supported by organising of academic and professional conferences with the purpose of bringing together scholars and practitioners. An important role plays also active involvement in industry chambers and professional bodies, participation in international programs, such as the Visegrad Fund and the EEA/Norway Grants, which encourage the utilization of research results in countries other than the Czech Republic itself, and participation in job fairs and exhibits.

Another way of research results transfer into praxis are various professional certification programs. In this field, FES is very successful, as shown also by cash flows generated by these programs. They generated 1.1 million EUR between 2019 and 2023, which is more than twice as much as the amount generated during the previous evaluation cycle.

Moreover, the faculty plans to commercialize data assets, one of which is a comprehensive database of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that was developed for the purpose of doing research on succession planning. This is potentially another way of transfer of research results into praxis, moreover, one generating additional cash flows.

However, it is important to note that current heavy orientation of FES toward powerful institutional stakeholders raises significant concerns from a social sciences perspective. The almost complete absence of collaboration with actors outside this dominant framework—such as civil society organizations, minority advocacy groups, labour associations, or critical grassroots initiatives, represents a missed opportunity for applying academic knowledge to promote social justice and reduce inequality. While economic development and regulatory refinement are essential, the social sciences also bear the responsibility to question, critique, and transform existing structures that perpetuate exclusion and inequality.

Furthermore, the faculty's current model of result transfer appears to reproduce prevailing power relations rather than offering alternatives. The lack of deliberate engagement with marginalized communities or vulnerable social groups means that the research agenda risks becoming technocratic and economically instrumentalized, rather than inclusive or emancipatory. This limitation stands in tension with the broader mandate of social sciences to enhance democratic participation, cultural diversity, and equitable development. Without strategic efforts to expand its range of partners and beneficiaries, the faculty's societal impact remains structurally constrained.

Recommendations:

1. **Broaden strategic partnerships to include actors beyond state and market institutions.** Particularly those representing marginalized or underrepresented social groups.
2. **Launch research programs that explicitly target socio-economic inequalities,** aiming at producing applicable knowledge for communities affected by systemic exclusion.
3. **Develop a dedicated framework for socially transformative knowledge transfer** that links research to advocacy, empowerment, and participatory policy-making.
4. **Focus on commercialization through spin-offs or licensing.** Expanding commercialization strategies and exploring new models for knowledge transfer could further enhance the faculty's societal and economic contributions while increasing the sources of income.
5. **Develop and run the planned business startup project** in a planned way to help the marketing of R&D&I results, even if they are in the social science field.
6. **Increase the marketing activities** promoting professional training events and performance tests, to get more clients and generate additional revenues from non-public sources.
7. **Plan for how to make money off important intellectual goods,** like the family business database, by licensing them or using other organized methods.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

During the evaluated period, FES successfully undertook numerous activities that contributed to the popularisation of R&D&I. The faculty adopted a multifaceted communication strategy with the broader public, including modern (podcasts, social media), as well as traditional (roundtables, seminars, TV, radio, print) communication channels.

The faculty members regularly publish articles in both print and digital formats, contributing to professional journals and public-facing publications such as the *Bulletin of the Confucius Institute*, the *VSFS Research Centre for Czech-China Relations*, and national newspapers like the "We from VSFS" insert in *MF Dnes*. They also contribute to national broadcast media, including television and radio platforms like CT24, Radio ZET, and iDNES.cz.

The faculty itself utilizes digital platforms such as YouRadio Talk and YouTube to produce podcasts and online video content, providing accessible discussions on subjects related to economics, management, marketing, and social sciences.

Public events such as roundtables and forum, including "Finance and Investment Forums" and "A Window into Financial Markets", further extend its outreach. These events attract both academic and general audiences and are often recorded and made available online to increase accessibility.

FES also collaborates with professional organizations such as the American Chamber of Commerce

(AmCham) and the Financial Academy of Golden Crown to host joint workshops, deliver expert training sessions, and promote financial literacy.

In addition to these efforts, the faculty contributes to community education through its involvement in the University of the Third Age in Most, where it delivers lectures and workshops for seniors on topics ranging from economics and finance to technology and law, thereby supporting lifelong learning and community engagement.

In general, the R&D&I popularisation efforts of FES help to enhance public financial literacy, foster societal understanding of economic and managerial issues, and strengthen the bridge between academia and practice.

Recommendations:

1. **Establish a public policy lab or “think tank” platform** where faculty research is translated into accessible policy briefs, interactive infographics, and short expert commentaries aimed at informing public discourse and political decision-making in Czech society.
2. **Develop a multilingual digital outreach strategy**, including short, subtitled video explainers and social media campaigns that showcase how FES research addresses key societal challenges (e.g. inflation, pensions, digitalization), reaching diverse audiences beyond academia and student circles.
3. **Initiate community-based research events or “citizen forums”** where faculty engage directly with local communities, minority groups, and civic organizations to discuss current research, collect input, and collaboratively identify pressing societal issues the institution can address through its expertise.
4. **Continue the expansion of these activities**, especially in English and through international platforms, will further enhance visibility and impact.
5. **Continue diversifying media outreach efforts** by engaging with a broader spectrum of content creators and investigating emerging digital platforms, to optimise public engagement.
6. **Conduct a systematic evaluation of the reach and impact of popularization activities** to determine the most effective content categories and channels for future initiatives.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

Since 2020, the FES has made notable efforts to improve the scope, interdisciplinarity, and real-world impact of its applied research. Evidence from the 2025 self-evaluation report shows that the faculty has expanded the diversity of its projects, including several funded by the Visegrad Fund, with increased emphasis on issues relevant to SMEs, regional development, and the circular economy. These improvements demonstrate a positive shift toward more socially relevant research output.

However, progress remains uneven and often driven by individual projects rather than a systemic institutional framework. For instance, although applied research has grown in volume and relevance, the faculty has not established a central R&D support office to coordinate activities or provide incentives. The commercialization of research outcomes, such as the potential exploitation of the “Database of Small and Medium Enterprises of Family and Non-Family Businesses,” has been initiated but not fully implemented. Furthermore, the rules for distributing financial benefits derived from applied research remain underdeveloped and would benefit from clearer, more consistent application to enhance motivation and transparency.

Internationalization has seen measurable progress. FES engaged in international research projects, deepened partnerships across Europe, increased academic mobility, and promoted staff participation in global academic societies. Although the faculty chose not to pursue the inclusion of conference proceedings in Scopus or WoS, it is strategically pursuing the indexing of its own journal *Acta VSFS*, underscoring its commitment to scholarly quality. However, as the on-site visit has shown, the call for papers with respect to *Acta VSFS* is too national and too much orientated to members of the faculty. On the other hand, international research collaboration has increased modestly, with some cross-border projects and academic involvement in editorial boards and lectures abroad. Nonetheless, the faculty still lacks participation in major EU research programs such as Horizon Europe, which limits its visibility and competitiveness on the international stage.

Issues related to the aging academic workforce have been partially addressed. The number of early-career researchers has improved slightly since 2021, but the overall academic staff count has declined compared to 2019. Institutional measures to support young researchers, such as mentoring programs or structured renewal plans, remain insufficient. Gender equality and sustainability themes are acknowledged in general terms within research documentation, but there is no systematic integration of these issues through measurable indicators, strategic hiring practices, or project planning frameworks.

On the other hand, the issue of gender imbalance within the research environment, particularly concerning female PhD students remains insufficiently addressed. While institutional reforms and international linkages have advanced, there is no sufficient indication of targeted measures to improve gender equity in doctoral training or to actively support the inclusion and academic progression of women researchers. Thus, the faculty's otherwise robust reform agenda still falls short of achieving a more inclusive and balanced academic culture.

To sum it up, the FES has demonstrated the will and capability to implement the recommendations provided by the previous evaluation. The faculty has made significant efforts to enhance the relevance and societal value of its research and to expand its project base. The decision to enter the process of indexing *Acta VSFS* in WoS databases is an important step too. However, more attention needs to be paid to areas such as research support infrastructure, international project participation, age and gender structure of the academic staff. A structured internal review process would also help to ensure that the recommendations are not only implemented but regularly evaluated and refined.

Recommendations:

1. **Diversify the editorial board and peer review network of *Acta VSFS*** to include more international scholars, especially from underrepresented regions and disciplines, thereby broadening its academic reach and appeal.
2. **Launch international calls for papers with thematic special issues** that align with global research trends and actively invite contributions from early-career researchers and scholars outside the faculty.
3. **Develop and implement a structured gender equality strategy for doctoral training**, including mentorship programs, dedicated scholarships for female PhD candidates, and

regular monitoring of gender representation in research activities.

4. **Introduce institutional incentives and awareness programs to promote the career advancement of women in academia**, such as gender-sensitive hiring policies and leadership development workshops.
5. **Establish an alumni club** to further support the collaboration with praxis. It should also help at identifying the praxis-oriented research topics with the highest potential.
6. **Empower existing R&D structures** to not only support grant logistics but to actively shape research direction, identify funding, and build strategic partnerships aligned with national and global priorities.
7. **Establish an internal monitoring system.** Introduce a KPI-based tracking mechanism to evaluate progress on past IEP recommendations, covering areas like research output, internationalization, commercialization, and gender/sustainability.
8. **Develop a commercialization framework.** create a formal strategy for research commercialization, including policies on spin-offs, licensing, and partnerships, supported by a dedicated Technology Transfer Office (TTO).
9. **Formalize research-linked compensation policies.** Define clear and consistent rules for distributing research-derived income, linking remuneration to transparent performance metrics and societal impact.
10. **Launch an academic renewal and mentorship program.** Address staff aging and declining numbers by implementing a structured hiring and mentoring plan to support early-career researchers and ensure long-term academic capacity.
11. **Integrate gender equality and sustainability into research.** Apply measurable KPIs to ensure gender balance, inclusive hiring, and sustainability alignment in research planning and execution.
12. **Increase international project participation.** Invest in grant writing support and consortium-building to boost involvement in EU and other global research programs, enhancing funding and international visibility.
13. **Support high-impact academic publishing.** Strengthen faculty publishing through targeted support such as mentoring, co-authorship incentives, and language editing to increase output in top-tier international journals.
14. **Pay attention to successful completion of the process of indexing Acta VSFS in WoS.** The process is underway, and although it is not fully under control of VSFS, this should be one of the priorities of the faculty, as it has the potential to stimulate the quality of research outputs as well as to bring some new international collaborations.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	3 - Average
3.3 Research projects	3 - Average
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	4 - Very good

3.5 Transfer of results into practice	3 - Average
3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	4 - Very good
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	3 - Average
Average rating [1–5]:	3 - Average
Grade [A–D]:	C
Summary assessment: The FES has made progress since the last evaluation period, responding to key recommendations with a broad strategic effort. Significant structural and operational reforms have taken place, including the integration of research coordination into faculty-wide processes, a notable expansion of international collaboration, and increased public engagement and especially dissemination. The faculty's decision to establish a Department of Social Sciences in 2023 represents a decisive step toward interdisciplinary integration, responding to contemporary global challenges such as digitalization and cultural transformation. Similarly, the strengthening of applied and contract research, both quantitatively and qualitatively, reflects a consistent alignment with the faculty's mission to connect academia with practical and societal impact. Also the R&D&I popularization efforts have notably intensified. The faculty has effectively used digital media, public forums, and professional networks to disseminate research outputs, raise awareness, and engage with diverse audiences, including senior citizens and SME stakeholders. However, important challenges remain. One persistent limitation is the faculty's excessive reliance on national structures and government-linked partnerships. While these connections are vital, the underrepresentation of transnational networks and critical research perspectives limits the international resonance and transformative potential of FES's work. Likewise, although the faculty is pursuing the indexing of its journal <i>Acta VSFS</i>, the publication still suffers from a predominantly internal authorship base and limited international exposure. Despite these achievements, there are areas for further development. A structured and formalized strategy for commercializing intellectual property remains underdeveloped, and while progress has been made with initiatives like the SME database, broader institutional mechanisms for spin-off creation and licensing are still needed. The declining number of full-time academic staff could become a limiting factor if not addressed, particularly in balancing research and teaching workloads. Moreover, although the faculty has incentive guidelines in place, clarity and consistency in implementing both financial and non-financial motivation for research-active staff require further attention. A prevailing problem represents also the age structure of the academic staff. A persistent limitation is also faculty's excessive reliance on national structures and government-linked partnerships. While these connections are vital, the underrepresentation of transnational networks and critical research perspectives limits the international resonance and transformative potential of FES's work.	
Summary recommendations: 1. Internationalize hiring processes. Postdoctoral and academic positions should be advertised internationally, with transparent criteria to attract diverse talent and broaden the international orientation of the faculty. 2. Globalize Acta VSFS call for papers. Launch multilingual and internationally themed special issues, involve editorial board members from different world regions. 3. Complete the process of indexing Acta VSFS in WoS. While the process is not fully under	

control of the faculty, it is important to pay high attention to it. Indexing the journal in WoS should mean a significant boost to the scientific profile of the faculty, moreover, it should open the way for new international partnerships and collaborations.

4. **Strengthen support for women in academia.** Develop mentorship programs, scholarships, and networking opportunities for women PhD students and early-career researchers.
5. **Foster inclusive and critical research agendas.** Encourage proposals that address social inequality, marginalization, and structural transformation as part of a broader international and interdisciplinary research framework.
6. **Institutionalize critical social research agendas.** Create dedicated research clusters or thematic groups focused on social inequality, digitalization, and power relations—examining how global economic and technological transformations impact marginalized populations and democratic governance.
7. **Promote participatory and inclusive research methodologies.** Encourage research designs that actively involve minority groups and affected communities, applying participatory methods to investigate social exclusion and co-develop strategies for inclusion and empowerment across different societal contexts.
8. **Develop institutional IP and commercialization policies.**
9. **Promote international academic exchanges and high-impact publications.** Implement clear and motivating rules for supporting international mobility of academic staff and for supporting publication in prestigious foreign scientific journals.
10. **Monitor and expand the societal and economic impacts of research outputs.** Create a system for evaluating the impacts more efficiently.
11. **Strengthen digital outreach to diversify channels of public engagement.**

EVALUATION REPORT IN MODULE 3

NAME OF EVALUATED UNIT: Faculty of Law and Public Administration

FORD: 5 - Social sciences

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE EVALUATED UNIT

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation

Indicator 3.1 is a non-evaluated indicator that provides basic information about the evaluated unit such as its mission and vision, organizational structure, size and staffing, or R&D&I capacities.

Commentary:

Since the last evaluation in 2020, the Faculty of Law and Public Administration (FPSS) has consolidated its identity as a research-oriented academic unit, while strengthening its applied mission in support of public institutions, legal practice, and security education and training agencies. The faculty now aligns its development with the broader Strategic Plan of the university, embracing a vision focused on fostering excellence in research, development, and innovation in law, criminalistics, and security studies, with a marked attention to the integration of theory and practice and the development of international partnerships.

