

Competency-Based Professional Development of Academic Staff

David Kryštof
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1 Introduction

In recent years, we have faced numerous social and economic changes that have had a direct impact on both the social and professional lives of individuals. Education can be considered the most effective tool for mobilising human resources in economics. Adult education, within the andragogy – the science that studies the processes of training and education in adults – is perceived as a key factor in providing a specific perspective on social issues (cf. Bartoňková & Šimek, 2002).

Education and training can have various meanings – personal, content-based, institutional, and socio-economic (Průcha, Walterová, Mareš, 2013). All definitions emphasise the personal development of individuals, which is closely linked to fulfilling their needs. Many of these definitions are directly connected to the process of education, which is essential concerning the concept of a learning society or, more precisely, a knowledge-based society. The personal dimension of education, as noted by the renowned management theorist Peter Drucker (2002), points out that knowledge, unlike money, is not anonymous. Knowledge is always embodied in a specific person who creates, preserves, improves, and applies it.

The need for education is often hidden and not always easily identifiable. Individuals may not be aware that education can contribute to solving their problems. Yet, education is one of the ways to change one's social status, and thus provides options for further development and better career opportunities. In this context, Beneš (2008) notes that the level of education attained is not a natural status, such as age, gender, origin, or race. Education is an achieved status, similar to occupational classification, cultural level, income, or political orientation. An adult, if motivated and possessing aspirations and abilities, can significantly influence their educational path.

This monograph focuses primarily on the interaction between an adult working in a specific professional sphere, who has particular educational needs, and is motivated for further development, and an educational institution operating within a specific institutional, economic, and political environment, striving to meet these needs. In addition to empirical evidence, the monograph also attempts to integrate insights from scientific and applied disciplines such as andragogy, economics, management, and human resource management.

Universities are examples of learning organisations that use their activities and reflection on experience to improve their effectiveness. They adapt their organisational models and processes to changing social, economic, and technological conditions and introduce innovative approaches in all areas of their operation. Development in the academic environment is becoming increasingly complex and multifaceted, and requires more knowledge and skills (cf. Winter et al., 2017; Linqvist, 2018). The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education, Youth

and Sports of the Czech Republic (MEYS CR) for Higher Education for the period from 2021 outlines six priority strategic goals, elaborated into specific measures. Progress in these areas is achieved through strategic capacities at both national and institutional levels. One of the expected measures is ensuring access for all relevant staff to professional support and opportunities for continuous development of their competencies (Strategic Plan, 2020). Experts such as Veteška and Tureckiová (2020) have been addressing the issue of competencies for a long time.

The beginning of an academic career is challenging for any individual. Constant pressure requires excellence in various areas and skills, with particular emphasis on contextual competencies (Matthews et al., 2014; Ragupathi, 2021). Discussions about the competencies of academic staff, particularly in teaching and research, have been ongoing for many years, and new requirements are emerging not only in the Czech Republic (Rončević et al., 2016; Deaker et al., 2016). That is especially relevant for early-career teachers and those using new educational technologies for the first time or innovating the content or organisation of study programmes. The development of pedagogical competencies (see Trabalíková & Hrebeňárová, 2022) can be linked to staff evaluation and career advancement or established as a requirement for specific groups.

In the academic setting, activities aimed at competency development are gaining importance for doctoral students and early-career researchers. These activities support the ability to manage one's work, career growth, experience sharing, and teaching skills (Skakni et al., 2022; Popkochev et al., 2019). At the same time, many universities evaluate the quality of doctoral programmes to enhance student competencies (Verderame et al., 2018; Lopez, 2021). The Strategic Plan of MEYS CR addresses these aspects and outlines trends that higher education institutions respond to in their strategic plans, thereby implementing measures to strengthen academic staff competencies, starting with doctoral students (for more details, see Adamec & Kryštof, 2022).

At some universities, academic staff are trained in cultural awareness, language skills, leadership, career planning, communication, presentation skills, project management, statistics, conflict resolution, work-life balance, publication strategies, project financing, ethics, and culture. They use a wide range of educational methods and forms, including seminars, workshops, individual feedback and supervision from experienced colleagues, or coaching from professionals and counselling by internal or external experts.

The competencies of university teachers include not only professional (scientific) expertise but also pedagogical skills essential for effectively transferring subject knowledge to students and motivating them to develop a more in-depth interest in the field. Many universities, not only in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, have long regarded this issue as crucial and approached it systematically. Nowadays, it is standard practice for modern universities to have departments responsible for

the staff education, professional, and personal development in a broad spectrum of areas, including teaching and research skills.

It is essential for university management to be constantly aware that managing and leading people is a fundamental activity. Higher education institutions have long focused on the professionalisation of activities related to planning, selecting, and recruiting employees. Equally important is the care for all staff, which includes regular feedback, appropriate remuneration, access to continuing education and development opportunities, and creating conditions for high-quality working relationships. This trend is gaining significance in the Czech Republic, particularly in the context of the prestigious HR Excellence in Research Award, awarded by the European Commission for outstanding care of human resources in the scientific environment.

This monograph aims to contribute to the understanding and development of key aspects of adult education in the academic environment, particularly in light of the need for continuous competency development. We believe that combining theoretical and practical approaches will provide useful insights for improving educational processes and support the effective development of academic staff. In this way, we seek to promote not only the professional but also the personal growth of those involved in shaping the future of the education system.

2 Lifelong Learning and Adult Education

Today, more than ever, it is true that what we learn will not be sufficient for the rest of our lives. Lifelong learning, particularly in the field of adult education, has become an integral part of our lives in the 21st century. We must continually keep up to acquire the latest, most up-to-date knowledge to remain competitive in the labour market. According to Rabušic and Rabušicová (2008), we are a so-called society of permanently learning individuals – a learning society. Leading Czech educators Průcha, Walterová, and Mareš (2013) also assume that the idea of lifelong learning has a long-term perspective. Its implementation is supported by the accessibility of all levels of the education system and a wide range of various forms of further education. At the same time, this trend is reflected in the content of many documents and surveys published, both at national and international levels, including those by the European Union, OECD, UNESCO, and others.

2.1 The Concept of Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning and lifelong education are prominent trends today. The term was first used in 1970 at a UNESCO conference and subsequently found its way into many political and programme documents. Eventually, it found its place in science, particularly educational sciences (Jarvis, 2004). UNESCO further developed the concept in a report titled *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*, produced by a group led by Edgar Faure (1972). More than fifty years ago, Faure already emphasised a holistic view of a human being and stressed that the goal of education is the physical, intellectual, emotional, and ethical integration of the individual (Hloušková and Pol, 2008).

In the 1970s, the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD) also took an interest in this area and included the concept of lifelong learning in the general debate about economic, social, and other contexts. The topic of lifelong learning experienced a certain renaissance in the 1990s, particularly in economic terms. For example, in 1996, UNESCO released another report titled *Learning: The Treasure Within* (Delors, 1996), which relates lifelong learning to personal development of an individual.

According to Šerák (2009), learning in this document is based on four pillars: (1) learning to know, (2) learning to do, (3) learning to live together, (4) learning to be. In 1996, the OECD also published a report *Lifelong Learning for All: Meeting of the Education Committee at Ministerial Level*. It emphasises the partnership between businesses, social partners, public administration and learners. That same year, the

White Paper on Education and Training was released, and 1996 was declared the *European Year of Lifelong Learning*. This document also introduced, for the first time, the concept of recognising acquired knowledge and skills (Šerák, 2009).

The recently deceased founding figure of adult education in the Czech Republic, Zdeněk Palán (1997), defined a learning society as one that ensures universal access to education without discrimination, where citizens are motivated, encouraged, and supported by all public institutions, and where educational progress is certified and recognised by society as a fundamental element. He also emphasised that the basis of this philosophy is the individual's right to personal development and growth.

According to Palán and Langer (2008), lifelong learning has brought about a shift in how education is viewed – connecting all learning opportunities within and outside the formal educational system into a single whole, enabling transitions between education and employment. It also allows individuals to gain comparable competencies and qualifications at any point in life and through various paths. The core of the lifelong learning concept is human development. Today's world is characterised by an overwhelming influx of information that our cognitive capacities cannot fully manage, which also impacts educational systems.

However, it is not a question of studying continuously throughout one's life, but of being constantly ready to learn. Lifelong learning emphasises individual activity that does not necessarily take the form of organised education. A crucial aspect is the need for education stemming from internal and external motivation. In a way, this concept builds on the philosophy of Jan Amos Comenius and his idea of lifelong education – in childhood, boyhood, adolescence, youth, manhood and old age (Mrhač, 2005).

Over the last three decades, the main current has been the so-called *Lisbon Process*, which sets the main direction for the European Union. Its priority is improving the quality and efficiency of member states' education systems and access to education (MEYS, 2007; 2007a). It is followed by the *Copenhagen Process*, addressing vocational education and training, and the *Bologna Process* aimed at tertiary education. These ideas were formalised in the widely known *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, which outlines six core principles: new basic skills for all, more investment in human resources, innovation in teaching and learning, valuing learning, rethinking guidance and counselling, and bringing learning closer to home (cf. European Commission, 2000).

2.2 Lifelong Learning and Professional Development

Many people change jobs or professions during their lives, and they are, therefore, forced to complement their education, knowledge, or skills, in general, to acquire

new, often different competencies than those gained in their initial education. Further education is thus undoubtedly a factor influencing productivity and competitiveness. Further education is generally divided into *professional*, *non-formal*, and *civic education*. This monograph primarily focuses on professional education.