The organisational structure of FPSS comprises the Dean, Vice Dean for Pedagogical Affairs, Vice Dean for Research and Publishing, Guarantors of Degree Programs, and academic departments (Department of Law, Department of Criminalistics and Forensic Sciences, Department of Security and Public Order). The faculty is focused on particular areas of law, more specifically on criminalistics and forensic sciences, on security and public order, and on business and copyright law.

While the three disciplinary pillar, security studies, criminalistics and forensic sciences, and law in public and business administration, remain consistent with the 2020 structure, the scope and institutional articulation of research activity has become more strategic. The FPSS has adopted a clearer commitment to open science, ethics in academic work, and societal relevance of research results, indicating a shift from discipline-specific projects toward a more systemic, impact and international cooperation-oriented approach.

In terms of human resources, the faculty counted approximately 20 full-time equivalent academic staff in 2023, which is a notable reduction compared to 29 staff members in 2019. This downsizing has coincided with a more targeted research focus and the intensification of strategic collaborations. The faculty served around 1,200 students in 2023, with a predominance of bachelor's students (around 900), reflecting a shift in student demographics compared to previous years.

The faculty's R&D&I capacities span both basic and applied research, with a stronger emphasis on the latter in recent years. This applied orientation is visible in the development of contract research, grant-supported projects, and the faculty's engagement in interdisciplinary workshops and conferences aimed at disseminating research findings to both academic and professional audiences.

Research in security studies continues to explore constitutional and global dimensions of Czech

security, while also addressing legal axiological issues and the evolution of security sciences. In criminalistics and forensic disciplines, notable developments include the application of Bayesian models, biomechanics, and advanced methods in criminalistics and forensic trace analysis—clearly marking a technical and innovation-driven trajectory.

The legal research area remains strong, with recognized outputs in substantive and procedural criminal law, copyright law in the creative industries, and contractual regulation under new EU frameworks. This line of research has contributed to legislative proposals and legal reform, underscoring the faculty's relevance for public policy and regulatory practice. Furthermore, the FPSS has increased the visibility and dissemination of its research through participation in international academic conferences (e.g. Madrid 2021, Lisbon 2022), the organization of an annual criminal law conference, the launch of the open-access scientific journal *Forensic Sciences, Law, Criminalistics*, and the hosting of thematic workshops on topics such as biomechanics, fire investigation, and experimental forensic techniques.

Compared to the 2020 evaluation, the FPSS has demonstrated a more coherent strategic direction, a tightened research focus, and a greater awareness of its societal mission, even amid a slight contraction in faculty size. The faculty is positioning itself as a regional knowledge hub that blends academic inquiry with actionable research, particularly through collaborations with public institutions, security bodies, and justice sector stakeholders.

RECOGNITION BY THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

3.2 Recognition by the research community

Evaluate the position of the evaluated unit in the R&D&I research community based on the facts presented in indicator 3.2 and its annexed tables (3.2.1 to 3.2.5).

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

Since the previous evaluation, the FPSS has made clear and measurable progress in strengthening its position and reputation within the R&D&I landscape. The 2023 evidence reveals a broader engagement of academic staff in national and international scientific communities and an increased visibility of the faculty's research.

Faculty members have assumed roles on editorial and advisory boards of international scientific journals, including some indexed in Web of Science (Q3) and Scopus, which marks a notable qualitative improvement compared to the 2020 situation, where such participation was not documented. Similarly, staff membership in prestigious academic societies, such as the International Association of Penal Law (AIDP) or the Society for Criminalistics, and involvement in high-level national advisory bodies, shows an embeddedness of FPSS researchers in shaping both academic and policy agendas.

The faculty has also received recognitions and awards for research excellence, including publishing awards with international scholarly publishers, an indicator of improved scientific impact and perceived quality. The international dimension of FPSS activities is also evident through invitations to lecture abroad at European and non-European universities and through participation in evaluation of European and national project calls. On the other hand, while the international presence by lectures of at least a part of the staff at international conferences, also beyond Slovakia, has well increased, the invited lectures by foreign scientists are mainly limited to academicians from Slovakia. Here, the faculty could try to invite more colleagues from a wider variety of foreign universities or institutions.

Moreover, participation in the evaluation of research project /program calls shows engagement

also in this area, though limited to one staff member in the specific field of copyright; here, more activities might be envisaged from the other law departments and colleagues, too.

Although the narrative focuses more on academic recognition than on competitive project funding (e.g., Horizon Europe, ERC, or national R&D programmes), and does not report on the actual implementation of such projects, the overall picture reveals a qualitative consolidation of academic standing and a growing professional reputation of the faculty in its core disciplines.

The faculty has significantly improved its external academic visibility and scholarly recognition, achieving important milestones in international engagement, awards, and academic governance. However, there is a lot of space for further improvements. Most importantly, the faculty needs to demonstrate leadership in major international research projects and a more consistent presence in high-impact publication outlets and competitive R&D&I programmes.

Recommendations:

1. **Strengthen participation in competitive international research programmes**, such as Horizon Europe, COST Actions, or Erasmus+ strategic partnerships, possibly through interfaculty consortia or joint applications with institutions in EU15 countries.
2. **Consolidate and track the impact of academic visibility efforts** (editorial roles, invited lectures, professional society membership) through a systematic R&D&I monitoring strategy and evidence-based reporting.
3. **Enhance publication strategies** by targeting higher quartile journals (Q1-Q2 in WoS/Scopus), especially in interdisciplinary areas bridging law, forensic science, and security studies.
4. **Invest in internal capacity building** by creating mentoring programs to support early-career researchers in engaging with international academic networks and applying for research grants.
5. **Increase strategic use of international guest scholars** to foster co-publications and co-supervision of PhDs, thus reinforcing the faculty's global research footprint.
6. **Expand the number and level of international lectures given by faculty staff**, with focus on other countries than Slovakia. Moreover, more disciplines should be covered, and more staff members should participate.
7. **Increase the level of engagement in evaluation process** of research project/program calls.
8. **Consider allowing at least part of the academic staff to focus more on research** and less on teaching. Based on the preferences and abilities of individual staff members.
9. **Improve correlation between formal and actual allocation of R&D&I and teaching resources** by taking into account the time necessary to administer courses and prepare lectures and seminars, grading papers, etc. Different courses require different levels of efforts to keep curricula and teaching up to date as some take rapidly changing phenomena as their objects of study.
10. **Focus more on applying for research grants oriented towards PhD and postdoctoral studies**, including partial participation in Horizon Europe or Erasmus+ calls and strategic partnerships.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

3.3 Research projects

Evaluate the most important research projects of the evaluated unit, especially regarding the results achieved and the application potential of the project, the proportionality with respect to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, the degree of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other parts of the evaluated HEI, and the consistency with the declared mission and vision of the evaluated unit. Use the data from the full list of research projects and contract research activities in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

During the period 2019–2023, the FPSS at VSFS demonstrated a substantial improvement in its involvement and implementation of research projects compared to the previous evaluation cycle. Unlike the 2014–2018 period, during which no applied research projects were implemented, the current period shows the Faculty's active participation in nine research projects funded by competitive national and international sources. These include both competitive grant-funded projects (e.g. Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, EEA and Norway Grants, Ministry of Culture) and contract research projects commissioned by public and private entities (e.g. CEZ, J&T Banka, Czech Telecommunication Office).

The projects address relevant and coherent topics in line with the Faculty's scientific profile, covering areas such as copyright law, governance, territorial cohesion, criminalistics, digital security, and cultural distribution, and reflect a clear interdisciplinary approach. Moreover, the research results are applied directly by public authorities (e.g. Ministry of Culture, Ministry for Regional Development, Czech Telecommunication Office) and by private sector actors, thus contributing to the social and economic impact of the FPSS's research. Notably, the Faculty's participation in projects involving international partners (e.g. Inland Norway University, Association of European Border Regions) marks a significant step forward compared to the previous evaluation period.

The contract research activities also demonstrate an increasing capacity for knowledge transfer and specialised consultancy, particularly in strategic areas such as security, digital forensics, and market regulation.

The Faculty's project-based research activity is highly diversified, interdisciplinary, and of strong applied relevance, supported by a robust network of collaboration with national and international public and private stakeholders. The improvement compared to the previous evaluation cycle is remarkable, both quantitatively (number and scale of projects) and qualitatively (impact, relevance, and transferability of results).

Recommendations:

1. **Consolidate participation in international consortia**, strengthening the Faculty's role as project coordinator, particularly in EU framework programmes (e.g. Horizon Europe).
2. **Enhance the scientific output resulting from funded projects**, ensuring that findings are published in high-quality, indexed journals (Scopus, WoS, ABDC) to increase academic visibility.
3. **Improve the monitoring of research impact** on society and public sector partners, through the development of impact indicators and performance metrics.
4. **Expand interfaculty cooperation**, encouraging joint projects between the Faculty of Law and Public Administration and the Faculty of Economy to reach interdisciplinary synergies

and enhance publication options.

5. **Formalise an internal support organisational structure for research project development**, to assist academic staff in proposal writing, project management, financial reporting, and dissemination activities. A dedicated staff member focused primarily on acquisition of contracts and submission of project proposals in competitive programs, as well as on administrative tasks related to such projects, could help a lot.
6. **Strengthen advanced training opportunities** for academic staff on topics such as EU project design, research data management, open science, and intellectual property rights.
7. **Encourage more faculty members to secure project financing** (as far as visible, 4 out of 9 projects have been at least co-realized by one faculty member).

3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society

Evaluate the research results already applied in practice or intended to be applied in practice. When evaluating, consider whether the results are proportionate to the R&D&I capacities of the evaluated unit, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and, if stated in the self-evaluation, how the results take into account the gender dimension and sustainability. Use the data from the full results summary in Table 3.4.1 to supplement the evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The level of impacts of KPSS's research outcomes on society has improved as well. The usefulness of results for society is obvious in particular in some of the publications, such as on specialized maps used by the competent Ministry and regional authorities, or the interdisciplinary work on forensics and physics, giving among others practical insights, to mention only some of the results.

In the current assessment period, the faculty has significantly enhanced its performance regarding the societal impact of its research results compared to the 2020 evaluation. While earlier outputs were limited and primarily national in scope, the recent portfolio presents a diverse and internationally oriented set of contributions with tangible and prospective practical applications across multiple domains, including law, digital services, forensics, regional development, and intellectual property.

- *Leska's work on moral rights* (2023), published in a major international handbook, provides groundbreaking interdisciplinary insights into copyright law and was recognized as a major contribution by the "IPKat" community. It also reflects a culturally situated, Central European perspective, reinforcing regional intellectual contributions to global legal debates.
- *The specialized map of outer peripheries* is a highly impactful, practice-oriented result. Used by the Czech Ministry of Regional Development and international organizations such as AEBR, it directly supports regional policy and strategic planning. Its methodological rigor and cross-border focus make it a notable applied research achievement.
- *The book "Forensics and Physics"* (2022) introduces innovative methods in forensic biomechanics, extending the reach of FPSS research into the domain of criminalistics. It is both theoretically robust and practically relevant, contributing internationally to expert and investigative practice.
- *The commentary on the "Right to Digital Services Act"* addresses a national legislative gap and offers critical input and guidance for both users and public institutions, showing an alignment between academic insight and practical utility in the e-Government domain.

- *Leska's and colleagues' work on collective management organizations*, as well as the contributions on performers' rights and the Berne Convention, bring a critical and original voice from Central and Eastern Europe into international discourse on copyright and cultural policy.
- Publications such as *"Transnational elements in the European Union and its law"* demonstrate the ability of FPSS scholars to influence legal and political science understanding at the intersection of national and supranational governance.

The body of work demonstrates increased interdisciplinarity, regional relevance, and international resonance. Several publications are tied to national or EU-level policy processes, and some have already been applied in practical contexts. Furthermore, the gender dimension and sustainability, although not always explicitly addressed, are implicitly present in several projects focused on regional development and public service reform.

Compared to the previous evaluation period, FPSS has improved to a clearly very good level, with some projects approaching outstanding impact.

Recommendations:

1. **Enhance monitoring of societal uptake and use cases.** FPSS should systematically document the application of research results in public policy, legislation, institutional reforms, and professional practice. This would allow better tracing of long-term societal impact and provide robust evidence for future evaluations, including the definition of the most promising areas for future research. It could be used also for marketing purposes.
2. **Institutionalize knowledge transfer mechanisms.** The faculty could establish or strengthen partnerships with ministries, regional authorities, and international organizations to formalize the feedback loop between academic research and societal application—especially in digital services, regional development, and forensic sciences.
3. **Develop a clear societal impact strategy.** While individual contributions are notable, a coherent strategy that defines priority impact areas (e.g., digital transformation, security, legal modernization, territorial cohesion) and target stakeholders would improve visibility and coordination.
4. **Address sustainability and gender dimension explicitly.** In line with Horizon Europe and national priorities, future projects should explicitly integrate sustainability and gender equality considerations into their design, methodology, and dissemination strategies.
5. **Expand international policy engagement.** FPSS scholars have a growing international presence. Future projects should seek to engage more directly with EU institutions, international think tanks, and global policy networks, especially on legal, digital, and cultural governance topics.
6. **Promote Open Access and multilingual dissemination.** Given the regional and international relevance of many works, FPSS should continue promoting open-access publication and consider multilingual summaries or translations, particularly for policy-facing outputs.
7. **Support Interdisciplinary training and outreach.** To further translate research into practice, FPSS could offer training programs, expert workshops, and consultancy services for public officials, police and security services, NGOs, and private actors based on research findings.

TRANSFER OF RESULTS INTO PRACTICE

3.5 Transfer of results into practice

Evaluate the effectiveness of the transfer of results into practice by the unit being evaluated. Pay attention to whether the composition of the stated users of the results or the way the R&D&I results are commercialised (if stated) is consistent with the R&D&I results produced and the mission and vision of the evaluated unit and how successful the evaluated unit is in its activities, such as attracting new users of the results, commercialising the R&D&I results and obtaining funding from non-public, non-grant sources.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

Between 2019 and 2023, the Faculty of Law and Public Administration demonstrated a significant capacity to transfer research results into practice, particularly within the public sector and professional organizations. Collaboration with public entities—such as the Fire Rescue Service, the Police, and the Ministry of the Interior—has resulted in the concrete application of research outputs, including the implementation of methodologies in public policies (e.g., regional peripherality classification and territorial cohesion tools). The active involvement of ministries as “application guarantors” highlights the relevance and practical usability of the faculty’s research.

Interaction with the private sector—although more limited than with the public sector—has nonetheless produced tangible results, particularly in the field of security, through contract research with companies such as CEZ Group, ALKOM Security, and J&T Bank. These projects focus on risk analysis and the development of legal and methodological solutions, contributing not only to improved security but also to the competitiveness of the companies involved. However, income from non-public, non-grant sources was modest (approximately EUR 16,410), and no orientation toward commercialization or spin-off creation was reported.

The faculty demonstrates a structured and diversified strategy to expand its network of research users, through scientific conferences, workshops, participation in fairs, collaboration with professional associations, and involvement in international projects (e.g., EEA and Norway Grants). These activities have made it possible to reach new stakeholders and disseminate research results beyond national borders.

Nevertheless, as noted in the 2020 evaluation, the nature of the social sciences and legal disciplines inherently limits the commercial potential of research results. The absence of a valorisation strategy aimed at patenting or spin-off creation is consistent with the faculty’s scientific mission, but still represents an objective limitation in terms of technology transfer.

The faculty demonstrates excellent ability to apply research results in the public sector and relevant professional contexts. The direct use of results by public institutions and associations, involvement in applied projects, and the ability to build strategic dissemination networks are highly positive aspects. However, the absence of structured initiatives for commercial valorisation or significant income generation from private sources limits the achievement of the “outstanding” level.

Recommendations:

1. **Develop a differentiated valorisation strategy** tailored to the social sciences and legal disciplines—focusing not on patenting but on consultancy, policy recommendations, and income generation through contract research with private sector entities and international organizations.

2. **Structure a knowledge brokerage model** to strengthen dialogue with the private sector, by creating roles or units dedicated to translating academic results into actionable products/services for companies and institutions, particularly in the fields of security, regional development, and digital regulation.
3. **Enhance impact monitoring** for applied research projects already adopted by public institutions, in order to systematically document the real-world benefits of research results and leverage them to attract new partners.
4. **Expand the international dimension of knowledge transfer**, building on existing European projects and increasing collaboration with foreign partners, supranational institutions, NGOs, professional networks, and think tanks that could benefit from the faculty's expertise in policy, security, and territorial governance.
5. **Explore alternative funding sources**, such as Horizon Europe, EIT calls, or private foundations, to support applied research projects in collaboration with non-academic stakeholders. These instruments can help ensure the sustainability of research transfer activities in the absence of direct commercial potential.
6. **Within established partnerships**, try to monitor application of the research results and the potential need for adaptation in new circumstances, or for improvement in practice, potentially identifying new research and contract/project topics/opportunities.
7. **Engage a staff member directly focused on attracting new users** of the research results and obtaining further funding, so as to alleviate the tasks of the research staff.

POPULARIZATION OF VAVAI

3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public

Evaluate how active and successful the evaluated unit is in the field of popularisation of R&D&I and communication with the public.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

During the evaluated period, FPSS significantly expanded and professionalized its efforts in the popularization of research, development, and innovation (R&D&I), demonstrating a robust and multifaceted strategy for engaging with both the expert and general public. Compared to the previous evaluation period, when the faculty focused primarily on lectures and the publication of an open-access journal, now it employs a much wider array of platforms and communication tools, ranging from traditional and digital media to exhibitions and podcasts.

The faculty has effectively used mass media channels (TV, radio, and the daily press) and modern digital communication tools (e.g., podcasts on Youradio Talk and TrestOnline, YouTube videos) to raise awareness about key topics in criminology, forensic sciences, cybersecurity, and legal studies. Regular appearances by faculty members on national media outlets such as Czech Television, TV Nova, and iDNES.cz showcase the FPSS's growing reputation as a credible source of expert commentary and scientific insight.

Moreover, the faculty organized numerous discussion forums, scholarly seminars, and exhibitions targeting both specialists and lay audiences. These events not only disseminate the results of

academic research but also foster public understanding and debate on complex societal and legal issues. The “traveling exhibition” on regional peripheries, for example, exemplifies the faculty’s ability to translate technical research into accessible, engaging formats.

The FPSS also established strong links with professional organizations and advisory bodies in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia, enhancing its capacity to influence public discourse and policymaking while reinforcing the societal relevance of its research.

The outreach activities extended beyond academia through invited lectures at other universities and institutions, public seminars, and cooperation with businesses. This broad engagement has helped bridge the gap between scientific research and societal practice, stimulating interdisciplinary dialogue and improving public literacy on topics of legal and social relevance.

Overall, the faculty has made an impressive qualitative leap since 2020, moving from a primarily academic-focused popularization strategy to a diversified, dynamic, and impactful public communication program. The FPSS has developed and implemented a comprehensive and diversified strategy for popularizing R&D&I and communicating research results to a broad audience. The integration of traditional and new media, strong visibility in national and international expert forums, effective collaboration with public and private institutions, and the faculty’s presence in policymaking circles all point to a high level of success and innovation in public engagement. The faculty clearly excels in communicating its scientific work beyond academic circles.

Recommendations:

1. **Consolidate media presence into a strategic communication plan**, ensuring consistent branding, messaging, and coordination across platforms (TV, podcasts, social media, exhibitions) to maximize audience reach and reinforce the public identity of the faculty.
2. **Enhance measurement of outreach impact**, including audience metrics (views, downloads, engagement rates), media citations, and feedback from the public, to better assess the effectiveness of popularization activities and guide future improvements.
3. **Develop an internal media and science communication training program** for academic staff to further professionalize their engagement with the media, improve storytelling techniques, and ensure clear, accurate, and engaging communication of complex topics.
4. **Strengthen multilingual and international outreach**, by providing more content in English or other languages and targeting international media platforms, conferences, and policy forums—particularly given the faculty’s involvement in global legal and security debates.
5. **Systematize collaboration with schools and educational institutions**, creating dedicated programs or learning modules based on the faculty’s research (e.g., forensic science in high schools, cybersecurity awareness workshops), to foster early public engagement and STEM/legal literacy.
6. **Leverage emerging digital formats** (e.g., interactive infographics, mini-documentaries, TikTok-style short videos) to reach younger demographics and adapt content formats to evolving public consumption habits.
7. **Bring the research results to schools** in a form adapted to pupils’ abilities and interests.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module 3

Evaluate how the evaluated unit has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the evaluated unit has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The FPSS has demonstrated a thorough and proactive approach in addressing the recommendations provided in the previous IEP evaluation. In particular, the faculty effectively increased efforts to secure external co-funding for research, as evidenced by the acquisition of five externally funded projects between 2019 and 2023, including one international project, totalling approximately EUR 330,000. Additionally, four contract research projects with private entities brought in another EUR 45,000, marking a total external funding volume of EUR 375,000. This level of external support is significant for an institution of FPSS's size (around 20 full-time equivalent academic staff).

The faculty fulfilled the recommendation to obtain applied research projects through engagement with funding bodies such as the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Culture, often in collaboration with both academic partners (e.g., universities in Norway and Czech Republic) and practical institutions (various ministries, copyright organizations). The practical implementation of research outputs, such as policy recommendations and legislative proposals, demonstrates the applied impact of these projects.

Regarding the diversification of funding sources, FPSS made solid progress by developing contract research partnerships with business entities in security and commercial law fields, fulfilling the recommendation to increase non-public revenues. The faculty is also committed to further expanding these efforts, especially in the security domain.

Inter-faculty collaboration at VSFS has been actively pursued and achieved through joint applied research projects and contract research, combining legal expertise from FPSS with sociological, economic, and IT competencies from other faculties, illustrating a commendable use of interdisciplinary synergies.

On the internationalization front, the faculty responded well to recommendations about strengthening contacts with foreign academic journals and expanding international networks. FPSS faculty members joined editorial boards of international journals, increased invited lectures abroad, and hosted more foreign experts, although there is room for further diversification beyond Slovakian guests.

Finally, the faculty has notably increased media presence through expert commentary in podcasts and television/radio programs, aligning well with the recommendation to raise public visibility.

To sum it up, the faculty has made strong efforts to follow the recommendations of the previous evaluation and has made remarkable progress in many respects, as shown for the different issues in the self-evaluation report, in particular, more internationalization (international publications and lectures, networking), publications in higher ranking journals, acquisition of research projects-funding, interdisciplinary focus of research, and in particular the dissemination of research results to the public by traditional and modern media. Given the comparatively small faculty, this progress is overall good.

Recommendations:

1. **Develop a systematic monitoring framework** to track the implementation status and impact of recommendations continuously, allowing for timely adjustments and evidence-based reporting for future evaluations.
2. **Further diversify international partnerships and guest lectures** by proactively inviting experts from a broader range of countries beyond Slovakia to strengthen global visibility and academic exchange.
3. **Expand contract research and applied project portfolios**, particularly targeting emerging areas such as cybersecurity and data protection, leveraging existing collaborations and market demands.
4. **Enhance internal communication and collaboration mechanisms** across VSFS faculties to foster more integrated, multidisciplinary project development and capitalize on synergies more efficiently.
5. **Increase efforts to publish in and contribute to higher-impact international journals** to complement the editorial board memberships and raise the research profile of the faculty internationally.
6. **Continue to broaden media engagement activities**, including exploring new formats and channels to reach wider and more diverse audiences, and systematically evaluate the outreach impact to optimize communication strategies.

EVALUATED UNIT RATING

Evaluation of unit

Having evaluated the individual criteria of module M3, please summarise your evaluation in the context of the module, describing and justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit being evaluated.

3.1 Introductory information about the unit under evaluation	NOT RATED
3.2 Recognition by the research community	3 - Average
3.3 Research projects	3 - Average
3.4 Research results with existing or prospective impact on society	4 - Very good
3.5 Transfer of results into practice	3 - Average
3.6 The most important activities in the field of popularization of R&D&I and communication with the public	4 - Very good
3.7 Implementation of the recommendations in Module	3 - Average
Average rating [1–5]:	3 - Average
Grade [A–D]:	C

Summary assessment:

The Faculty of Law and Public Administration demonstrates a strong and commendable performance across the spectrum of evaluation criteria in Module 3, reflecting a robust research environment with clear societal relevance and active engagement beyond academia.

The FPSS is very successful in securing and managing externally funded research projects, including applied and contract research, with significant financial volumes relative to its size. The faculty's

strategic response to prior evaluation recommendations is exemplary, showing a clear capacity for self-assessment and continuous improvement. The successful collaborations both within the university and with external academic and practical partners demonstrate maturity in project management and interdisciplinary research.

Another strength of the faculty is its ability to communicate with the public and promote of R&D&I. The faculty actively disseminates research outcomes to diverse audiences using traditional, as well as modern communication platforms. This outreach effectively raises public awareness of critical issues in law, criminalistics, and security, and enhances the faculty's visibility nationally and internationally.

The faculty enjoys strong recognition from its peers, evidenced by memberships in international societies, editorial board positions, and invitations for expert lectures abroad. The research outputs show promising societal impacts, particularly in legal and security policy areas, although there remains some room for broader international academic influence and higher-impact publications. The faculty successfully translates research findings into practical tools, policy recommendations, and legislative proposals, underscoring the applied value of its work. This practical orientation is supported by partnerships with government bodies and private entities, ensuring research relevance beyond academic settings.

However, there are also several areas for improvement. While internationalization has progressed, the faculty could enhance the diversity of its foreign collaborations and invited speakers to include a wider array of countries and institutions beyond the current main partners. Also the impact of media and popularization efforts, though strong, could be further evaluated and optimized to ensure even broader public engagement. And more attention should be devoted to publishing research outcomes in high-impact international journals, to bolster academic recognition and the faculty's global research profile.

Summary recommendations:

1. **Broaden the network of international collaborations** by actively seeking partnerships with universities and research centres in underrepresented regions beyond Europe and North America.
2. **Increase the number and diversity of invited foreign scholars** delivering lectures and seminars at FPSS to enrich academic exchange and visibility. Focus on international scholars beyond Slovakia.
3. **Encourage faculty members to publish more frequently in high-impact**, internationally recognized journals to strengthen global research recognition.
4. **Encourage faculty members to provide more international lectures** at foreign institutions.
5. **Develop systematic tools to evaluate the reach and effectiveness of popularization activities** and media appearances, using audience metrics and feedback to refine communication strategies.
6. **Experiment with new and emerging digital platforms and interactive formats** (e.g., webinars, live Q&A sessions, social media campaigns) to engage broader and younger audiences.
7. **Foster collaborations with schools and civil society organizations** to extend the societal impact of research findings.
8. **Build on existing synergies with other faculties and external partners** by initiating joint research programs addressing complex societal challenges that require interdisciplinary solutions.
9. **Seek additional applied research and contract projects** with private sector and public

administration to diversify funding sources and increase practical research outputs.

10. **Develop targeted support mechanisms** (e.g., seed funding, workshops) to help researchers translate innovative ideas into viable applied projects.
11. **Continue to intensify efforts to secure competitive national and international grants**, including EU funding programs, with a strategic focus on topics of societal relevance and institutional strengths.
12. **Provide tailored training and administrative support to researchers** to enhance grant proposal quality and success rates.
13. **Explore opportunities for industry partnerships and public-private collaborations** to diversify income streams and promote research commercialization.
14. **Implement mentoring and professional development programs** aimed at early-career researchers to improve research productivity and international engagement.
15. **Encourage participation in international conferences and academic networks** to build expertise and visibility.
16. **Foster a research culture that values innovation**, collaboration, and impact, aligning individual incentives with institutional goals.

SUMMARY RATING IN MODULE 3

MODULE 3 – SUMMARY RATING

After evaluating the individual units, please provide a summary evaluation of social relevance in Module 3 for the HEI as a whole. Please assess the balance of the evaluated units, how they contribute to the mission and vision of the HEI and describe the strengths and weaknesses of the HEI assessed in Module 3.

The summary rating is determined in accordance with the rules of the Methodology HEI2025+ as the average of the grades of the individual units, weighted by their size in terms of FTE staff.

EVALUATED UNIT	Grade [A–D]
Faculty of Economics	C
Faculty of Law and Public Administration	C
Summary grade	C

Summary quality assessment:

The University of Finance and Administration consists of two individually evaluated units: the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Law and Public Administration. The Faculty of Economics is larger, with a higher number of academic staff, more students, a greater volume of project funding from public sources, and higher revenues from contract research activities. However, as shown by the information provided in the self-evaluating reports, as well as during the on-site visit, both faculties play a crucial role in the university's activities and in fulfilling its objectives.

In terms of social relevance, both faculties show several strengths, but also several weaknesses. Therefore, after carefully evaluating all the aspects and specifics of both faculties and their research fields, the International Evaluation Panel awarded both faculties with grade of C. As a result, the overall grade of the University of Finance and Administration in Module 3 is C as well.

Both faculties are successful in securing externally funded research projects, including applied and contract research. The university also shows very good ability to disseminate the obtained research results via traditional, as well as modern communication platforms, which increases the national as well as international visibility of the university and its faculties.

The academic staff members are included in various advisory boards, international societies, and editorial boards, and they receive invitations for expert lectures abroad. All of this confirms the relevance of the staff members and their educational and research activities. Of high social relevance are the partnerships with government bodies and private entities, which ensure research relevance beyond the academic area.

However, there are also several areas for improvement. Both faculties should enhance the diversity of their foreign collaborations, to include a wider array of countries and institutions, preferably beyond the CEE region. Also, the impact of media and popularization efforts, though strong, could be further evaluated and optimized to ensure even broader public engagement. Although strong government-linked partnerships are a positive feature, the university should seek more diversification in this area. And more attention should be devoted to publishing research outcomes in high-impact international journals, to bolster academic recognition and the faculty's global research profile.