Průcha and Veteška (2012) define professional development as all vocational education during one's working life after completing initial (formal) education and training for a profession. Its goal is to develop the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviours necessary for the labour market. It also aims to maintain consistency between subjective qualifications (an individual's real ability) and objective qualifications (the demands of a specific profession). In the Czech Republic, several systems of further professional development exist, each with its specific legislation and terminology. The best-known include:

- pedagogical staff further education;
- public administration officials' training;
- healthcare workers education;
- social services workers' training;
- retraining (Mužík, 2012).

The characteristics of target groups in education focus on the level, options, and educational needs of people sharing similar work activities, hierarchical levels in an organisation, social status, or interests. Target groups are based on shared educational needs. If necessary, the description of the target group also includes entry requirements for educational activities. In general, target groups are not static but change dynamically. Therefore, research must focus not only on existing, identified target groups but also on new ones whose needs have so far been overlooked despite the apparent need. For instance, university staff are not specified as a target group for further professional development and possible legislative anchoring of this issue.

2.3 Adult Motivation for Professional Development

Traditional psychological contracts that only promise job security are no longer sufficient. Nowadays, in addition to this condition, organisations must also offer their employees opportunities to develop their potential (cf. Novotný, 2009; Kirovová, 2005). It is understandable that companies and enterprises expect their employees, in return for support in developing their competencies, to be flexible, creative, and to contribute to organisational development. It is clear that adult professional education is a broad area and must be addressed interdisciplinarily.

Fields such as andragogy, education economics, or human resource development, that reflect on the practice, can provide the answers and a strong foundation for mutual cooperation and interaction.

Motivation plays a key role in adult education. Knowles (1973) offers an interesting perspective, distinguishing four categories from the perspective of education implementers: (1) the perspective of a policy implementer, who monitors the adequacy of the solution – from objectives through implementation to educational outcomes; (2) the perspective of an administrator associated with issues of consistency between the method of implementation and educational goals; (3) the perspective of a learning expert focused on methods and forms of education; (4) the perspective of a consultant oriented towards the promotion of an appropriate concept as the basis of all education.

Motivation for learning in adults is primarily utilitarian. According to Starý (2008), that means that they pursue education for tangible benefits such as retraining, qualifications, or knowledge or information relevant to better job performance. Unlike schoolchildren, adults typically have stronger internal motivation and long-term personal goals. Research by Rabušicová, Rabušic, and Šedová (2008) revealed that professional motivation for adult learning is often connected to maintaining or improving job positions, job advancement or broadening career opportunities. Beneš (2008, p. 83) argues that a complex mix of motives influences the decision to pursue education, evolving over time and impossible to hierarchise clearly. He notes: “*Motives always have a social background; motivation differs among social groups. What matters is that adult learning is not mainly driven by curiosity but by the need to solve specific problems.*”

Motivation varies across target groups, and their participation in education is influenced by several external factors such as social challenges, environment, life situations, previous education, personality traits, etc. Interesting results concerning the motivation to learn have been obtained from an empirical investigation of educational needs concerning participation in adult education, as described by Šedová & Novotný (2006). They found, for example, no significant gender differences in educational motivation in the research group, though higher economic status correlated with greater participation, and higher values were shown for employees than for other respondents. The authors state that these needs may be related to the content of the work performed, likely due to workplace-related pressures. The fact that higher education generates higher educational needs and motivates participation in further education has also been confirmed.

2.4 Economic Contexts of Adult Professional Development

In general, this area, which includes education tied to work, the workplace, or a specific profession, carries many expectations. Political documents at the national level and within the European Union highlight its importance and associate it

with concepts such as social policy, employability, competitiveness, and more. It can also be stated that learning and training, or the development of employees and workers, are frequently discussed in an economic context. Broadly speaking, this monograph focuses on adult learning and education linked to the workplace, job content, current or future professions, or even past occupations (cf. Novotný, 2009).

From the individual’s perspective, continuous professional development is usually of personal interest to maintain or regain the qualifications necessary for their profession, which secures their employment. At the same time, one might also seek to acquire new knowledge and skills that would allow for a career change. The White Paper (National programme, 2001, p. 79) also notes: *“The need for adult education is further increased by shifts in employment structure, changes in the content of work, and generally by people’s initiative to improve their education, whether for a better career or to pursue personal interests. From the individual’s point of view, adult education demonstrably enhances employability and facilitates access to higher career levels and increased income.”*

From an organisational or business-level perspective, the interest in learning and training is driven by the need to maintain and develop the human resource potential for performance, align employee competencies with company needs, and increase labour productivity. An organisation, such as a business, can represent a complex tangle of interests, where not all stakeholders necessarily share the same goals. Therefore, it is necessary to align the interests of various groups, for example, those involved in processes versus those focused on outcomes (stakeholders vs. stockholders). Such alignment of interests can also apply to education and learning.

Table 1

Comparison of perspectives of main stakeholder groups

| Interest | Purpose of participation in specific education/training | Purpose of participation in general education/training | Risks of employee participation in education/training |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Individual | Benefits for current job performance | Benefits for employability or career/employer change | No significant risks |
| Organisational/business | Benefits for work efficiency and productivity | Benefits for long-term development | General education/training may threaten loyalty to the employer |
| Societal | Benefits for current economic activity | Benefits for employability and the sustainability of human resources | No significant risks |

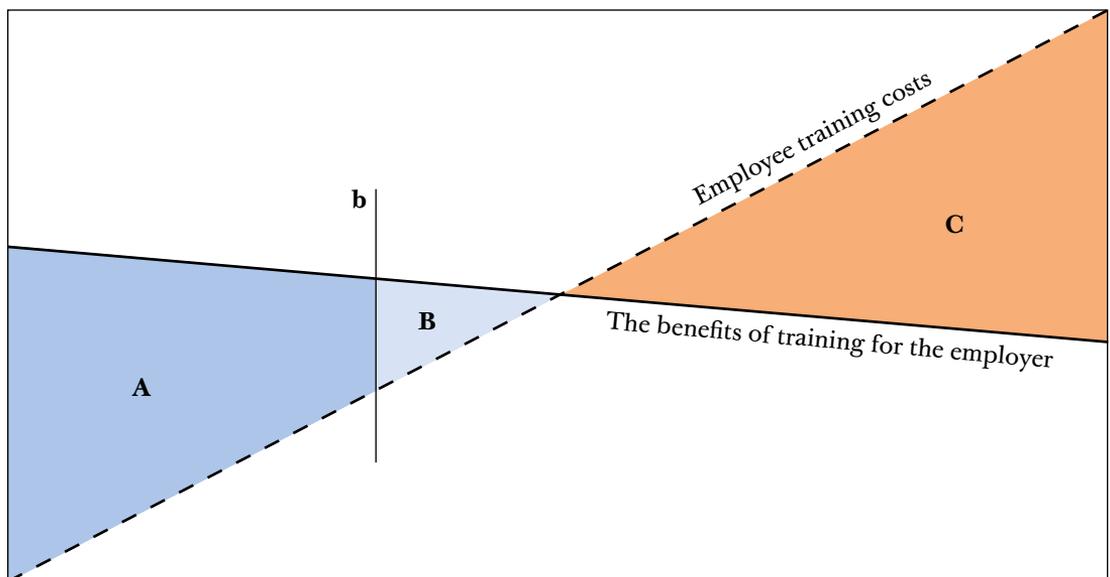
Source: Novotný, 2009, adapted from Leuven, 2007

Regarding the public interest in adult learning and education, it is mostly associated with the economic and social development of society or with addressing issues that may hinder such development. Such interests are primarily represented by the state or international, and supranational organisations. Relevant topics include labour supply and demand, employment issues, and demographic trends such as population ageing. As stated by Beyond (2003, p. 26, in Novotný, 2009): *“Adult education requires public intervention primarily because some educational needs are not covered by the market. That results in many gaps in the supply of adult education, partly due to market failure.”*

When the interests of the aforementioned parties do not align, disagreements or conflicts may arise. A typical basis for such conflict is when the investments made do not match the benefits received by one of the parties. Selected situations, particularly in corporate training, are illustrated in a diagram that compares the alignment between training costs and employer benefits. A purely economic perspective is emphasised. For the employer, the ideal scenario is represented by zone A: the employer increases investment in education (dashed line) and receives benefits (solid line) in the form of higher labour productivity, increased profit, and other benefits for the company or organisation. Zone B represents a more risky and less favourable scenario where the costs nearly equal the potential benefits. Zone C is disadvantageous, as the benefits fall short of the investment. From the employee’s perspective, both A and B may still be seen positively if they feel a need to develop their potential, even more so in C. This model helps visualise conditions under which investing in human resources is advantageous, as well as to determine when such investment may no longer be economically viable (Checchi, 2006).

Figure 1

Typical scenarios for investing in employee professional development within the organisation



Source: Checchi, 2006

Some experts claim that even in zone C, certain positives can be found. For example, Groot and Van den Brink (2007, p. 110 in Novotný, 2009) state that: *“...such over-education is only temporary and can make a worker more flexible and better prepared for changes, such as technological changes or changes in position within a company (job description). However, it is important to know how to retain such a worker, which is related, for instance, to how human resources are managed, how employees are rewarded, and what kind of general workplace culture prevails.”* Checchi (2006) also points out that reciprocity, trust, and loyalty are significant in the above-described relationships. At the same time, according to Leuven (2007), it is substantial to consider the content of employee education. His findings suggest that general education is riskier because it is transferable and the employee can use it with any other employer. He therefore recommends targeting education more specifically to minimise this risk.

3 Human Capital and Human Resource Management

The theory of human capital was developed primarily during the 1960s and 1970s. Schultz, Becker, and Mincer were key contributors, emphasising the fundamental role of education and investment in human capital. Today, Becker's definition (1963, in Dudová, 2013) is generally accepted: human capital consists of "*abilities, skills, and the appropriate motivation to apply these abilities and skills.*" The main assumption underlying this theory is that education increases an individual's productivity. Investment in education is an inevitable prerequisite for economic, social, and technological development and helps to enhance human capital. Education and training are currently regarded as investments for the state, businesses, and individuals. Human resources must possess the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt quickly to changes and new labour market demands. In addition to human capital theory, economists have also begun to emphasise the role of education as a signalling and screening tool (Dudová, 2013).

3.1 Human Capital and Qualifications Development

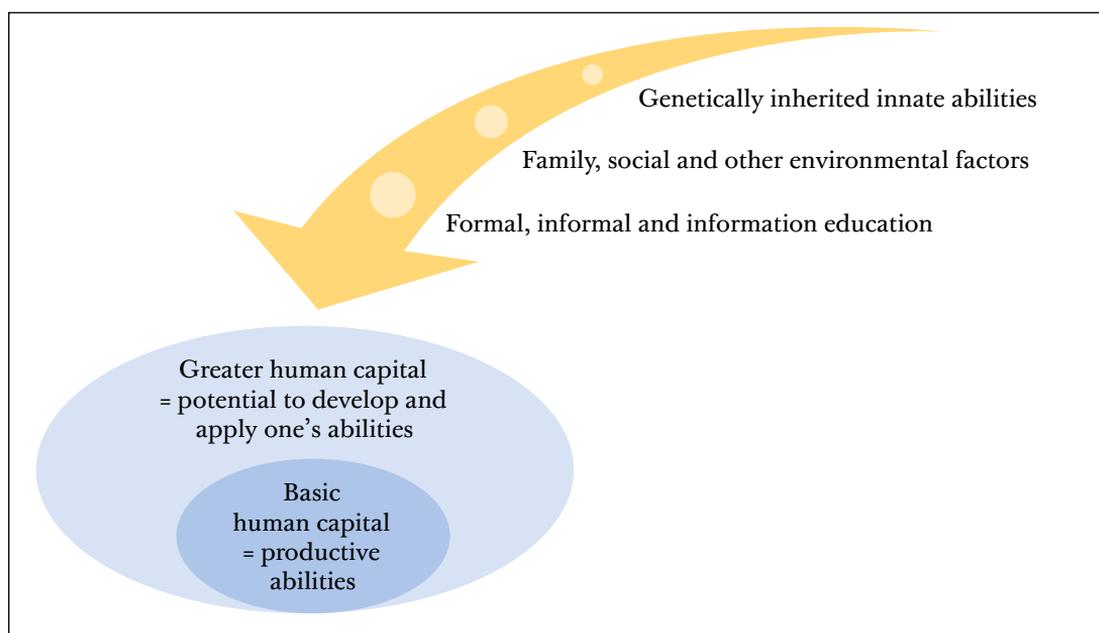
Currently, the OECD is intensely involved in evaluating human capital development, publishing an annual report on the state and progress of human capital called *Education at a Glance* (e.g., OECD, 2021). The OECD defines human capital as the knowledge, skills, abilities, and characteristics of an individual that facilitate the creation of personal, social, and economic well-being (Mazouch & Fischer, 2011). Human resource management is closely related to personnel management and organisational leadership. Employee development is associated with adult education and corporate training. Human resource development focuses on three main issues – learning, performance, and change – both at the individual and organisational levels (Yang, 2004).

The following figure illustrates three key factors that influence human capital. When these are linked to the factors mentioned by the OECD, it becomes clear that an individual's characteristics and abilities are primarily determined by initial factors (inherited and innate), and can be subsequently developed through further influence and education. It is important to note that the individual components of human capital influence one another. For example, a person's traits can significantly affect, both positively and negatively, how well they acquire knowledge (in formal, non-formal, and informal education) or develop skills. Similarly, the development of these characteristics and abilities depends on the environment in which the individual is raised or operates (Mazouch & Fischer, 2011).

A specific qualification is usually defined in relation to a specific job. In the broadest sense, it includes theoretical knowledge confirmed by a diploma (education), practical experience, and certain personal qualities. Generally, qualification refers to the ability to perform a profession in a specific job position. Qualification is a tool for securing employment among the active population, and its importance is increasing in the context of rising long-term unemployment. Therefore, it is vital not only to acquire but also to maintain a qualification throughout life, i.e. a qualification that enables permanent employment of an individual.

Figure 2

Structure and factors affecting human capital



Source: Mazouch and Fischer (2011)

Mazouch and Fischer (2011) state that in recent decades, the development of qualifications has increased both qualitatively and quantitatively, while the trend in innovation and technology has multiplied. That creates significant pressure on individuals to continually adapt to the labour market, learn new things, master new technologies, and gain new professional knowledge. Currently, there is rapid development in the field of qualifications. Up to 80% of technologies become outdated within 10 years, yet 80% of workers who operate them acquired their qualifications 10 to 40 years ago.

There are currently two noticeable trends in qualifications. In developed countries, there is a clear tendency toward increasing worker qualifications due to structural employment changes and the development of the education system. That comes with a potential risk of devaluation of attained education. That primarily affects higher education, where the level of education exceeds the requirements of the

actual job. This phenomenon is known as overqualification. On the other hand, the development of job requirements occurs more indirectly and focuses mainly on technical or economic management tasks that require initiative and individual response. Therefore, developing competencies rather than just qualifications is essential. Competencies represent an individual's personal disposition to adapt to technology and other demands. However, this ability is not easily identifiable in advance and is not part of standard qualification requirements. While qualifications are based on set values and classifications, competencies are of a more personal nature.

3.2 Education as a Part of Human Resource Management

According to Průcha, Walterová, and Mareš (2003, p. 114), human resources are *“the potential of a society formed as a reservoir of knowledge and skills in the people of a given state or territory. Hidden wealth for the economic growth of society lies in this potential and its development.”* According to Novotný (2009), the key level for addressing human resource development is the organisational one. However, the concept of human resource development also includes the individual perspective (the learning individual) and the broader social perspective (economic and social trends and their reflection), and it is part of conceptual and policy documents at regional, national, and international levels. The current concept of human resource development (as well as the concept of lifelong learning) has broader social implications arising from the development of social and economic contexts. These include demands for socially responsible human resource development, which must not be ignored in the professional world, such as equal opportunity (also mandated by legislation in most developed countries), support for social inclusion (often based on concerns about new inequalities in the knowledge society), and also sustainability and ethical management and leadership.

Another substantial perspective is the economic one, represented by the economics of education. This economic view of learning and education in the professional-career context is appropriate because the mutual connection is evident. From the perspective of the individual, the business, and higher entities such as the state, to compare the investment and return in the context of adult training and education is more than logical (cf. previous chapter).

The issue of research in adult education is closely linked to human resource development. The personal and social development of individuals should be directed towards inner satisfaction with their work, social security, and maintaining a balance between job performance and self-actualisation. Essential processes supporting this direction include career planning and development, professional counselling, and professional development management. The demands of

professional development, which never ends and essentially becomes lifelong, require research and generalisation, as well as modelling of systems for further professional development, counselling, and conceptual personnel work.

The process of professionalisation significantly depends on the qualifications of those working in the field and on cooperation between theory and practice. Educational processes can also effectively influence the social and cultural-educational spheres. For them to be effective, however, their implementation should be preceded by an analysis and identification of the learning needs of an adult person (Prusáková, 2000). Professional literature identifies five different approaches organisations can take to education:

Table 2

Organisational approaches to education

| Approach to education | Characteristics of the approach |
|------------------------------|---|
| Resentment | Education is seen as unnecessary or redundant |
| Obligation | Education is reduced to the legal minimum requirements |
| Incoherence | Unorganised non-systemic approach, based on individual initiative |
| System | Organised educational system at all levels, evaluation of outcomes |
| Integration | Integrated, coherent system; evaluation of outcomes based on benefits for the organisation and individual |

Source: Bontová, 2015

One of the currently prevailing concepts or ideals is the *Learning Organisation*. In simple terms, that is an organisation capable of adapting to change and to learn. Characteristics of a learning organisation include systemic behaviour, connections between organisational subsystems, delegation of authority to employees, free access to organisations, a social climate that supports learning, continuous skills development of individuals, integration of work and learning processes, alignment of education with learning needs, learning competency, and professional support for that competency (Prusáková, 2000).

3.3 Human Resource Management and the Competency-Based Approach

In recent years, the concept of competency orientation, or competency models, has become prominent in adult education. Today, competencies are understood as not strictly tied to specific qualifications but going beyond them. The general structure of competencies includes knowledge, character traits, attitudes, skills, experience, and even specific types of competencies such as social, technical, professional,

and others. Competency includes a combination of abilities, knowledge, skills, experience, and attitudes. According to Beneš (2002, in Veteška & Tureckiová, 2008, p. 31): “*The concept of competency is increasingly part of professional, political, and public discussion. However, a clear and universally accepted definition remains problematic. Competencies are the subject of research in various scientific fields. At the same time, their development is a goal of educational, social, and economic policy and human resource development in organisations.*”

Competencies also play a significant role in defining the requirements placed on managers, their education and development. Today, competencies are already included in strategic and conceptual curricular documents. They are now used not only by professional workplaces and research institutions but also by actual educational entities and specific people: teachers, school principals, education specialists, managers, HR professionals, lecturers, university teachers, and students of tertiary technical schools and universities, especially in the humanities (Veteška & Tureckiová, 2008).