Further weaknesses worth mentioning represent the underdeveloped strategy for commercializing intellectual property and the deteriorating age structure of the academic staff.

Summary recommendation:

A detailed and relatively exhausting list of recommendations from the International Evaluation Panel can be found in the individual evaluation reports of the two faculties. However, in general, it is possible to recommend the university: seeking more international partnerships, increasing the volume of scientific papers published in respectable scientific journals (preferably Q1 and Q2 in WoS and Scopus), and addressing the worsening age structure of the academic staff.

EVALUATION REPORT FOR MODULES 4 & 5

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION NAME:

University of Finance and Administration

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER (CRN): 04274644

MODULE 4 – VIABILITY

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF R&D&I

4.1 Organisation and management of R&D&I

Evaluate the organizational structure and setup of the R&D&I management system in relation to the size and type of the university and its mission and vision. Also consider comparisons with foreign universities of similar size and focus.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

As a private institution, VSFS positions itself as both a provider of accredited undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs and, simultaneously, as a research entity in accordance with Czech legislation. Research governance is centralized under the Vice-Rector for Research and Development, who also oversees doctoral education. The centralised coordination through the Vice-Rector for R&D, complemented by vice-deans at faculty level and supported by the Department of R&D, Library Services Centre, VSFS Publishing, and the University Research Centre (UVC), reflects sound alignment with the university's mission and comparable European institutions. Monthly coordination meetings, internal grant administration, and structured data flows to the national evaluation system indicate mature processes and compliance with national legal frameworks.

While this managerial structure appears functionally sound, it bears striking resemblance to a “corporate governance model”, prioritizing administrative control and performance metrics over the cultivation of independent, critical inquiry. Ambitions such as strengthening the nexus between research and teaching, promoting interdisciplinarity, and enhancing international visibility remain largely declarative. The university still lacks an international scientific advisory board to independently assess research priorities, suggest benchmarking strategies, and enhance global visibility.

Strengths relative to peers of similar size and profile abroad include: clear central stewardship of R&D with faculty-level anchoring; explicit linkage of research to study programmes; the presence of shared research infrastructure (UVC and laboratories spanning empirics, interdisciplinarity, forensic science, and neuromarketing); an Internal Grant Agency; and a transparent, positive incentive scheme for publication and creative outputs. However, there are also several weaknesses, such as the relatively low effective R&D capacity due to staff composition and teaching loads, and concentration of many functions centrally, which, while efficient, can create a bottleneck for project generation, interdisciplinarity, and internationalisation if not matched with sufficient distributed capabilities. Moreover, the reduction in effective R&D FTE from 34 (2020) to 25 (2024) is material for sustaining project pipelines, doctoral supervision, and publication

performance.

Recommendations:

1. **Rebalance institutional priorities.** Elevate research beyond symbolic commitment. The university should confront the structural asymmetry between teaching and research by revising workload models. Setting binding minimum quotas for research time across all academic ranks and offering course relief or teaching buy-outs for staff engaged in substantial research projects is worth considering.
2. **Evolve the incentive scheme.** Retain the positive, transparent awards but add weighted criteria for: external competitive funding (MEYS, TA ČR, Horizon Europe partnerships), high-quality publications (e.g., field-weighted impact), doctoral supervision outcomes, industry/authority collaboration with measured impact, and open science practices.
3. **Introduce a systemic research culture and community,** by organising regular research seminars, colloquia, and internal peer reviews. Also students and PhD students should actively participate in certain committees.
4. **Establish internationalization structures,** especially an international advisory board. It should consist of international experts from both academia and industry, aligned to VSFS's profile (finance, law/public administration, security/forensics, applied data/AI in business). They should be involved in peer consultation, joint project planning, and long-term horizon scanning. This will not only provide critical feedback, but also open networking channels.
5. **Support international collaboration,** especially participation in international research consortia, and joint publications with foreign partners.
6. **Stimulate interdisciplinary collaboration** by connecting internal labs with external partners through structured platforms and mobility frameworks. Use existing labs as anchors for 2–3 focused international partnerships (e.g., Erasmus+ KA2, COST Actions, Horizon CSA) and Czech industry/public-sector collaborations with defined joint outputs (datasets, pilot studies, co-authored papers). Appoint a “lab partnership lead” in each lab with modest workload credit and set annual targets for external co-funding, joint publications, and student involvement.
7. **Integrate research outcomes into the pedagogic process in a more substantive way,** to fulfil the stated goal of research-based teaching. Develop curriculum modules linked directly to ongoing research projects. Encourage student involvement in empirical studies, thesis collaborations, and publication processes

R&D&I QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT SYSTEM

4.2 System of support for a quality R&D&I environment and incentive measures for quality science

Evaluate the systems/measures/tools described to stimulate high-quality science at the HEI being evaluated. In your evaluation, consider the documented effectiveness of the measures described, their impact on achieving the mission and vision of the HEI being evaluated, the realization of excellent science and the possible absence of key systems/measures/tools.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The university has a comprehensive system of stimulating the R&D&I activities. It includes a positive incentive scheme; an active Internal Grant Agency (IGA) with student, junior, and standard schemes; professional central support for funding acquisition and project administration; and

targeted support for open access, mobility, and excellent publications. The system is structured, rule-based, and implemented through the Department of R&D, the University Research Centre, and regular internal evaluation with financial reflection—practices that compare well to peer institutions in the Czech Republic and similar European private universities.

At the core of this system is the Internal Grant Agency (IGA), which supports various tiers of research engagement through student projects, junior research initiatives, and standard research proposals. Each of these project categories is evaluated using a multi-stage, expert-driven rating process that incorporates both peer review and post-project assessments. This process ensures quality control and accountability, while also fostering a culture of transparency and continuous improvement.

The system also offers extensive administrative support to assist faculty and researchers in applying for both national and international funding. The institution facilitates access to project documentation templates, consults on legal and budgetary issues, and provides proofreading and language services for grant applications. Furthermore, the support for participation in international conferences, study visits, and mobility programs is embedded within this system, signalling a deliberate push toward internationalization.

It is evident that substantial efforts have been undertaken to ensure procedural coherence and administrative efficiency. However, particularly in the field of social sciences, the research activity is predominantly assessed through the lens of publication output. While the promotion of publishing in indexed journals and edited volumes is certainly a legitimate goal, it appears that empirical engagement with socially pressing issues—such as inequality, precarity, or institutional transformation—is afforded comparatively less visibility. In this respect, the research agenda could benefit from a broader conceptualization of what constitutes scientific contribution, particularly within disciplines whose impact often unfolds beyond standardized metrics.

Moreover, the coordination of research at VSFS is presented as a function carried out largely by administrative and managerial actors. While such coordination is undoubtedly necessary, the current configuration raises the question of the extent to which academic staff are actively involved in shaping strategic research directions. The risk here lies less in an overt “marginalization” of researchers than in the possibility that administrative rationales begin to guide research agendas more strongly than scholarly inquiry itself. Strengthening the participatory role of academic staff in governance processes and in the formulation of long-term research strategies could help foster a more autonomous and dynamic research culture.

It is also important to note that the international dimension of research remains underdeveloped. The absence of an institutionalized international advisory structure and the limited mention of cross-border research collaboration suggest that further strategic investments in internationalization would be beneficial. Enhanced international engagement would not only increase the visibility and competitiveness of the university’s research profile but also provide valuable opportunities for PhD candidates and early-career researchers, whose academic development increasingly depends on access to global networks and interdisciplinary exchanges.

Recommendations:

1. **Strengthen the participatory role of academic staff** in governance processes and in the formulation of long-term research strategies, to foster a more autonomous and dynamic research culture. Faculty-led research committees or advisory boards could help balance managerial coordination with scholarly autonomy.
2. **Internal evaluation criteria should expand beyond publication metrics** to value empirical research, particularly on social issues like inequality and public policy. This would align

more closely with the methodological diversity of the social sciences.

3. **Support internationalization of early-career researchers and PhD students** by providing more funding for international conference participation, mobility, and publishing.
4. **Foster interdisciplinary collaboration** by supporting cross-departmental initiatives and interdisciplinary project platforms, to connect research agendas with current societal challenges and broaden external collaboration.
5. **Update incentive weights.** Complement publication metrics with points for external competitive funding, doctoral completions, open science (data/code), policy/industry impact, and international collaboration. Calibrate weights annually based on strategic priorities and publish the schema for transparency.
6. **Consider complementing financial rewards with non-financial motivations** such as research sabbaticals, awards for mentorship, or recognition through internal communication platforms.
7. **Continuous monitoring and user feedback** should be integrated into the IGA's operations to optimize administrative procedures and ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.
8. **Introduce micro-grants** for scoping studies, pilot data, or consortium meetings aligned to imminent calls. This increases responsiveness to MEYS, TA ČR, Horizon Europe, and foundation timelines.

4.3 Quality control system for R&D&I environment

Evaluate the described internal and external evaluation system in terms of its quality, effectiveness and suitability for the HEI.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The university has a structured, rules-based internal quality system anchored in the Rector's College, the Vice-Rector's monthly quality conference, and the Internal Assessment Board. The framework is transparent (published rules), data-informed (IS data, bibliometrics), and increasingly quality-oriented (Rector Decision 291/2023 with new minimum requirements), with six-monthly personal assessments linked to incentives and documented improvements in WoS/Scopus outputs.

However, the system remains predominantly individual-centric; there is no systematic internal evaluation of research teams/units, limited continuous external input beyond statutory processes, and long five-year cycles risk slow feedback loops. Labs and interdisciplinary initiatives are not explicitly assessed as collective entities, and evidence on effectiveness (conversion to grants, impact, open science compliance) is not routinely reported.

The quality control processes appear to be predominantly steered by administrative actors, with academic staff largely positioned as subjects of evaluation rather than as co-creators of evaluative standards and strategic goals. Although academic representatives are involved (e.g. vice-deans, UVC leadership), the absence of a parity-based structure and the relatively weak integration of the broader academic community into strategic decisions may hinder the development of a dynamic and responsive research culture.

Overall, the system is solid and appropriate for size and profile, but would benefit from team-level evaluation, broader quality indicators beyond publications, and integration of the broader academic community into strategic decisions.

Recommendations:

1. **Facilitate flat hierarchies in research governance.** Develop mechanisms for horizontal communication between departments, faculties, and the University Research Centre, such as open forums or interdisciplinary quality panels, which allow for decentralized feedback and cross-level coordination.
2. **Establish content-oriented evaluation practices.** Complement bibliometric indicators with peer-driven, qualitative assessments that account for the societal relevance, methodological rigor, and theoretical contribution of research projects, especially in the social sciences.
3. **Encourage a culture of collaborative quality reflection.** Regular internal symposia or retreats on research quality and ethics — led by academics rather than managers — could foster a culture of shared responsibility and reflexive practice across disciplines and ranks.
4. **Strengthen the international dimension of quality assessment.** Create an international research advisory board with external scholars who can provide critical and comparative perspectives on research output and strategic development. Their input would serve both benchmarking and quality enhancement purposes.
5. **Foster more equalitarian academic governance structures.** Establish parity-based bodies for research quality assurance, where academic staff are formally represented alongside „administrative leadership“. This would enhance legitimacy and ensure that evaluative frameworks reflect disciplinary diversity.
6. **Introduce team- and unit-level internal evaluations** alongside individual reviews. Define annual KPIs for departments/labs (grant submissions and success, co-authored publications, doctoral outcomes, open science compliance).
7. **Establish an annual light external peer review of selected areas.** Invite two to three external experts to review a rotating subset of departments or labs, focusing on quality, relevance, and internationalization. Use short written feedback to adjust plans before the next funding cycle.
8. **Formalize ethics and research integrity monitoring with proactive training.** Deliver annual short courses on authorship, predatory venues, data management, and AI/use-of-tools, and record completion rates in quality reports. Incorporate random audits of outputs and datasets, feeding lessons learned into guidance and the Code updates.
9. **Encourage benchmarking with similar universities across Europe** to identify emerging best practices in R&D&I quality management.

4.4 Sustainability and resilience of R&D&I

Evaluate the described system of measures for sustainability and resilience of R&D&I in terms of their quality, effectiveness or possible absence of key measures.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

VSFS has established a solid foundation for the sustainability and resilience of its R&D&I activities, with clear attention to infrastructure, ethical standards, and knowledge transfer. The university shows a systematic approach to quality assurance, and the integration of social responsibility and open science principles. Its partnerships with industry, public institutions, and regional actors, as well as its focus on digitalization and cybersecurity, contribute positively to institutional resilience.

The knowledge transfer system is well-developed, with open access, collaboration, and popularization activities embedded in practice. The university has developed a multifaceted

system that connects academic research with societal application. This includes structured partnerships with industry, government, and NGOs, as well as institutional platforms that promote public engagement.

VSFS has also committed to open science principles as a cornerstone of its research dissemination strategy. The implementation of both Gold and Green Open Access (OA) policies has resulted in greater visibility of institutional research, aligning with European research and innovation norms. Research data management practices are in line with GDPR and FAIR principles, with secure infrastructure and clear data stewardship guidelines.

A key strength in the current model is the explicit focus on institutional resilience. Cybersecurity measures have been upgraded and are integrated with business continuity planning for both administrative and academic processes. These include protocols for data protection, system redundancies, and crisis response measures that safeguard the university's digital assets and research continuity.

However, the institutional framework outlined for intellectual property protection raises important questions regarding academic ownership. If it is indeed the case that authorship rights for scholarly publications — including books and journal articles — are held primarily by the institution rather than the academic staff, then this would represent a significant limitation to academic freedom. While such arrangements may be standard in contexts involving patentable technical outputs or commercial innovations, the blanket application of such rules to publications in the humanities and social sciences risks undermining the autonomy and recognition of scholarly authorship. The intellectual independence and motivation of researchers are intrinsically linked to their rights over their own work. In this regard, a reconsideration of intellectual property arrangements, particularly in relation to academic publishing, would be desirable.

Recommendations:

1. **Integrate reflexive and ethical dimensions into knowledge transfer.** Encourage critical examination of the societal impact of research activities, not only in terms of output but also regarding values such as equality, inclusion, and sustainability — especially in fields related to public policy and finance.
2. **Establish participatory models for societal co-creation.** Local and regional collaboration should be framed not only in terms of service delivery but also as opportunities for co-designing research agendas with civil society and public institutions, strengthening the university's social embeddedness.
3. **Safeguard intellectual property rights for academic publications.** If authorship rights for non-commercial scholarly work are currently institutionally held, a revised policy should restore publication rights to the authors. This would reinforce academic freedom, international academic standards, and scholarly motivation.
4. **Formalize research data management** with DMP(Data Management Plan) and FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) standards. Require project-level Data Management Plans, designate data stewards, and provide DMP templates aligned to national/Horizon Europe norms. Audit a sample annually and recognize compliant teams in internal evaluations.
5. **Open up the institutional repository for Green OA dissemination.** Move from closed access to public metadata and embargo-managed full texts, with clear licensing and rights checking. Track and publish repository usage (downloads, compliance rates) each semester.
6. **Consider incorporating ethical and governance frameworks** for advanced technologies,

particularly AI and machine learning applications, to remain at the forefront of responsible research practices.

7. **Further diversify income streams for research**, with special attention to EU green transition funds, philanthropic grants, and corporate R&D partnerships.
8. **Evaluate the potential of establishing a dedicated sustainability office** or coordinator responsible for ensuring implementation of green policies across research and institutional operations.

PERSONEL POLICY

4.5 Structure of human resources

Evaluate the described structure of human resources at the evaluated HEI in terms of age composition, degree of internationalization, distribution by job classification, and gender balance. For the assessment, use the data from the annexed tables 4.5.1 and 4.5.2; it is also possible to draw on the more detailed staffing data presented in indicator 3.1 of the self-evaluation reports for the evaluated units.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The university experienced a noticeable decline in the number of academic staff involved in research and development, both in absolute terms and in terms of full-time equivalent (FTE) contributions over recent years, from 34 in 2020 to 25 in 2024. It signals a structural vulnerability that becomes particularly critical when viewed in light of the dual demands of teaching and research that characterize academic work.

Age composition is skewed mid-to-late career: professors and many associates cluster 50+, with limited under-29 presence and modest early-career researcher counts, creating succession risks. The situation has worsened compared to the previous evaluation period. Although a moderate rise in the number of early-career researchers is noted, it is unlikely to compensate for the demographic shift without further strategic support.

The internal differentiation of research engagement according to academic rank — with higher expectations for professors and lower for assistant professors — is, in principle, a rational system. However, it requires careful implementation to avoid unintended consequences. In particular, early-career academics should not be reduced to purely pedagogical functions.

The gender distribution, particularly in higher academic ranks, reflects persistent asymmetries. The complete absence of women among full professors, and the underrepresentation among associate professors, point to structural barriers that have yet to be effectively addressed. While assistant professor positions show a more balanced gender ratio, upward mobility appears to be skewed. In this regard, gender equity cannot be assumed to evolve organically and may require active institutional measures — including, where appropriate, targeted recruitment policies or quota mechanisms — to ensure fair access to academic leadership positions.

Finally, the lack of international staff (just one position) is striking. In 2024, the university employed no academic personnel with foreign citizenship, which raises concerns about the international openness of the institution and its attractiveness to global talent. This also limits the diversity of academic perspectives and potential for international cooperation in teaching and research.

The recruitment system for external academic staff is largely informal. The recruitment often relies on personal relationships and internal networks rather than a structured, merit-based procedure. While this may be manageable in a small institution, such reliance limits the diversity of staff backgrounds and hinders efforts to broaden academic perspectives. The self-evaluation indicates that “international recruitment procedures are not implemented as a separate agenda,” and no comprehensive system exists for attracting foreign researchers.

Recommendations:

1. **Stabilize and strategically expand the size of the academic staff.** Counteract the downward trend in research-active academic staff by increasing recruitment, especially in junior and mid-level positions, to maintain institutional capacity across teaching and research.
2. **Promote rejuvenation of the academic workforce.** Prioritize the recruitment of younger scholars and support their advancement through tenure-track models and targeted development programs to address demographic imbalances and ensure long-term institutional sustainability.
3. **Launch a targeted tenure-track/ECR renewal program.** Prioritize 5–8 hires in strategic themes (finance/fintech, AI/data for business, security/forensics, public administration) with clear progression criteria and protected research time. Pair each hire with senior mentorship and internal grant priming to accelerate external funding readiness.
4. **Strengthen senior capacity via selective promotions and visiting professorships.** Run an internal promotion round with transparent criteria tied to quality outputs and grants, complemented by 2–3 part-time international visiting professors per year. Use these roles to co-supervise doctorates, co-publish, and build consortia.
5. **Address gender imbalances through affirmative measures.** Introduce concrete measures to improve gender equality in higher academic ranks, including career development support for women and the possible use of gender quotas or hiring targets at professorial levels. Introduce coaching, grant-writing support, and workload adjustments for women eligible for habilitation/professorship.
6. **Strengthen internationalization of academic staff.** Develop a strategy for attracting foreign scholars through joint positions, visiting professorships, and international calls for academic posts. This would enrich the research environment and enhance global visibility.
7. **Implement inclusive career progression structures.** Establish transparent and supportive promotion procedures that enable academic staff from all ranks and backgrounds to pursue advancement, integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion principles.
8. **Develop a formal, transparent recruitment policy** for both national and international candidates, replacing informal reliance on internal networks.
9. **Establish a dedicated international recruitment strategy,** including language support, onboarding assistance, and competitive packages to attract global talent.
10. **Create a balanced succession plan** that proactively recruits early-career researchers and supports their development toward senior roles.

4.6 Academic and Research Careers

Evaluate the described system for the recruitment and career development of academic and research staff. Evaluate the system in terms of its quality and effectiveness, as well as the potential absence of key elements.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

VSFS has established a relatively structured and clearly articulated framework for managing academic and research careers. Central to this system are Personal Records, which serve as planning and evaluation tools. These records are used for setting professional development goals and are reviewed in regular six-monthly evaluations. The outcomes of these reviews are directly linked to tangible rewards, including financial bonuses and eligibility for academic progression through doctoral studies, habilitation, or promotion to professorship.

The institution has also shown sensitivity to work-life balance and family responsibilities. Support systems are in place for staff returning from parental leave, including re-adaptation programs that assist with reintegration into teaching and research duties. Such programs indicate institutional awareness of gendered career interruptions and the importance of career continuity.

There is also transparency in workload allocation, with clear delineation between teaching and research duties, which supports effective time management and performance monitoring. This clarity allows staff to plan their academic trajectory with awareness of institutional expectations and support mechanisms.

However, the recruitment procedures are formally grounded in open, transparent, and merit-based principles, with some attention given to ensuring gender balance on selection committees. Nonetheless, the description reveals a reliance on informal personal networks and internal recommendations, which may compromise the principle of inclusivity and the diversification of academic staff. The absence of dedicated international recruitment mechanisms further limits the institution's global academic integration, already noted as a structural gap in earlier sections.

Of particular relevance is the university's stated commitment to gender equality. As shown in the data under section 4.5, women remain significantly underrepresented among associate professors and entirely absent from the rank of full professor. This indicates that the measures currently in place, though well-intentioned, are insufficient to bring about structural change. More robust mechanisms — including strategic hiring targets or quota systems — may be necessary to overcome embedded patterns of gender imbalance.

Additionally, the lack of a formal mentoring program—particularly for early-career researchers and newly hired academics—represents a significant shortcoming. While informal guidance may occur, structured mentorship is essential for effective onboarding, integration, and long-term development in research-intensive roles.

The career pathway from doctoral candidate to professor is not fully articulated, with a thin or absent postdoctoral layer, informal mentoring, and appraisals not consistently tied to individualized development plans or protected research time. Criteria overweight output counts over competencies such as leadership, supervision quality, engagement/impact, and open science; high teaching loads constrain promising researchers and depress grant competitiveness. International recruitment, mobility, and dual-career support are limited, and pathways for research leadership and research management roles are under-specified.

Recommendations:

1. **Move from gender sensitivity to gender equity implementation.** Strengthen gender equality by introducing measurable objectives such as gender hiring targets for senior positions and structured support programs for female academics pursuing habilitation and professorship.
2. **Establish a dedicated international recruitment strategy.** Create formal pathways and outreach initiatives for hiring international academics, including bilingual job postings and international job platforms, to enhance institutional diversity and academic exchange.
3. **Diversify recruitment channels beyond internal recommendations.** Reduce dependency on personal contacts in hiring processes by formalizing broader, anonymized evaluation procedures and expanding public advertisement of positions.
4. **Ensure workload models supporting balanced career development.** Maintain transparency while developing more flexible workload arrangements that reflect the dual function of academics as both educators and researchers, particularly at the early career stage.
5. **Publish a comprehensive career framework and progression rubric.** Define stage-specific expectations (research quality, teaching excellence, supervision, impact/open science, service/leadership), typical timelines, evaluation panels, and evidence standards. Include narrative CV elements to capture quality and contribution.
6. **Create a structured postdoctoral program.** Offer 2–3-year fixed-term research-focused posts with mentoring, formal development plans, mobility expectations, and light teaching caps.
7. **Strengthen internationalization levers.** Set budget for inbound visiting scholars, sabbaticals, short-term mobility for early career researchers, and international co-supervision. Include relocation and dual-career guidance in recruitment packages.
8. **Monitor equality and well-being indicators.** Track gender and international representation by rank, time-to-promotion, success rates, teaching loads, and attrition. Use dashboards to identify bottlenecks and adjust policies.
9. **Integrate regular staff satisfaction and career planning surveys** into HR management practices to identify systemic challenges and tailor support mechanisms.
10. **Establish academic career tracks** that recognize both research excellence and teaching leadership to create more diverse and equitable promotion pathways.

4.7 Gender equality measures

Evaluate the gender equality measures described in self-evaluation. Evaluate the measures in terms of their quality and effectiveness, as well as the potential absence of key measures.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The VSFS demonstrates a clear institutional commitment to the discourse on gender equality, evidenced by the development of a Gender Equality Plan (2024–2026), partnerships with gender-focused institutions, and the implementation of formal procedures aiming to support equal treatment in recruitment, career advancement, and work-life balance. The presence of women in central leadership positions suggests that gender equality is not absent from the university's strategic horizon. Female representation in the Academic Council has increased from 3 to 6 members since the previous evaluation period. Furthermore, at the Faculty of Economics, both the Dean and Vice Dean are women, demonstrating the university's capacity to promote women into influential leadership roles.

Nonetheless, a closer analysis reveals persistent disparities that require more targeted structural attention. As already indicated in section 4.5, women remain underrepresented in the upper echelons of the academic hierarchy — notably at the associate and full professor levels — which suggests that the principle of gender balance is not yet consistently reflected in the academic core of the institution. The university rightly acknowledges this issue and emphasizes its intention to address it. However, visible and measurable outcomes are still limited, and the persistence of these imbalances over several years points to the need for more robust, binding interventions rather than relying solely on voluntary or procedural measures.

The commitment to flexible work arrangements and non-discriminatory benefits is commendable and reflects a supportive institutional culture, particularly for employees balancing academic and personal responsibilities. However, the broader institutional approach to gender equality seems to be focused primarily on formal policies and symbolic measures. A more strategic integration of gender equality into the university's core research, teaching, and staffing policies would further strengthen the impact of these efforts and contribute to a more balanced and inclusive academic culture.

A formal, EU-compliant Gender Equality Plan with SMART targets and accountability is still not evident, and dashboards on recruitment, pay, promotion, leadership, grants, and teaching load remain limited. Post-leave reintegration, workload relief, and structured bias-mitigated recruitment are underdeveloped, and harassment reporting pathways lack visibility and independence.

Recommendations:

1. **Adopt and publish a Gender Equality Plan aligned with EU/HRS4R standards.** Set 3–5 priority areas with baseline metrics, annual targets, and responsible owners. Report progress publicly each year.
2. **Enhance data transparency in gender equality monitoring.** Regularly publish disaggregated data on salary structures, promotion outcomes, and research funding allocation to enable more precise analysis and strategic interventions.
3. **Strengthen institutional mechanisms for reporting and awareness.** While no incidents have been reported, ensure that policies addressing misconduct are not only in place but well-communicated, accessible, and supported by regular training for staff and students.

4. **Embed gender equality objectives into institutional planning.** Align gender equity goals with the university's broader strategic and quality assurance processes, ensuring that gender-related outcomes are integrated into institutional assessments and leadership accountability.
5. **Develop structured mentorship for female academics.** Create targeted mentorship and career development programs for early- and mid-career women to support their progression into senior academic roles.
6. **Create return-to-research and teaching-relief schemes post-parental leave.** Offer bridge funding, mentoring, and grant-writing support. Track outcomes for retention and outputs.
7. **Continue partnerships with national and international networks,** including EU-funded equality initiatives, to enhance internal capacities and access to best practices.
8. **Evaluate implicit cultural and institutional barriers** that may hinder women's progression into top academic positions and adjust internal processes accordingly.

4.8 Mobility of academic and research staff (including sectoral and inter-sectoral mobility)

Evaluate the described mobility of academic and researcher staff. Pay attention to whether the evaluated HEI achieves the set objectives, whether the mobility objectives are appropriately set for the HEI and whether the strategies in place lead to their achievement or help remove existing barriers to mobility.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

VSFS demonstrates a proactive and structured approach to academic and researcher mobility, aiming to reinforce internationalization through diverse measures. The university prioritizes international student mobility, supports language skills and global competencies, and encourages academic staff and doctoral students to participate in ERASMUS+ mobility projects and bilateral agreements.

In comparison to the previous evaluation period, the volume of outgoing, as well as incoming academic staff members increased (especially in the post-pandemic years). Moreover, participation in international conferences and mobility trips is rigorously assessed for research and collaboration impact. The university also secured several long-term visits of foreign researchers, enhancing the internal internationalization climate and fostering potential future recruitment of foreign post-docs.

However, there are also several challenges. The high teaching loads limit long-term outbound mobility of the academic staff, as well as upward mobility for staff members seeking promotion. The mobility is limited to Europe, although some steps have been taken to establish international projects with partners beyond the immediate CEE region. Moreover, the mobilities remain predominantly pedagogical and conference-focused, with fewer long-term research stays by VSFS staff abroad.

Recommendations:

1. **Address high teaching loads by** implementing policies to reduce teaching responsibilities temporarily for staff engaging in long-term international research stays, enabling more outbound mobility and research collaboration abroad.
2. **Develop resource allocation models** that acknowledge the time needed to prepare lectures and seminars, commenting on and grading papers etc.
3. **Enhance mobility beyond Europe.** Actively seek and cultivate partnerships with universities and research institutions outside Europe (e.g., North America, Asia) to diversify mobility destinations and collaborations.

4. **Increase long-term mobility opportunities.** Promote and financially support longer research visits abroad for academic staff to deepen research collaboration and integration into international scientific networks.
5. **Further develop language and cultural preparation.** Continue strengthening language training and intercultural competence development, possibly introducing formal English proficiency requirements and incentives linked to mobility participation.
6. **Formalize support for hosting foreign academics.** build on the current successful hosting of foreign researchers by establishing more structured visiting scholar programs with clear integration and research support.
7. **Leverage international grants for mobility.** Target international grant schemes (e.g., Marie Curie, Horizon Europe) to secure funding specifically for staff mobility and collaborative projects, reducing dependence on internal funding constraints.

RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

4.9 Research infrastructure

Evaluate the system described for the acquisition/optimisation of core facilities and other equipment and their renewal. Evaluate the system in terms of its effectiveness and suitability for the HEI. Also consider the system for sharing instruments and equipment, including core facilities and equipment of evaluated units. Use the data in Annex Table 4.9.1 to support your evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The research infrastructure of the university is well-aligned with its focus in the field of social sciences. As a result, no highly-specialized and expensive equipment is needed. The core needs involve regular replacement and updating of basic IT equipment such as computers and statistical software essential for data analysis.