Table 3

Academic and research staff and other employees at public universities in the Czech Republic in 2018 (average full-time equivalents)

| The Czech Republic | | Total | % | of which women | % |
|-----------------------|---|----------|--------|----------------|--------|
| Academic staff | Professors | 2,112.6 | 11.5% | 314.8 | 14.9% |
| | Associate professors | 3,968.0 | 21,5% | 1,024.8 | 25.8% |
| | Assistant professors | 9,483.8 | 51.5% | 3,717.7 | 39.2% |
| | Teaching assistants | 1,177.7 | 6.4% | 594.7 | 50.5% |
| | Lecturers | 792.9 | 4.3% | 461.5 | 58.2% |
| | Scientific, research, and development staff involved in teaching activities | 891.3 | 4.8% | 322.1 | 36.1% |
| | Total | 18,426.3 | 43.3% | 6,435.5 | 34.9% |
| Research staff | Postdoctoral researchers | 592.1 | 11.6% | 210 | 35.5% |
| | Research staff not falling into other categories | 2,477.1 | 48.4% | 690.8 | 27.9% |
| | Other scientific, research, and development staff | 2,047.6 | 40.0% | 885 | 43.2% |
| | Total research staff | 5,116.8 | 12.0% | 1,785.8 | 34.9% |
| Others | Other employees | 19,032.9 | 44.7% | 12,459.7 | 65.5% |
| Total | Total employees | 42,576.1 | 100.0% | 20,681.0 | 100.0% |

Source: MEYS CR (2020).

The table above summarises data from individual annual activity reports submitted by universities for the year 2018. The full-time equivalent (FTE) count

as of December 31 represents the number of staff converted to full-time positions. A research worker in this context refers to a person who is not considered an academic staff member under Section 70 of Act No. 111/1998 Coll. on Higher Education Institutions. “Other employees” refers to all staff not directly involved in education and research; those are mainly administrative, technical, and support staff.

The development of professional competencies is broader, multilayered, multidimensional, and may include affective and psychomotor objectives. Every employer wants their employees to possess competencies that Belz and Siegrist (2001, in Veteška & Tureckiová, 2008) categorised into six components:

- the ability to solve problems and be creative;
- the ability to accept responsibility;
- the ability to think and learn;
- the ability to reason and evaluate;
- the ability to communicate and cooperate;
- independence and efficiency.

Tremblay et al. (2002, in Veteška & Tureckiová, 2008) at the same time emphasise that a competency is always contextual, multidimensional, defined by a standard, and has the potential for action and development. Through further education, training, workshops, sharing of best practices, etc., workers can acquire knowledge and develop skills. By applying them in practice, they gain experience, which leads to the formation of competencies. Every employer defines specific requirements for each job, which employees are expected to meet. These are the so-called qualification prerequisites. According to Veteška and Tureckiová (2008), managing based on competencies (competency-based/HR/management, or CBM) is now considered a progressive system of human management work.

Employers always consider the effectiveness and return on investment in training. Since, in particular, external education can be costly, planning should be systematic and well-considered. It is not always necessary to rigidly define and separate educational methods and forms; rather, it is advisable to create a suitable education model for each employee. The goal is to achieve the necessary employee qualifications and increase their competencies and motivation to work (Palán et al., 2007). To a certain extent, it could be said, analogously to Lindr (2017), that the goal is to find an optimal form of employee education that balances professional and social science components so that it contributes to the cultivation and humanisation of the university environment.

3.4 HR Excellence in Research Award – A Practical Example

Every university, like any business or other organisation, must pay adequate attention to human resources. In higher education institutions, it is also important to develop this area with a focus on scientific and research or academic staff. For this purpose, the European Commission has created a strategy for human resources management in research. Many institutions are currently undergoing a process related to obtaining a certificate known as the HR Award. Receiving this award is prestigious for institutions and signifies increased attractiveness for both local and foreign researchers, international recognition, and benefits in acquiring funding from grants. Part of the process typically includes an analysis of the compliance of the current state of human resources management with the Charter and Code (see below) and developing an action plan for implementing corrective measures. The following text presents partial results of a survey among employees conducted in 2018 during the process of obtaining the aforementioned award at a selected university (for more details, cf. Adamec, 2020).

The European Commission awards the prestigious HR Excellence in Research Award (hereinafter HR Award) for excellence in human resources care in the scientific environment. For researchers, an organisation with the HR Award certification guarantees a European standard of staff care, openness and transparency in the recruitment process, and a quality work environment. For a university, the HR Award logo increases attractiveness when approaching foreign researchers or acquiring grants. Receiving the HR Award certificate signifies an institution's commitment to improving the quality of human resources care, enhancing prestige and attractiveness, international recognition, and benefits in obtaining funding from grants (cf. Horizon, 2018). Basic information about the process of obtaining this award and partial results from a survey related to this process at a specific university is provided in the following text.

3.4.1 Basic Information about the HR Award

The HR Award is now considered an international standard in human resources management and development in science and research. An institution wishing to obtain the HR Award must commit to the principles outlined in the *European Charter for Researchers*, a set of general principles and requirements specifying the responsibilities and rights of researchers and their employers (Horizon, 2018).

Table 4*Categories and principles contained in the European Charter for Researchers*

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| General principles and requirements relating to researchers | Freedom of research | Proper research practices |
| | Ethical principles | Dissemination and exploitation of results |
| | Professional responsibility | Public commitment |
| | Professional attitude | Relationship with supervisors |
| | Contractual and legal obligations | Supervision and management obligations |
| | Accountability | Continuous professional development |
| General principles and requirements relating to employers and funders | Recognition of the profession | Access to professional counselling |
| | Non-discrimination | Intellectual property rights |
| | Research environment | Co-authorship |
| | Working conditions | Supervision |
| | Stability and permanence of employment | Teaching |
| | Funding and salaries | Evaluation/appraisal systems |
| | Gender balance | Complaints and appeals |
| | Career development | Participation in decision-making bodies |
| | Value and mobility | Recruitment |
| | Access to training and continuous development of researchers | |

Source: Adapted from European Commission, 2006

The principles anchored in *the Charter* and *the Code* form the basis for creating *the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers* (hereinafter HRS4R). The implementation of this strategy takes several months and involves several steps. The first step is an analysis through which the organisation maps its deficiencies and develops a specific plan for improving them (Horizon, 2018).

The Gap Analysis serves to understand and realistically evaluate which changes can be achieved, e.g., in connection with legislative options. Based on the gap analysis, an action plan is developed, involving the entire institution. The implementation of the action plan is coordinated, and regularly supervised and evaluated by external evaluators (Jarošová, 2017).

If the applying institution successfully completes this phase, it receives the HR Award certificate. Obtaining the HR Award commits the institution to create and develop favourable conditions for researchers and is a mark of quality. Two

years after awarding the certificate, another evaluation is conducted, which is then repeated every three years (Horizon, 2018).

As part of the HR Award process, the organisation must also commit to *the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*. This consists of a set of general principles and requirements that employers and/or instructors should follow when appointing or recruiting researchers. These principles and requirements should ensure compliance and complement the principles and requirements set out in *the European Charter for Researchers*.

Table 5

Categories and principles contained in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| General principles and requirements of the Code of Conduct | Recruitment | Recognition of qualifications |
| | Selection | Seniority |
| | Transparency | Appointment of postdoctoral researchers |
| | Merit-based evaluation | Researchers |
| | Variations in the chronological order of CVs | Employers |
| | Appointment or employment | Investors |
| | Recognition of mobility experience | |

Source: Adapted from European Commission, 2006

The text of *the Charter* and *the Code*, created in 2005 as a framework of general principles for the labour market in research, development, and innovation in the newly established European Research Area, appeals not only to individual scientists, rectors, or heads of grant agencies but also to member states. The Charter and Code have been formally adopted by approximately nine hundred organisations in Europe and beyond. Currently, about half of them can pride on the award, with hundreds more awaiting it (Jarošová, 2017).

The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of the Czech Republic supports Czech research organisations in obtaining the HR Award through the Operational Programme Research, Development, and Education titled *Development of Capacities for Research and Development* (MEYS, 2017). The first Czech university to receive the prestigious award from the European Commission was Mendel University in Brno in 2018 (MENDELU, 2018a).

On October 6, 2017, Mendel University in Brno committed to the principles anchored in *the European Charter for Researchers* and *the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*. The University conducted an internal gap analysis ([link](#)), aiming to compare current practices at the University with the Charter and the Code, and

simultaneously prepared an action plan for implementing measures to fulfil the principles anchored in the Charter and the Code (MENDELU, 2018a).

The award was pursued within the project OP RDE *Development of Capacities for Research and Development at Mendel University in Brno* CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/16_028/0006175, with Key Activity 1 focusing on establishing strategic management of the research organisation in accordance with the conditions for obtaining the HR Award. The project output was the HRS4R Action Plan (MENDELU, 2018b). The gap analysis included the below-described survey among university employees.

3.4.2 Methodology of the Survey

In June 2018, a survey was conducted at the University with the aim of finding out how employees feel, how they perceive the work environment, and, last but not least, which areas should be improved in the future. The primary respondents were research staff, although all categories of university employees were invited to participate. The results helped objectively determine and set action plans in connection with the process of obtaining the HR Award. The overall survey results are available on the MENDELU website (cf. Korvasová et al., 2018).

The survey was conducted via a questionnaire using Google Forms and was available in two language versions (Czech and English). The questionnaire contained 34 questions, 5 of which focused on the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. The remaining questions were further divided into areas based on the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The four thematic areas were:

- Ethical and professional aspects
- Recruitment and selection of the employees
- Working conditions
- Training and development

All questions were optional; therefore, the number of evaluated responses varied for each. The questionnaire contained closed and open questions, allowing respondents to comment on the current state and suggest improvements. Respondents answered on a scale from 1 - "yes or satisfactory" to 4 - "no or unsatisfactory", and respondents could choose from predefined answers or provide text responses to open-ended questions.

The survey was anonymous, and it was decided that the results would be transparent, each respondent could view ongoing (and summarized) results upon completing the questionnaire, including open-ended responses. In total, 447 university employees responded out of 1,600 invited, resulting in a 28% response rate. Employees from all university departments participated. The respondent structure is presented in the table below:

Table 6*Survey respondent structure within the HR Award process*

| Observed variable | Category | Absolute frequency | Relative frequency |
|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gender | Not specified | 23 | 5.1% |
| | Male | 207 | 46.3% |
| | Female | 217 | 48.5% |
| | Total | 447 | 100% |
| Age | 30 years or younger | 76 | 17% |
| | 31-50 years | 278 | 62.2% |
| | 51 years or older | 72 | 16.1% |
| | Not specified | 21 | 4.7% |
| | Total | 447 | 100% |
| Job position | Not specified | 58 | 13.0% |
| | Academic staff | 171 | 38.3% |
| | Research staff | 116 | 26.0% |
| | Technical and administrative staff | 102 | 22.8% |
| | Total | 447 | 100% |
| University department | Not specified | 31 | 6.1% |
| | University-wide units | 93 | 20.9% |
| | Faculty of Business and Economics | 89 | 20.0% |
| | Faculty of AgriSciences | 87 | 19.6% |
| | Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology | 84 | 18.9% |
| | Faculty of Horticulture | 30 | 6.7% |
| | Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies | 23 | 5.2% |
| | Institute of Lifelong Learning | 12 | 2.7% |
| Total | 447 | 100% | |

Source: Adapted from Korvasová et al., 2018

3.4.3 Employee Satisfaction Based on Survey Results

The following text presents the survey responses related to the *Working Conditions* section of the questionnaire. The questions focused on university employee satisfaction with the indicators shown in the following two graphs. The calculated values are based only on valid responses; invalid or unanswered questions were excluded from both absolute and relative frequency calculations.

The charts below show the results of the responses focusing on working conditions and job satisfaction. The overall results showed that university employees generally

perceive their working conditions positively. More than four-fifths (81%) are satisfied with the work environment and equipment. Slightly fewer – but still a significant number – about two-thirds of employees (69%) are satisfied with the opportunities for further education.

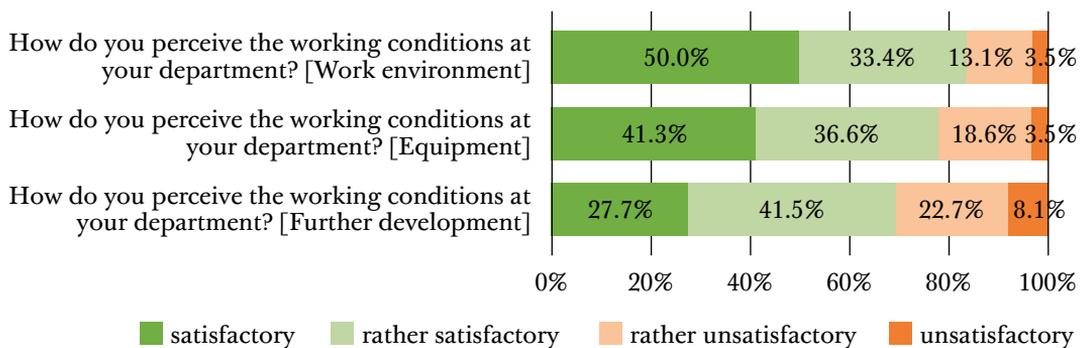
Over 80% of respondents described their work environment as one that allows them to balance work and family life, e.g., in terms of childcare or caring for family members. Furthermore, three-quarters of respondents are satisfied with the University’s approach to supporting mobility abroad. However, only half of the respondents believe they have opportunities for career advancement within their current job position. Fewer employees are satisfied with their financial compensation – only two-fifths. Among academic staff especially, many do not consider their compensation adequate for the work performed.

Just under half (49%) of the respondents believe that the evaluation of their work performance is sufficiently transparent and clear. Again, academic staff are the least satisfied in this area. Only a third of respondents agreed they have enough resources (time, finances, capacity) to engage in research activities alongside their teaching duties. The smallest proportion of respondents, also about one-third, stated that they have insufficient opportunities to influence what happens in their department and the broader institutional context.

The insights and findings from the survey were a valuable source of information for the university management to work more effectively with academic, research, and non-academic staff. The problem areas identified will serve as a basis for improving human resource care and have been incorporated into the institution’s HR development strategy in a way that aligns with the principles set out in *the Charter* and *the Code*. It is important to note that these principles are binding not only for organisations and institutions but also for researchers who want to engage with them – they are expected to commit to fulfilling all requirements.

Chart 1

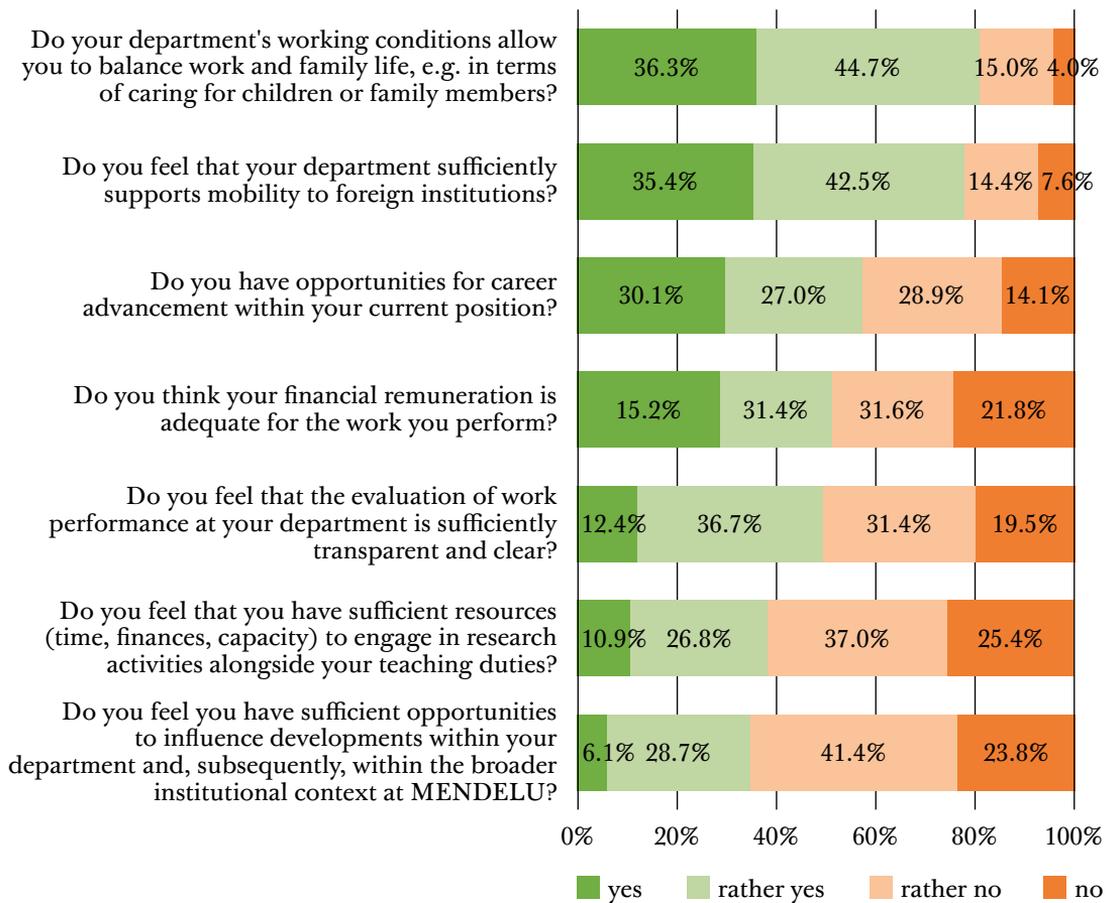
Responses to questions on working conditions



Source: Adapted from Korvasová et al., 2018

Chart 2

Responses to questions on job satisfaction



Source: Adapted from Korvasová et al., 2018

4 Educational Needs Analysis

The educational needs of an adult arise under the influence of situations experienced by the individual, group, society, or nation. These are both personal and collective situations. If we want to explore the analysis of educational needs more profoundly, it is necessary to delve into multiple layers of its examination. The first involves identifying possible motivation and distinguishing between the need to solve a specific situation and the need to engage in education. The need to solve a specific situation is characterized by the individual not being adequately prepared in terms of knowledge – they don't know how to address the situation or how to cope with it because they lack sufficient knowledge and skills. The need for education is characterized by the desire to gain knowledge and skills to adapt to changing conditions in professional, social, and cultural life.

The educational needs analysis is a cornerstone of a systemic approach to education, even though the literature raises doubts about the effectiveness and credibility of such a focused empirical research. Jarvis (2004) outlines two reasons for these doubts. The first is the belief that the concept of educational need is weak and poorly defined, often confused with desires or interests or with the demands of individuals or employers. The second reason is the difficulty of creating educational offers based on these needs.