The university operates four laboratories: Laboratory of Criminalistics and Forensic Disciplines, Laboratory of Neuromarketing and Marketing Analyses, Laboratory of Empiric Studies, and Laboratory of Interdisciplinary Projects and Strategic Grants. The Laboratory of Criminalistics and Forensic Disciplines and Laboratory of Neuromarketing are main facilities. The laboratories are primarily dedicated to internal research activities and not openly shared with external entities except through collaborative projects or contract expertise.

In general, The research infrastructure system is clearly suited to VSFS's needs and research scope, with appropriate acquisition and renewal procedures in place. The laboratories actively support internal research and student involvement, with ongoing equipment replacement and consumables procurement. The absence of large-scale or expensive infrastructure is justified by the disciplinary focus. Some limitations remain regarding equipment sharing and external access, which might restrict broader collaborative opportunities. The investment in major new assets appears limited, which is acceptable given the research field but may require monitoring to keep infrastructure updated.

Recommendations:

1. **Maintain and Update Core Equipment Proactively.** Continue regular replacement and upgrading of computer hardware and software to ensure researchers have access to current and efficient tools.
2. **Explore broader equipment sharing possibilities.** Consider formalizing access to the

laboratories or specific equipment for external partners under collaborative agreements to enhance the use and visibility of VSFS infrastructure.

3. **Monitor emerging research needs.** Periodically reassess whether new equipment or technologies might expand research possibilities, especially for interdisciplinary projects, and prepare funding requests accordingly.
4. **Enhance laboratory visibility and outreach.** Increase efforts to promote laboratory capabilities for contract expertise and joint research to attract external collaborations and potential funding.
5. **Document infrastructure use and impact.** Systematically collect and report data on laboratory usage, research outputs, and student involvement to support future funding applications and strategic planning.
6. **Plan for equipment lifecycle and maintenance.** Although repair costs are currently negligible, establish a formal maintenance schedule and budget to prevent future downtimes or unexpected costs.

FINANCES

4.10 Budget and structure of financial resources

Evaluate the budget and financial resource structure of the evaluated HEI in terms of its suitability for the HEI, i.e. whether the financial resource structure is appropriate for the size and type of the evaluated HEI. You should also pay attention to the ability of the evaluated HEI to attract prestigious research projects. Use the data in the annexed tables 4.10.1 to 4.10.5 to support your evaluation.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

Since the last evaluation period, the university has shifted its research focus from fundamental to applied research in order to pursue the goal of increasing the relevance and societal impact of the research activities. Therefore, 81% of funding was attributable to the applied research as of the end of the current evaluation period.

The university has demonstrated a growing ability to attract prestigious and competitive external funding, including international grants and collaborative projects. Noteworthy is its involvement as both beneficiary and coordinator in projects funded by the International Visegrad Fund, EEA and Norway Grants, and the Czech Science Foundation. Additionally, VSFS secured multiple applied research projects supported by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Culture. This diversified portfolio signals a strengthening capacity to attract competitive funds beyond purely domestic or institutional support.

An important source of funding is also contract research, continuing education, and certification activities. The receipt of institutional support via the long-term conceptual development fund (LCDRO) facilitates internal project funding, particularly supporting junior researchers and student-led initiatives.

VSFS has made measurable progress in accessing foreign and non-public research funds, addressing prior concerns about limited diversification. The increased engagement with international partners and relevant funding programs reflects improved research management and strategic alignment.

To sum it up, VSFS has successfully rebalanced its research budget towards applied projects, better matching its strategic priorities and societal needs. The university has attracted multiple prestigious international projects and diversified funding sources, overcoming previous limitations.

The financial structure supports both institutional priorities and externally funded projects, including international collaborations. The university's capacity to manage and coordinate international grants has improved, as reflected in recent projects. Some room remains for growth in innovation and experimental development, and continuous efforts to broaden funding sources would be beneficial.

Recommendations:

1. **Further diversify funding sources.** Continue efforts to secure more projects from non-public and international sources, including EU frameworks like Horizon Europe, leveraging existing expertise and international networks.
2. **Strengthen support for large-scale projects.** Enhance the R&D department's capacity (staffing, training, and resources) to proactively identify, prepare, and manage bigger competitive research projects, especially in applied research and innovation.
3. **Encourage innovation and experimental development.** Develop strategies to increase activities in experimental development and innovation, which currently remain minimal, to broaden research impact and funding opportunities.
4. **Promote interdisciplinary and strategic grant applications.** Use the existing four laboratories and research centers as hubs for interdisciplinary applied research, potentially attracting larger and more varied funding.
5. **Leverage contract research and continuing education.** Expand contract research services and continuing education programs as sustainable income streams that can complement grant funding.
6. **Enhance monitoring and reporting.** Implement robust monitoring of financial resource allocation and project outcomes to optimize budgeting and demonstrate impact to funders and stakeholders.

4.11 Rules for the use of institutional support for the LCDRO

Evaluate the strategy described and the rules for the use of institutional support for the LCDRO. In your evaluation, consider the effectiveness of the implemented strategy and policies and whether they contribute to the mission and vision of the HEI.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

VSFS has established a clear and structured approach to the use of the institutional support funds provided by the Research Organization Long-Term Conceptual Development (LCDRO). Given that these funds represent about 13% of the total R&D budget, the university appropriately prioritizes these resources to support its mission and vision, focusing on thematic areas closely aligned with its academic programs.

The institutional framework, governed by internal regulations such as Rector Decisions No. 250/2019 and 291/2023, and guided by the methodological instructions of the vice rector for R&D, ensures transparency and rigor in the allocation and use of LCDRO funds. The rules cover key aspects such as project submission, evaluation, implementation, oversight, and fund usage, which contribute to accountability and effective governance.

Significantly, the LCDRO funds support personnel costs, including compensation for successful research implementation and high-quality publishing outputs, which incentivizes research excellence. The criteria for rewarding above-standard publishing are clearly defined and systematically applied, fostering a performance-oriented research culture.

The funding scheme also strongly supports early-career researchers through junior projects, promoting talent development and innovation capacity building. This strategic emphasis on nurturing new researchers aligns well with the university's growth and sustainability goals.

Moreover, LCDRO funds finance essential infrastructure, including software and equipment renewal, access to electronic literature, and the facilitation of academic mobility through support for conferences, publication fees, translations, and language editing. This comprehensive support framework strengthens the overall research environment and helps maintain international visibility and standards.

The absence of a formal reallocation key based on productivity metrics (e.g., publication count per faculty) may limit the strategic targeting of resources but does not undermine the overall effectiveness of the policy given the relatively small size of the institution and the centralized distribution model.

Overall, the strategy and policies for LCDRO fund use effectively contribute to VSFS's mission of advancing applied social sciences research, enhancing research quality, and developing academic staff and students.

The strategy is well-documented, transparent, and aligned with the HEI's research priorities and size. It effectively incentivizes research excellence through compensation linked to publishing performance. Strong support is provided to early-career researchers, which is critical for sustainability. The funds cover a broad range of research needs, including personnel, equipment, and dissemination. The centralized management of funds fits the scale of VSFS but could be enhanced with performance-based reallocations. The system is effective but could be improved with more dynamic allocation mechanisms and expanded support for innovation.

Recommendations:

1. **Introduce a Performance-Based Allocation Model:** Consider developing a formalized key or formula for reallocating LCDRO funds based on measurable research outputs (e.g., publications, citations, successful grants) to incentivize faculties and departments more explicitly.
2. **Expand Support for Innovation and Experimental Development:** While the current focus on personnel and publishing is strong, additional targeted funding for innovation projects and applied experimental development could be beneficial to diversify research impact.
3. **Enhance Support for Early-Career Researchers:** Continue to strengthen junior project funding and consider additional mentoring or training programs to accelerate their integration into competitive external funding schemes.
4. **Facilitate Broader Collaboration:** Explore ways to use LCDRO funds to foster inter-faculty and external collaborations, which could amplify research quality and lead to larger external grants.
5. **Promote Digital and Open Science Infrastructure:** Allocate a portion of LCDRO funds to support digital research infrastructure, open access publishing, and data management to increase research visibility and compliance with modern research standards.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

4.12 Significant collaborations in R&D

Evaluate listed examples of significant R&D&I collaborations with respect to the effectiveness of the collaborations established, their proportionality and appropriateness to the type of HEI and its mission and vision.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

VSFS has a wide range of collaborations at the national as well as international level. At the national levels, it maintains close ties with important research and education institutions such as University of Economics in Prague, Masaryk University in Brno, or Czech University of Life Sciences, as well as with government bodies, professional associations and industry stakeholders. The collaboration now explicitly highlights concrete, externally funded research projects funded by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, indicating a substantive engagement in applied and policy-relevant research domains such as regional development, environmental sustainability, and family business succession. The role of VSFS as coordinator of the university platform targeting SMEs' financing and management shows a strategic leadership role in research networks. The frequent involvement in governmental advisory bodies and the embedding of research outputs into practical policy tools reinforces the alignment with VSFS's mission of applied social sciences research serving societal needs.

At the international level, VSFS participates in international projects funded by programs like the Visegrad Fund and EEA/Norway grants, producing innovative tools and methodologies adopted beyond Czech borders. The organization and co-organization of recurring international conferences and workshops underline VSFS's commitment to fostering academic exchange and research dissemination. Membership of faculty in prestigious international scholarly societies further strengthens the university's international profile. The emphasis on international mobility and participation in consortia is consistent with modern research ecosystems and enhances institutional visibility.

The collaborations described appear proportionate and appropriate for a private HEI focused on social sciences and applied research. The blend of basic and applied projects, policy impact, and academic networking suits the size and strategic orientation of VSFS. The partnerships demonstrate effectiveness through applied outcomes, policy influence, and ongoing collaborative initiatives.

Recommendations:

1. **Systematize monitoring and impact assessment.** Implement structured tracking and evaluation mechanisms for collaboration outcomes, including metrics on research impact, policy uptake, and innovation to better demonstrate effectiveness and inform strategic decisions.
2. **Expand international research project portfolio.** Try to increase participation in larger-scale EU Framework Programme projects (e.g., Horizon Europe) to enhance funding diversity and global research visibility.
3. **Strengthen industry and SME engagement.** Build deeper ties with private sector partners, particularly SMEs aligned with VSFS research fields, to foster applied innovation and increase external funding opportunities.
4. **Develop collaborative training and mobility programs.** Use collaborations to enhance joint doctoral and postdoctoral training initiatives, including co-supervision and exchange programs, thus building human capital and research capacity.

5. **Leverage digital collaboration platforms.** Invest in digital tools to facilitate international and cross-institutional collaboration, enabling more dynamic joint research, virtual events, and knowledge sharing.
6. **Enhance communication of collaborative success.** Promote collaboration outcomes through targeted communication campaigns, showcasing societal impact and reinforcing VSFS's reputation as a hub for applied social science research.

STUDIES

4.13 Doctoral studies

Evaluate the described organisation of doctoral studies. Pay attention to the setup and quality of the processes, as well as their effectiveness through basic statistics, such as drop-out rate or data on the future career of graduates.

Rating [1–5]:

3 - Average

Qualitative assessment:

The doctoral studies program at VSFS shows clear advancement since 2020, especially in terms of internationalization, structure, supervision, and infrastructure support. The program remains a 3-year study with defined milestones, including a more detailed supervisor manual (introduced in 2023) that clarifies supervisor responsibilities semester by semester, a positive step in ensuring quality and consistency. The study obligations are well articulated, involving multiple exams, publication requirements, and international activities.

The supervisors are drawn not only from VSFS academic staff but also from other universities and the research field, enhancing interdisciplinarity and potentially improving research quality. The introduction of a supervisor manual and the formalized individual study plans, plus annual assessments, indicate a structured and supportive supervisory environment.

Between 2020 and 2024, 60 doctoral candidates started the doctoral study. However, only 16 of them successfully completed the study and 31 of them dropped out, which means a more than 50% drop-out rate. This remains a concern and points to ongoing challenges in student retention despite improvements in program support.

On the other hand, the doctoral studies experienced a significant improvement in terms of internationalization. During the evaluated period, there were 43 foreign doctoral students, and the international mobility, including participation in ERASMUS+ and research stays abroad, improved as well. The growth of internationalization was supported especially by the introduction of the English mutation of the study program.

The doctoral students are involved in internal and external projects and have access to travel and publication funding. The acquisition of infrastructure funding (OPJAK) to improve research facilities and access to databases and software tools reflects an investment in research quality and student support.

VSFS also monitors graduate career paths through surveys and external data, with evidence of graduates working in academia and notable organizations. The active Alumni and Diamond Clubs contribute positively to graduates' professional integration and networking. For communication and coordination, the appointment of a doctoral studies coordinator to facilitate communication and process management indicates attention to administrative efficiency.

To sum it up, the doctoral program has developed positively. Positive factors are especially the well-structured program with clear supervision and student support, improved

internationalization, stronger infrastructure, active promotion, and career tracking. Negative factors are the high drop-out rate (>50%), unclear financial support details, and possibly limited incentives to improve completion rates.

Recommendations:

1. **Address High Drop-out Rate.** Analyse the reasons behind the drop-outs, and Develop targeted interventions such as mentoring, additional academic support, and early-warning systems.
2. **Enhance Financial Support.** Reassess the scholarship and funding model to better support full-time dedication to research (following the example of higher stipends in Scandinavian countries or Slovakia). Explore paid teaching assistantships or research contracts to reduce students' financial pressures.
3. **Expand International Partnerships.** Formalize joint doctoral programs and increase foreign supervisor involvement. Strengthen ties with partner universities for exchange programs, internships, and co-supervised theses.
4. **Improve Career Tracking & Alumni Engagement.** Enhance systematic data collection on graduate employability and career progression. Increase the role of Alumni and Diamond Clubs in mentoring and networking activities to motivate current students.
5. **Strengthen Research Training & Output.** Increase the number and quality of doctoral student publications and conference participations through workshops and targeted support. Expand access to international research networks and grant opportunities.
6. **Increase Awareness and Recruitment.** Continue and broaden promotion activities, emphasizing the English-language doctoral program and internationalization to attract diverse applicants.
7. **Optimize Supervision Practices.** Monitor implementation of the Supervisor Manual to ensure consistent application. Provide training and development for supervisors to enhance their mentoring and research guidance skills.
8. **Monitor any deficiencies that students might perceive,** even only on an anonymous basis.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

4.14 Implementation of recommendations in Module 4

Evaluate how the HEI has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the HEI has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

VSFS has made noticeable and systematic efforts to address the recommendations from the previous evaluation cycle. The institution shows clear progress in multiple key areas. It has expanded its international cooperation substantially, with partnerships across Europe and beyond. Though it does not yet have a fully international scientific board focused specifically on quality control and R&D&I management, it uses existing bodies (Scientific Board, Internal Assessment Board) with external experts. Language training, international mobility options, and the introduction of a post-doc position aimed at attracting foreign researchers also demonstrate a strong institutional commitment to internationalization.

The university has increased its focus on applied research and succeeded in obtaining international

projects and non-public funding sources. The growing number of contract research projects and the involvement in international grants reflect a positive trajectory in research activity and financial diversification.

In terms of doctoral studies, targeted measures to address previous weaknesses in doctoral completion rates and international student recruitment are visible. The appointment of a doctoral coordinator, creation of a supervisor manual, infrastructural improvements, financial support enhancements, and the expansion of foreign doctoral student enrolment all show a strategic approach to doctoral education quality and support. The establishment and activity of the Alumni and Diamond Clubs further support doctoral students and graduates.

VSFS has also introduced non-financial incentives, career support measures (e.g., sabbaticals, re-adaptation after parental leave), and made visible progress in gender balance at leadership and academic staff levels. While it lacks a formalized international recruitment system, it ensures open and non-discriminatory recruitment and benefits from Erasmus+ staff mobility programs. However, the continuing aging of academic staff presents a serious challenge.

Overall, the university has demonstrated responsiveness to past recommendations with tangible actions and some positive outcomes. However, some elements remain works in progress, such as the establishment of a dedicated international scientific authority and a comprehensive international recruitment framework. Also the problems with the age structure of the academic staff prevail.

Recommendations:

1. **Establish a fully-international scientific board focused on R&D&I quality evaluation.** Formalize and expand the international scientific academic authority to actively oversee research quality, international cooperation strategies, and innovation management. This would strengthen the institution's global research profile and quality assurance.
2. **Develop a formal international recruitment policy.** create clear, transparent procedures and guidelines specifically tailored for international recruitment to attract diverse and high-calibre academic staff systematically. This should include outreach strategies, visa support, and cultural integration assistance.
3. **Expand applied research and funding sources.** Continue to diversify funding by pursuing additional international grants, industry partnerships, and applied research projects. Establish dedicated support services to assist academic staff and doctoral students in grant writing and project management.
4. **Enhance language training and internationalization efforts.** Increase the proportion of courses taught in English and promote further language skill development among academic staff to better support international students and collaborations.
5. **Strengthen doctoral student support and monitoring.** Build upon the current infrastructure and supervisory improvements by implementing regular monitoring of doctoral student progress, identifying risk factors for dropouts, and providing tailored academic and career support.
6. **Leverage alumni networks more systematically.** Further develop the Alumni and Diamond Clubs into strategic platforms that actively mentor current students, promote employability, and facilitate academic and business partnerships.
7. **Supplement the academic staff with younger academicians.** Try to attract younger academicians from other institutions in Czech republic or abroad, or try to motivate the PhD students to continue in their career at VSFS. This should help to address the issues with the deteriorating age structure of the academic staff.

MODULE 4 RATING

MODULE 4 – SUMMARY EVALUATION

After evaluating each indicator, please provide an overall evaluation of Module 4. Assess the overall state of the research and institutional environment and the quality of the internal processes of the HEI. Consider whether and how the set processes contribute to the fulfilment of the HEI's mission and vision.

The aggregate grade is determined in accordance with the rules of the Methodology HEI2025+ as a simple average of the scores for each indicator.

INDICATOR	RATING [1–5]
4.1 Organisation and management of R&D&I	4 - Very good
4.2 System of support for a quality R&D&I environment and incentive measures for quality science	3 - Average
4.3 Quality control system for R&D&I environment	3 - Average
4.4 Sustainability and resilience of R&D&I	3 - Average
4.5 Structure of human resources	3 - Average
4.6 Academic and Research Careers	3 - Average
4.7 Gender equality measures	3 - Average
4.8 Mobility of academic and research staff (including sectoral and inter-sectoral mobility)	3 - Average
4.9 Research infrastructure	4 - Very good
4.10 Budget and structure of financial resources	4 - Very good
4.11 Rules for the use of institutional support for the LCDRO	4 - Very good
4.12 Important collaborations in R&D&I	4 - Very good
4.13 Doctoral studies	3 - Average
4.14 Implementation of recommendations in Module 4	4 - Very good
AVERAGE RATING	3 - Average
GRADE [A–D]	C

Summary assessment:

Compared to the previous evaluation period, VSFS has experienced improvements in numerous areas. What is positive the university has shown the will to improve and addressed the majority of recommendations from the previous evaluation report.

The university has diversify the R&D&I funding sources, it is involved in a broader variety of national and international research grant schemes, it further developed the mechanisms for support of international mobility of the academic staff, re-focused on applied research, adopted clear and effective governance mechanisms, managed to internationalize its doctoral study program, further supported the broad spectre of collaborations with business entities, etc.

However, some issues persist. Worth mentioning are especially the high drop-out rates of the PhD

students, aging academic staff, or missing strategy of recruitment of foreign academicians.

Summary recommendations:

1. **Enhance doctoral studies support.** Focus on improving doctoral completion rates through targeted mentoring, progress monitoring, and expanded financial and infrastructural support. Increase international recruitment efforts to diversify the doctoral student body further.
2. **Strengthen international scientific governance.** Formalize the establishment of an international scientific board dedicated to RD&I quality assurance and strategic research development.
3. **Develop formal international recruitment policies.** Create dedicated procedures for attracting and integrating international academic staff to boost the institution's global competitiveness.
4. **Expand applied research funding and partnerships.** Build capacity for securing diverse funding sources and deepen collaborations with industry and international partners.
5. **Increase the volume Courses and Materials in Foreign Languages.** Support further internationalization of teaching and research by expanding English-taught programs and language learning opportunities.
6. **Enhance international appearances** at conferences and in collaborations, also beyond Europe.
7. **Address the age structure of academic staff.** Adopt measures for attracting younger academicians, in order to improve the age structure of the academic staff. Support the career progress of the existing members of the academic staff.

MODULE 5 – STRATEGY AND POLICIES

5.1 Mission and vision of the evaluated institution in R&D&I

Evaluate the described vision and general mission of the university emphasizing R&D&I (in context of its educational function and the educational policy strategy of the state or the relevant ministry for higher education. Compare the defined mission with reality. The evaluation should consider how the mission and vision of the HEI has been fulfilled in the past five-year period and whether the vision for the next five-year period is adequately set and realistically achievable.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The R&D&I mission and vision of VSFS are aligned with the national educational policy. The university wants to be a respected, independent research institution with the goal of producing new, beneficial knowledge disseminated broadly. The mission aligns well with the institution's educational function and the broader strategic goals of the state's higher education policy. The strategic documents ("2021+ Strategic Plan," "Concept for Research and Development 2021-2027," and annual implementation plans) show a commitment to increasing research quality, internationalization, and interdisciplinary collaboration, especially in emerging fields like computer and information sciences.

Compared to the previous evaluation period, notable progress in several areas has been reached. The vision explicitly references tackling global challenges (e.g., financial stability, digital economy, Industry 4.0, cybersecurity), showing an alignment with contemporary research priorities and international research consortia participation. The strategic intent to increase external funding and international research involvement is clearly articulated, along with the provision of administrative

support to boost research and publishing productivity. The vision to adjust disciplinary capacities, specifically increasing focus on Computer and Information Sciences and Media and Communication, suggests a dynamic, forward-looking approach that adapts to evolving research fields. Concrete measures supporting doctoral students, including financial incentives and conference participation, highlight an emphasis on nurturing future researchers, a positive development from the previous evaluation. Research, teaching, and knowledge transfer have been better connected with activities such as conferences, workshops, and contract research projects, indicating good fulfilment of the mission in the past five years.

However, the mission and vision still remain somewhat broad and aspirational, and while strategic plans are clearly formulated and activities implemented, there is limited evidence of measurable, concrete targets or benchmarks for impact and internationalization achievements.

VSFS has fulfilled its mission well in the recent period and set a realistic and relevant vision for the next five years, with clear intentions to expand disciplinary capacity in digital and media fields, maintain excellence in social sciences, and deepen international engagement. However, the mission and vision lack some more precise measurable targets, especially regarding international research output and doctoral program outcomes.

Recommendations:

1. **Set specific, measurable goals for internationalization and research impact.** Define clear, quantifiable targets for international research projects, foreign student and staff recruitment, and publication in high-impact international journals. This will sharpen strategic focus and facilitate progress monitoring.
2. **Set specific goals and timelines** for increasing external research funding and applied research outputs.
3. **Translate strategic capacity shifts** (e.g., increases in ICT and media-related research) into actionable investment plans, staff development strategies, and interdisciplinary collaborations.
4. **Consolidate and expand doctoral program innovations.** The recent enhancements to doctoral support are commendable. VSFS should now formalize these practices into a comprehensive doctoral development framework, including regular review of thesis quality, mentorship programs, and international co-supervision.
5. **Strengthen interdisciplinary and applied research collaboration.** Building on the close connection with professionals and recent contract research successes, VSFS should foster more interdisciplinary projects, especially at the intersection of social sciences, law, and digital technologies. Expanding partnerships with industry and public sector organizations, both nationally and internationally, will enhance the practical impact of research and increase external funding opportunities.
6. **Intensify efforts to recruit foreign academic staff and doctoral students,** as well as foreign students in research programs, to foster a more international research environment.
7. **Increase participation in and leadership of** international research consortia and networks.
8. **Strengthen integration of research and teaching.** Promote greater utilization of doctoral theses and cutting-edge research outputs in the curriculum to enhance research-led teaching. Increase incentives for academic staff to integrate research findings into pedagogical innovations.
9. **Improve strategic communication of mission fulfilment.** Develop and publish regular, transparent progress reports on the fulfilment of the R&D&I mission and vision, highlighting key achievements and challenges. Use these reports to support internal motivation and external stakeholder engagement.

- 10. Support capacity building in emerging fields.** Allocate resources to build disciplinary capacities in Computer and Information Sciences and Media and Communication as planned, ensuring recruitment and infrastructure meet targets. Encourage interdisciplinary research bridging social sciences with natural sciences and technology.
- 11. Enhance visibility of mission impact by producing an annual R&D&I impact report** that illustrates how institutional research contributes to addressing global and regional.
- 12. Ensure continuous alignment between the R&D&I mission and national/international policy frameworks,** including the Czech RIS3 strategy and EU research agendas.

5.2 Research and development objectives

Evaluate the set goals of the HEI in both the area of R&D&I and the development of the HEI as an institution. Consider whether the goals are adequately established in relation to the size and type of the HEI, as well as its mission and vision, and whether they are achievable within the proposed timeframe.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

VSFS has maintained and further detailed its primary objective to uphold its status as a research organization actively engaged in research projects supported by both domestic and foreign sources. The goals remain aligned with the institution's mission and vision, particularly in focusing on economics, business, law, public administration, and related fields, with a clear intention to tackle global challenges such as financial stability, Industry 4.0, and cybersecurity. The strategy also emphasizes internationalization, quality publishing, ethical standards, and robust support for doctoral and early-career researchers.

Compared to 2020, the 2023 objectives are more comprehensive and operationalized, incorporating:

- Multi-source funding strategies combining ministry support, external grants, contract research, and supplementary activities.
- Clear actions for promoting research quality (regular evaluation and financial incentives for high-impact publishing, especially in international open access journals).
- A strong focus on infrastructure, including library resources and electronic databases, aimed at supporting research excellence.
- Measures to involve doctoral students actively and support early career researchers with fellowships and mobility.
- Emphasis on increasing internationalization through attracting foreign researchers, participation in global consortia, and involvement of foreign experts in doctoral advisory boards.
- Improvements in administrative and digital infrastructure to reduce bureaucratic barriers.
- Proactive strategies for collaboration with business and public institutions.

These objectives are ambitious yet appear realistically aligned with the size and type of VSFS, a focused social sciences university with an emerging capacity in natural sciences. The detailed list of concrete actions shows a mature strategic approach and awareness of key factors enabling the institution to meet its research and development goals within the proposed timeframe.

A potential limitation is that while the goals and initiatives are exhaustive, the report does not explicitly specify quantitative targets or timelines for many of the objectives, which could help

measure progress more precisely. Moreover, the objectives are numerous and sometimes fragmented. This may make the monitoring of progress, and effective resource allocation more difficult.

Recommendations:

1. **Group objectives into strategic priorities with measurable KPIs.** To improve strategic management and communication, VSFS should organize its many objectives under a few overarching goals (such as research excellence, internationalization, and talent development) with an achievable number of objectives. For each, define specific, measurable KPIs (e.g., number of international projects, publications in indexed journals, doctoral student mobility rates) and set annual targets. This will facilitate progress tracking and resource allocation.
2. **Strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.** Establish a regular review process for all R&D&I activities, using the grouped objectives and KPIs. Annual progress reports should be prepared and discussed at the institutional level.
3. **Enhance Internationalization and Interdisciplinary Collaboration.** While internationalization is a stated goal, VSFS should set more concrete targets for international research partnerships, foreign staff and student recruitment, and joint publications.
4. **Set clear quantitative targets and timelines.** Define measurable KPIs for research outputs (e.g., number of international projects, publications in WoS journals), funding diversification, doctoral student participation, and international staff/researcher recruitment with target dates.
5. **Enhance collaboration with the business sector.** Further develop cooperation frameworks with industry partners to increase contract research and knowledge transfer activities.
6. **Prioritize Research Capacity Building in Emerging Fields.** Allocate specific resources and incentives to accelerate growth in Computer and Information Sciences and Media and Communication disciplines as planned.
7. **Expand Doctoral and Early Career Researcher Support.** Continue to build competitive support schemes and mobility programs for doctoral candidates and post-docs, targeting increased international participation.
8. **Digital Transformation and Administrative Simplification.** Continue investing in digital tools to streamline internal processes and reduce administrative burdens for researchers.
9. **Implement structured support systems for academic staff development.** This includes launching formal mentoring programs for early-career researchers and doctoral students, as well as regularly evaluating the impact of junior and post-doctoral positions on career progression and research productivity.
10. **Boost public and academic recognition of the university's research** by producing annual impact reports and organizing interdisciplinary events focused on strategic research themes such as cybersecurity, fintech, and AI.

5.3 Institutional instruments and measures for the implementation of the research and development strategy

Evaluate the described institutional and strategic instruments for the fulfilment of the research and development objectives regarding how they will contribute to the fulfilment of these objectives. In your evaluation, also pay attention to the possible absence of key instruments or measures.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

The 2023 report presents a very detailed and structured set of institutional instruments and measures for implementing the R&D strategy of VSFS. Compared to 2020, the description is more transparent and comprehensive, including:

- **Tools to motivate academic staff**, with emphasis on research quality, regular evaluations with clear criteria, reward systems for high-level publications, and mechanisms for reimbursing publication fees in prestigious international journals.
- **Optimization and effective use of public funding**, encouraging student and early-career researcher participation, incentivizing external project proposals, and prioritizing high-quality open access publications.
- **Professional support for R&D execution**, through dedicated structures such as the Department of Research and Development, the Specialized Library, internal Publishing, and the University Research Centre providing technical, administrative, and organizational support.
- **Numerous internal regulations and directives**, updated and specific (e.g., motivation directives, rules for funding allocation, evaluation of scientific activities, gender equality policy, code of ethics, etc.).
- **Regular evaluation tools** such as “Personal Records,” annual doctoral student assessments, monitoring and peer review of internal projects and publications.