In andragogy practice, there are varied perspectives on the process and methodology of analysing educational needs. That is as it should be because the target groups in education are diverse and have specific needs. There are often many reasons for education. They are most systematically developed in the context of professional training of employees – ranging from legal obligations and reasons stemming from legislative, technological, or organisational changes to problem-solving and prospective development. It is always necessary to differentiate whether the needs stem from society, an organisation, a region, or individuals – or whether they pertain solely to individuals.

4.1 Educational Needs Analysis

The basis of educational needs analysis is to identify the gap between the current state and the state we want to achieve, followed by the assessment of whether this gap can be addressed through education. In this context, some authors highlight the importance of distinguishing the depth or complexity of educational needs analysis. Just as there is a risk of insufficient education, there can also be a risk of its excess (Buckley and Caple, 2004, in Novotný, 2009). Thus, in general, it is possible to distinguish:

- *Comprehensive analysis* that examines all aspects of a person's personal, social, or professional situation and identifies educational needs in these contexts. This analysis is very demanding in terms of content, finances, and time.
- *Key issues analysis* that focuses on fundamental problems in an activity or a social situation or the feasibility of achieving personal interests through education. The outcome would likely be a resolution of basic issues and a proposal of the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies.
- *The problem-focused analysis* primarily follows a reactive path to education, investigating a specific deficit that has caused a known issue and whether it can be resolved through education. It is used when dealing with a partial problem while other areas of the employee/client/citizen's situation are satisfactory.

Like any analysis, educational needs analysis has its strengths and weaknesses. According to Koudelka (2000), the strengths include mainly:

- The possibility to estimate in great detail the scope of further education needs of an institution when the analysis is well-conducted;
- The ability to define target groups for whom the training is relevant;
- The capacity to propose specific content and forms of further education;
- The opportunity to recommend the optimal organisation for delivering training activities based on comprehensive insights;
- The ability to estimate the effectiveness of the time spent on further education.

According to Krajcarová (2004), there can be found some weaknesses in the educational needs analysis that include:

- Mistakes in distinguishing between wants and needs;
- Uncritical acceptance of what management considers important;
- The assumption that training is necessary only when deficiencies are found;
- A tendency to focus more on past needs rather than future ones;
- The assumption that everything can be solved through training;
- The inability to implement a systematic approach to education.

4.2 Educational Needs in the Context of Academic Staff Development

Educational needs analysis is the first of four steps in the cycle of education and development in organisations. Educational activities must be based on understanding what needs to be done and why. This understanding is mainly

achieved by analysing the workplace, work activities, technological and knowledge development planning, and labour market or industry changes. According to Veteška (2016), the basic cycle for developing professional competencies and qualifications within systematic education and development consists of four phases:

- Identification of training and development needs;
- Planning of staff education and development (or individual learning);
- Implementation of the educational and/or developmental programme;
- Evaluation of the effects of education and learning, including the educational programme evaluation.

The identification of educational needs precedes their analysis. Identifying training and development needs acts as an impulse for change. Awareness of the current state may or may not lead to the need for learning and education. Identification enables the recognition, definition, and possibly the categorisation of individual competencies. The depth of the analysis, including the uncovering of relationships between different competency components, is determined by several factors – such as the willingness for self-reflection, the transparency of the work environment, professionalism, and the analytical competency of the evaluator (Bontová, 2013).

Employee training and development are paramount, but it is crucial to ensure they are effective. According to Urban (2014), the effectiveness of further education depends on three main factors: correctly identifying development needs, choosing suitable educational methods, and regularly evaluating the outcomes of the education and training provided. It is essential to carry out the training needs analysis thoroughly, and, at the same time, it is important to provide feedback on educational activities. The goal of training and development activities should be to enhance performance or bring about behavioural changes in employees that align with organizational goals. Practical application and usability of new knowledge or procedures are key.

Before sending an employee to a training or development activity, it is important to verify whether the activity aligns with the organisational goals and addresses the weaknesses of the individual employee, the team, or the workplace. An employee should only be sent to training after mutual agreement with their manager, confirming that the activity will be beneficial.

It is also important to pay attention to the training outcomes, ensuring that newly acquired knowledge and skills are applied in practice. According to Urban (2014), the effectiveness of training and development can be determined in the following ways:

- Determining what was learnt using specialized or standard tests;
- Evaluating changes in work behaviour resulting from the training activity;

- Assessing work outcomes, i.e., measuring the impact of training on achieving company goals such as productivity, sales, costs, quality, market share, etc.

At the end of this subchapter, it is important to draw attention to a crucial criterion for evaluating training and development activities: a clearly defined and specific goal set in advance. Without it, it is not possible to measure the effectiveness or impacts on behavioural change, employee performance, or workplace results. Moreover, a clearly defined goal can motivate participants, who, after completing the training, may be asked to reflect on what they learnt, how the training was beneficial, and how they will apply the acquired knowledge in practice.

4.3 Methods of Educational Needs Analysis

Educational needs arise from an individual's desire to achieve a balance between their capabilities and possible social and occupational fulfilment. The needs are influenced primarily by the labour market, though personal and societal factors play their parts, too. An individual's educational needs correlate with the educational needs of society and provoke societal demands. For some social groups, these needs must be actively stimulated (Palán, 2002).

The primary goal of the educational needs identification phase is to detect problems and deficiencies that exist in the organisation and individual employees. The need for employee training does not always manifest as deficiencies. It may also appear, for example, when designing new educational programmes or activities, during organisational changes, etc. In these cases, discrepancies or gaps between employees' knowledge structures, skills and work attitudes, and what is currently required, may become apparent. These discrepancies can serve as the foundation and starting point for planning specific training or development activities (Frk, 2010).

In general, three basic principles for gathering data for educational needs analysis can be defined:

- Define a specific objective and reason for collecting the data, and determine what will be done with it;
- Begin as high up in the hierarchy of the relevant area as possible;
- Verify whether the information is being obtained from the correct source, and collect data from multiple sources.

Each type of analysis requires data collection. A fundamental question in needs analysis is identifying the source of information and the method of obtaining it. The selection of methods is a complex process and depends on what we aim to discover. The quality of information about educational needs is only as good as its source.

At the individual level, we must consider subjective methods of identifying educational needs, primarily through self-feedback. Peter Drucker, a well-known management theorist, stated that whenever we make an important decision, we should also write down what we expect from it and then, after a reasonable period, compare these expectations with actual results (Drucker, 2000). Every person has certain ambitions and ideas about their development and seeks self-fulfilment. However, not everyone has the means or the ability to identify the appropriate pathways that lead to such fulfilment.

According to Brázdová (2007), the process of educational needs analysis requires thorough preparation, particularly addressing the following questions:

- What are the objectives of the educational needs analysis?
- Who will carry out the analysis?
- What is the timeline?
- Where will the research be conducted?
- How will it be conducted?
- How will the results be evaluated?

A wide variety of sources can be used in the training needs analysis process, and it is rarely possible to determine their importance in advance. This always depends on the goals of the analysis and the nature of the target group or individual. Koubek (2003) states in connection with the analysis of educational needs in further education that the individuality of the worker, his specific skills, qualities, talents, attitudes, simply everything that impacts the fact of how training is reflected in his work performance, cannot be captured by any measurement. Therefore, the phase of identifying organisational needs in employee qualifications and training is based on estimates and approximative procedures. It thus has more of an experimental nature, where the results then enter the following stage of educational needs identification at the end of the entire cycle in the form of experience and thus modify the subsequent training cycle. Although this cannot be universally generalised, it highlights certain challenges in training needs analysis and characterises the process as never-ending.

According to Prusáková (2010), the essence of educational needs analysis lies in collecting information about the current state of individuals' and groups' knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitudes, analysing this information, and evaluating it in terms of educational planning. From the very beginning of the analysis process, it is necessary to clearly define the criteria for selecting sources of information based on their relevance to the objectives. Sample size and depth are important. The sample must be large enough for statistical analysis but small enough to make data collection cost-effective.

4.4 Sources for Educational Needs Analysis

Suppose we accept the premise that the decisive factor is the education market and the individual's interest, then we focus on analysing the educational needs of an individual. We seek to identify them without necessarily considering the needs of society, regions, or organisations, as well as the individual's potential role within society. In this context, we conclude that the sources of educational needs analysis must be viewed comprehensively.

The sources of educational needs analysis mainly include:

- Needs and strategies of society development and their sectors (e.g., strategies, documents, and legislation of the European Union, national governments, ministries, and national further education strategies and concepts);
- Regional needs and strategies (documents on regional development); regional needs and strategies are becoming an important source of educational needs development;
- Organisational development needs and strategies (e.g., information resources of the organisation, strategic plans, internal professional standards);
- Development needs of target groups (related to their professional, social, or cultural/educational development);
- Development needs of individuals – increasing emphasis is being placed on the individual's role in identifying and defining educational and broader development goals. Individuals are encouraged to independently analyse development impulses from both internal and external environments and to translate these into personal goals for competency development (Prusáková, 2010).

According to Průcha (2014), we must distinguish between three main types of educational needs:

- Educational *needs of individual subjects* – that is, actual or potential participants in adult education. The educational needs of individuals vary greatly depending on age, gender, education level, etc. Therefore, they are difficult or even impossible to identify precisely.
- Educational *needs of groups of subjects* – these are usually age groups (youth, younger and older adults, seniors), professional groups (teachers, doctors, lawyers), socioeconomic groups (e.g., the unemployed, women on maternity leave), or ethnic groups (immigrants, ethnic minorities).
- Educational *needs of businesses*, national economy sectors, and society as a whole. At the business level, they are often expressed through requirements of employers or educational economists and policymakers. At the societal (or state) level, they are defined as educational priorities or national educational goals.