These instruments demonstrate a clear commitment and capacity of VSFS to translate the R&D strategy into concrete actions, with attention to quality, transparency, skill development, and internationalization.

However, as in 2020, there is no explicit description of a formal, systematic mechanism for periodic review and adaptive modification of these instruments (e.g., benchmarking, feedback loops), nor a medium-to-long-term strategic planning based on well-defined performance indicators. There is also no explicit strategy for focusing on priority research areas to avoid dispersing resources and to concentrate efforts on high-impact topics. Moreover, several strategic tools remain only partially implemented or are still in development, particularly those related to internationalization (e.g., post-doc recruitment, involvement of foreign experts), digitalization, and the safe use of AI.

Recommendations:

1. **Prioritize and sequence implementation.** Group tools and measures into strategic clusters (e.g., internationalization, digitalization, research quality) and set clear timelines and responsibilities to ensure systematic, staged implementation and avoid fragmentation.
2. **Establish an annual review process for the R&D strategy**, incorporating foresight exercises to anticipate future research trends and compliance areas, including AI governance, research security, and open science mandates.
3. **Adapt internal support systems to facilitate participation in key international programs**

such as Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, and EU Missions. Provide project incubation, proposal development coaching, and matchmaking services to increase international success rates.

4. **Launch pilot interdisciplinary labs** focused on emerging themes such as fintech, smart cities, sustainability, and AI governance. Provide seed funding and cross-disciplinary mentoring to foster innovation across academic and applied domains.
5. **Define clear, objective evaluation criteria.** Establish transparent, quantifiable standards for assessing research outputs (such as impact factor, journal quartile, or international collaboration metrics) to guide rewards and career advancement.
6. **Strengthen monitoring and feedback loops.** Introduce regular, formal reviews of all institutional tools and measures, with mechanisms for stakeholder feedback and agile adjustment, ensuring that partially implemented or planned initiatives are completed and aligned with evolving strategic priorities.
7. **Define more specific and transparent criteria for incentive allocation,** for example, by integrating bibliometric impact (Impact Factor, WoS quartiles, citations) into quality assessments.
8. **Plan and communicate a resource-focusing strategy,** setting priorities based on scientific impact and social/economic relevance, to avoid dispersing efforts across too many fronts.
9. **Intensify internationalization efforts for researchers,** with specific incentives to attract foreign post-docs and enhance participation in international consortia.
10. **Improve internal communication on research opportunities and administrative procedures,** possibly through dedicated digital platforms and continuous staff training.

5.4 Implementation of recommendations in Module 5

Evaluate how the HEI has reflected the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the IEP, if applicable.

If the HEI has not been evaluated before, the indicator will be marked as N/A – Not Applicable.

Rating [1–5]:

4 - Very good

Qualitative assessment:

VSFS has demonstrated substantial progress in implementing the recommendations from the previous evaluation, especially in areas related to internationalization and research quality. The institution secured three international projects and attracted 43 foreign doctoral students, reflecting positive momentum in global engagement. Although the recruitment of foreign academics has yet to be fully successful, concrete steps are underway with post-doc positions being filled by foreign scholars.

Efforts to improve staff language skills have been well executed through expanded and diversified language course offerings, including international programs. Doctoral education quality has been enhanced by aligning dissertation topics with strategic research areas, introducing a clear "Supervisor's Manual," and systematic evaluations via the Doctoral Subject Area Board.

The strategic plan now explicitly includes international collaboration tools such as participation in international programs, support for external project applications, fostering interdisciplinary research, and prioritizing high-quality open access publishing. Institutional partnerships with numerous universities and businesses across Europe and beyond have been established, supporting research collaboration and mobility.

Specific incentives and infrastructure improvements for doctoral students, such as financial support for conferences and publications and creation of a dedicated research workspace, further

underline VSFS's commitment to research development.

VSFS also strengthened the evaluation framework for R&D activities, introducing clear criteria for high-quality publishing (AIS, SJR quartiles) and regular internal assessments of research outputs and academic staff performance. The strategic plan and R&D instruments are continuously reviewed and updated based on feedback and recommendations.

Nonetheless, the absence of a fully international scientific board dedicated exclusively to R&D management somewhat limits strategic oversight and international benchmarking, although VSFS compensates partially through external experts in its existing boards.

VSFS shows clear and effective implementation of past recommendations with evident advancements in internationalization, research quality, and doctoral education. The efforts are well documented and structured. However, the lack of a fully international R&D scientific board and still limited success in recruiting foreign academics indicate room for improvement before reaching an "Outstanding" level.

Recommendations:

1. **Establish a fully international scientific advisory board dedicated specifically to R&D management** to provide strategic guidance, international benchmarking, and enhance global research visibility.
2. **Accelerate recruitment efforts of foreign academic staff**, potentially by developing targeted programs and incentives, to enhance diversity and international expertise.
3. **Continue expanding international project acquisition**, focusing on strategic partnerships aligned with VSFS's priority research areas.
4. **Formalize a structured feedback and impact evaluation system** for implemented recommendations to monitor effectiveness and adapt strategies dynamically.
5. **Further enhance support for doctoral students**, including expanding infrastructure (e.g., audiovisual classrooms), career development workshops, and international mobility opportunities.
6. **Promote greater integration of interdisciplinary and applied research projects** in collaboration with industry partners to increase societal and economic impact.
7. **Develop clear impact indicators** such as citation growth, international co-authorship, and doctoral completion rates to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented recommendations. Introduce a mid-term review cycle to adjust strategies and ensure continuous improvement.
8. **According to the possibilities and preferences of individual research fields**, focus on collaborations with high-performing universities in Western Europe, North America, and the Asia-Pacific region. Based on the successful cooperation achieved in the previous period in research and exchange projects, continue to build networks in Central and Eastern Europe. Prioritize partners with strong research infrastructure and transparent evaluation systems.

MODULE 5 RATING

MODULE 5 – SUMMARY EVALUATION

After evaluating each indicator, please provide an overall evaluation of Module 5. Evaluate the overall setting of the HEI's strategic objectives and development plan.

The aggregate grade is determined in accordance with the rules of the Methodology HEI2025+ as a simple average of the scores for each indicator.

INDICATOR	RATING [1–5]
5.1 Mission and vision of the evaluated institution in R&D&I	4 - Very good
5.2 Research and development objectives	4 - Very good
5.3 Institutional instruments and measures for the implementation of the research and development strategy	4 - Very good
5.4 Implementation of recommendations in Module 5	4 - Very good
AVERAGE RATING	4 - Very good
GRADE [A–D]	B

Summary assessment:

The University of Finance and Administration maintains a very good level of performance across all four assessed criteria related to its Research, Development, and Innovation activities. The main positives are clear mission and vision, clearly aligned with broader national and international strategies; clear, quality-driven, and internationally oriented research objectives that reflect contemporary trends in science and society; a wide range of institutional measures to implement the research strategy, including incentives for high-quality publications, systematic evaluation processes, support mechanisms for grant applications, etc.; efficient implementation of recommendations from the previous evaluation report, especially in the field of international collaboration, improvement of doctoral education quality, and support of early-career researchers. However, there are also several deficiencies, such as the missing international scientific advisory board dedicated to R&D&I oversight. In general, VSFS shows a solid institutional foundation and commitment to advancing its research and innovation agenda. The consistent “very good” ratings reflect effective strategic planning, institutional support, and adaptive implementation practices. The university's ability to integrate previous evaluation feedback further demonstrates its dedication to quality enhancement and international competitiveness.

Summary recommendations:

1. **Develop and formalize an international scientific advisory board** to provide external expertise and strategic guidance, reinforcing VSFS's international research standing.
2. **Enhance recruitment strategies for international academic staff and researchers** to increase diversity and global integration within VSFS's research community.
3. **Refine research priorities to focus on selected thematic areas or geographic regions** where VSFS can achieve distinctive impact and recognition.
4. **Continue strengthening doctoral training and early-career researcher support**, including infrastructure improvements and increased opportunities for international mobility.
5. **Maintain regular review and adaptation of institutional instruments and strategies** to stay aligned with evolving research trends and stakeholder expectations.

OVERALL EVALUATION IN MODULES 1 TO 5

OVERALL EVALUATION

Provide a summary evaluation of the HEI as a whole across all five modules. Justify your evaluation and highlight the main strengths and/or weaknesses of the evaluated HEI. The overall grade is determined according to the rules of the "Methodology VŠ2025+".

MODULE	MODULE WEIGHT	GRADE [A–D]
MODULE 1 and 2	50 %	C
MODULE 3	30 %	C
MODULE 4	10 %	C
MODULE 5	10 %	B
OVERALL RATING		C – Average

Qualitative assessment:

Overall, the R&D&I activities of the University of Finance and Administration, and their societal impacts, are at a good level, and in numerous areas, the university achieved notable improvements compared to the previous evaluation period. Based on the Self-evaluation report, as well as the interactions during the on-site visit, the International Evaluation Panel was able to identify several strengths and weaknesses, and to formulate numerous recommendations for further improvements. They can be found in reports for modules M3, M4, and M5.

To focus only on the most important points, among the main strengths belongs the ability of the university to disseminate its research results via various traditional as well as modern communication channels. It, along with the inclusion of the academic staff members in various advisory boards, international societies, and editorial boards, helps to increase the national as well as international visibility of the university and its faculties. Another positive is that the research is focused on internationally relevant contemporary trends in science and society. Moreover, the quality of research outputs is supported by incentives for high-quality publications, systematic evaluation processes, support mechanisms for grant applications, etc.

It is also important to note that the university has shown the will and the ability to improve and to listen to the recommendations provided by the previous evaluation panel. It is possible to expect further improvements in the future.

Among the main weaknesses that should be addressed are the worsening age structure of the academic staff, high drop-out rates of the PhD students, a missing strategy of recruitment of foreign academicians, and a lower level of participation in big international research projects.

The University of Finance and Administration is in a specific position, as in Modules 1 & 2, it received a grade of C/D. After a thorough evaluation, the International Evaluation Panel awarded the university a grade C in M3, a grade C in M4, and a grade B in M5. Therefore, given specific weights awarded to individual modules, if the overall rating is calculated with a grade C for M1 & M2, the resulting overall grade is C. However, if it is calculated with a grade D for M1 & M2, the overall grade is D. After we thoroughly investigated the Self-evaluation report, visited the university and communicated with the university and faculty managements, academic staff, and students during the on-site visit, we prefer the University of Finance and Administration to be awarded the overall rating

of “C – Average”. We realize that the University of Finance and Administration is not a leading research institution in the Czech Republic; however, we recognize its societal impact, its public outreach, and its close ties with other research, public, and private entities, as well as the potential for further improvement. The university has already shown a notable improvement in numerous areas since the last evaluation period, and it is moving in the right direction. Therefore, the overall grade of C is reasonable.

Recommendations:

A detailed and relatively exhausting list of recommendations from the International Evaluation Panel can be found in reports for modules M3, M4, and M5. However, in general, it is possible to recommend the university: to seek for more international partnerships, especially to participate in big international projects (such as Horizon), to increase the volume of quality publications, especially research articles in high-quality journals (preferably Q1 and Q2 in WoS and Scopus), to rejuvenate the academic staff, to identify the reasons for high PhD student drop-out rates and to eliminate them, to develop formal recruitment policies, including a recruitment policy for foreign academicians, and to assemble an international scientific advisory board to provide external expertise and strategic guidance.

OVERALL EVALUATION IN MODULES 1 TO 5

OVERALL EVALUATION

Provide a summary evaluation of the HEI as a whole across all five modules. Justify your evaluation and highlight the main strengths and/or weaknesses of the evaluated HEI. The overall grade is determined according to the rules of the "Methodology VŠ2025+".

MODULE	MODULE WEIGHT	GRADE [A–D]
MODULE 1 and 2	50 %	D
MODULE 3	30 %	C
MODULE 4	10 %	C
MODULE 5	10 %	B
OVERALL RATING		D – Bellow average

Qualitative assessment:

Overall, the R&D&I activities of the University of Finance and Administration, and their societal impacts, are at a good level, and in numerous areas, the university achieved notable improvements compared to the previous evaluation period. Based on the Self-evaluation report, as well as the interactions during the on-site visit, the International Evaluation Panel was able to identify several strengths and weaknesses, and to formulate numerous recommendations for further improvements. They can be found in reports for modules M3, M4, and M5.

To focus only on the most important points, among the main strengths belongs the ability of the university to disseminate its research results via various traditional as well as modern communication channels. It, along with the inclusion of the academic staff members in various advisory boards, international societies, and editorial boards, helps to increase the national as well as international visibility of the university and its faculties. Another positive is that the research is focused on

internationally relevant contemporary trends in science and society. Moreover, the quality of research outputs is supported by incentives for high-quality publications, systematic evaluation processes, support mechanisms for grant applications, etc.

It is also important to note that the university has shown the will and the ability to improve and to listen to the recommendations provided by the previous evaluation panel. It is possible to expect further improvements in the future.

Among the main weaknesses that should be addressed are the worsening age structure of the academic staff, high drop-out rates of the PhD students, a missing strategy of recruitment of foreign academicians, and a lower level of participation in big international research projects.

The University of Finance and Administration is in a specific position, as in Modules 1 & 2, it received a grade of C/D. After a thorough evaluation, the International Evaluation Panel awarded the university a grade C in M3, a grade C in M4, and a grade B in M5. Therefore, given specific weights awarded to individual modules, if the overall rating is calculated with a grade C for M1 & M2, the resulting overall grade is C. However, if it is calculated with a grade D for M1 & M2, the overall grade is D. After we thoroughly investigated the Self-evaluation report, visited the university and communicated with the university and faculty managements, academic staff, and students during the on-site visit, we prefer the University of Finance and Administration to be awarded the overall rating of “C – Average”. We realize that the University of Finance and Administration is not a leading research institution in the Czech Republic; however, we recognize its societal impact, its public outreach, and its close ties with other research, public, and private entities, as well as the potential for further improvement. The university has already shown a notable improvement in numerous areas since the last evaluation period, and it is moving in the right direction. Therefore, the overall grade of C is reasonable.

Recommendations:

A detailed and relatively exhausting list of recommendations from the International Evaluation Panel can be found in reports for modules M3, M4, and M5. However, in general, it is possible to recommend the university: to seek for more international partnerships, especially to participate in big international projects (such as Horizon), to increase the volume of quality publications, especially research articles in high-quality journals (preferably Q1 and Q2 in WoS and Scopus), to rejuvenate the academic staff, to identify the reasons for high PhD student drop-out rates and to eliminate them, to develop formal recruitment policies, including a recruitment policy for foreign academicians, and to assemble an international scientific advisory board to provide external expertise and strategic guidance.