Discrepancies and contradictions often arise between these types of educational needs. For instance, external educational needs defined by a company may not fully align with the individual needs of subjects. While individuals often blur the line between actual educational needs and subjective desires or ambitions, corporate or collective educational needs tend to be more objective and realistic.

Educational needs are essentially states of experiencing or feeling a lack of something or a desire for something perceived as preferable or ideal, which the subject believes can be achieved through some form of education. On the one hand, educational needs are influenced by the values that the individual shares; on the other hand, they serve as motivational stimuli for their activities. Naturally, educational needs change over the course of life. They differ in youth, adulthood, and senior age (Průcha, 2014).

It is clear that in addition to individual educational needs, there are also educational needs for specific categories of employees or entire professions. Besides individual or group training needs, organizations often identify needs expressed by employers, usually targeting school graduates entering the labour market. These are typically formulated as requirements for professional competencies that current or future employees should possess.

4.5 Training Needs Analysis at a University – A Practical Example

The aim of the following text is to present partial conclusions and results from a survey focused on analysing the educational needs of employees at a public university in the Czech Republic (for more details, cf. Adamec, 2022). The results below primarily address the following questions:

- 1) *What are the preferences of public university staff regarding their professional development (further education)?*
- 2) *What motivates public university staff the most to pursue professional development (further education)?*
- 3) *What obstacles do public university staff perceive in relation to their professional development (further education)?*

To address the issue, a standardized questionnaire was used, which was programmed into an online platform. Data collection was carried out using the CAWI method (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing), and potential respondents were contacted via a mass email. After eliminating duplicate responses, the final sample for statistical processing consisted of 456 respondents. Given the use of a quantitative method, the respondents' answers were processed using the statistical software SPSS. Open-ended responses were categorised.

Among the respondents, 40% were women. Nearly half of the respondents had more than 16 years of experience working in higher education. The respondents included one-third of administrative and technical staff, one-third of academic staff up to Ph.D. level, and 13% of associate professors or professors. The overall structure of staff at the public university is presented in the table below. For relevant comparison with national figures, data from the University's 2018 annual report was also used.

Table 7

Academic and research staff and other employees at a public university in 2018 (average full-time equivalents)

| Selected University | | Total | % | of which women | % |
|-----------------------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Academic staff | Professors | 54.4 | 10.5 % | 6.2 | 11.4 % |
| | Associate professors | 120.8 | 23.4 % | 35.9 | 29.7 % |
| | Assistant professors | 266.6 | 51.6 % | 92.0 | 34.5 % |
| | Teaching assistants | 47.8 | 9.2 % | 26.9 | 56.3 % |
| | Lecturers | 0 | 0.0 % | 0.00 | 0.0 % |
| | Scientific, research, and development staff involved in teaching activities | 27.4 | 5.3 % | 6.1 | 22.3 % |
| | Total | 517 | 31.8 % | 167.1 | 32.3 % |
| Research staff | Postdoctoral researchers | 14.3 | 5.9 % | 4.1 | 28.7 % |
| | Research staff not falling into other categories | 192.9 | 79.2 % | 92.3 | 47.8 % |
| | Other scientific, research, and development staff | 36.4 | 14.9 % | 19.00 | 52.2 % |
| | Total research staff | 243.6 | 15.0 % | 115.4 | 47.4 % |
| Others | Other employees | 866.3 | 53.2 % | 498.8 | 57.6 % |
| Total | Total employees | 1,626.9 | 100.0 % | 781.3 | 100.0 % |

Source: Annual Report (2019)

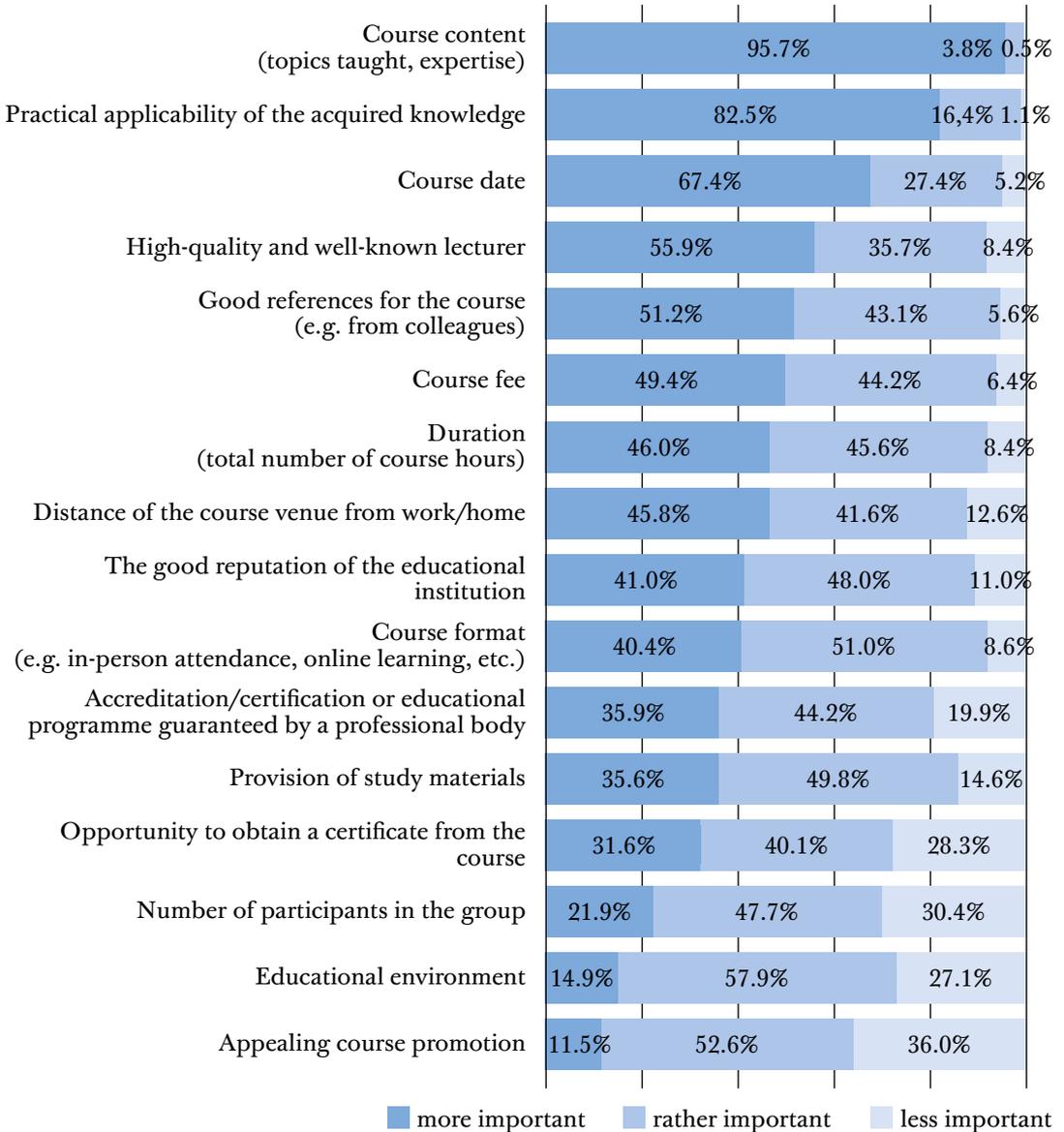
Using a set of 16 criteria battery, the survey explored what is most important for respondents when deciding whether to participate in a particular type of educational activity. Respondents answered using a six-point scale¹. The analysis revealed that the most important factors for the majority were the course content (95.7%) and the practical applicability of the acquired knowledge (82.5%). The course timing

1 Respondents answered using a scale from 1 - least important to 6 - most important. For the purposes of interpretation, responses 1 and 2 were combined into the category "less important", responses 3 and 4 into the category "rather important", and responses 5 and 6 into the category "more important".

(67.4%), a quality and well-known lecturer (55.9%), recommendations from colleagues (51.2%), and the course price (49.4%) were also significant. By contrast, course promotion was deemed the least important factor in decision-making. The following graph illustrates the results in detail.

Chart 3

To what extent are the following criteria significant when deciding whether to enrol in an educational course?



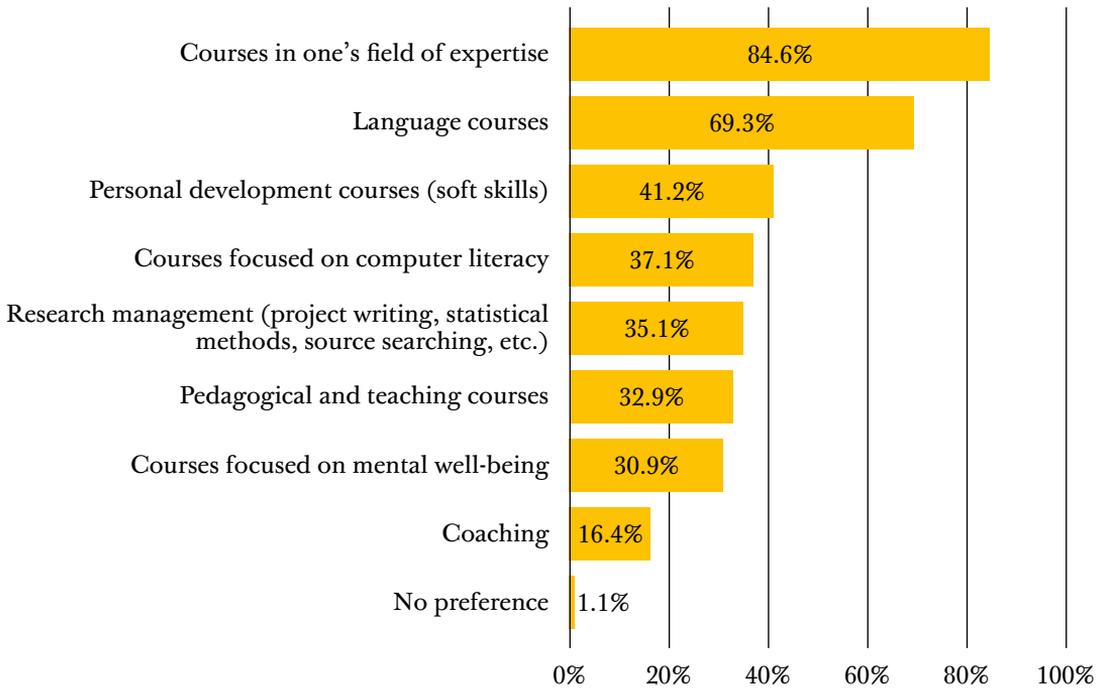
Regarding course length, nearly two-fifths of respondents prefer one-off, single-day events (38.5%). A quarter prefer regular courses (e.g. 2 hours per week) (26.7%), and one-seventh favour multi-day one-off events (13.7%). One-fifth are indifferent to the course length (21.1%).

In terms of training format, the majority prefer in-person learning (80.2%). Other frequently mentioned forms included on-the-job rotation, workshops, and hands-on instruction (41.4%). The least popular option was distance form (e-learning) (21.1%)².

To develop their professional knowledge, respondents most frequently expressed interest in courses related to their area of expertise (84.6%) and language courses (69.3%). The least interest was in coaching courses (16.4%)³. The detailed results are provided in the following graph.

Chart 4

In which areas would you like the most to take part in training courses for your professional development?



2 Respondents could select multiple answer options; therefore, the total of the individual relative frequencies exceeds 100%.

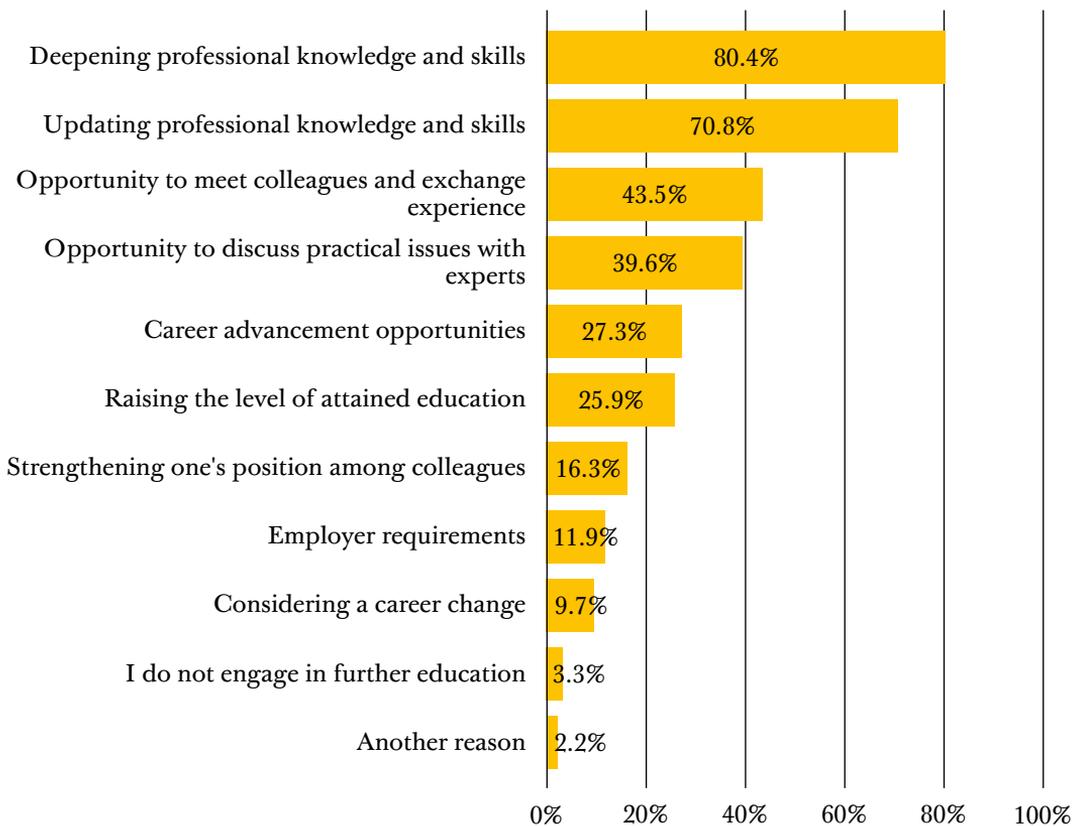
3 Respondents could select multiple answer options; therefore, the total of the individual relative frequencies exceeds 100%.

Respondents could also suggest their own topics. These varied widely, but the most common included: economics and financial literacy; geographic information systems; and graphics.

The most frequently cited motivation for further education was deepening professional knowledge and skills (80.4%), followed by updating knowledge and skills (70.8%). Other motivations included networking and exchanging experience with colleagues (43.5%) and discussing practical issues with experts (39.6%). The least mentioned motivation was considering a career change, only 9.7% of respondents mentioned it. Just 3.3% of respondents reported not participating in any professional education at all. The graph below provides more details.

Chart 5

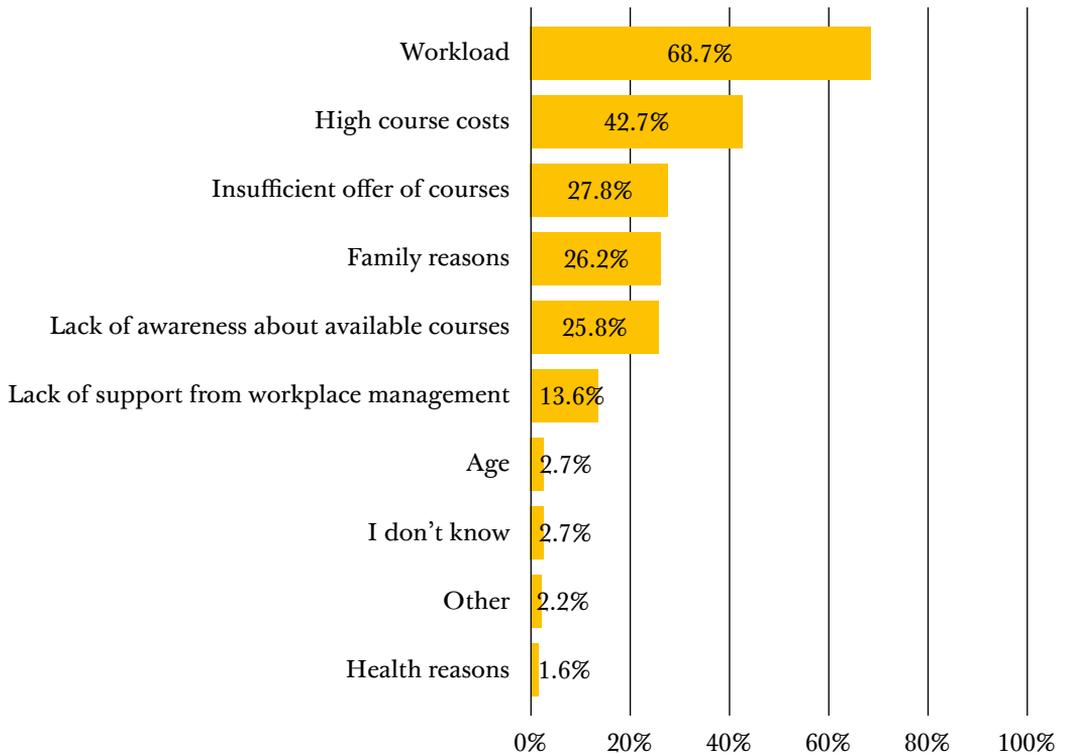
What motivates you the most to pursue further professional development?



The greatest barrier to participating in educational courses, according to two-thirds of respondents (68.7%), is workload. This is followed by the high cost of courses, cited by 42.7%. Age was seen as the least significant barrier (2.7%). The following graph provides the results in detail.

Chart 6

What is the biggest obstacle preventing you from participating in educational courses?



Under the “other” category, respondents mentioned reasons such as reluctance to travel, long distances, poor course or trainer quality, or a lack of relevant professional development opportunities in their field.

The analysis shows that university staff are generally willing to participate in further professional development. The most important factors when deciding to attend are the course content (95.7%) and its practical applicability (82.5%). The most suitable time for attending training, according to respondents, is in the morning (61.9%). Regarding course length, single-day events are preferred by 38.5% of the respondents. In terms of format, in-person attendance is the most favoured (80.2%), with other interactive formats also mentioned. In addition to the partial results explicitly mentioned above, almost three-fifths (58.2%) prefer courses where they can be active rather than passive participants. To develop their profession, respondents would most like to participate in courses in their field of expertise (84.6%). The main motivations are deepening (80.4%) and updating (70.8%) professional knowledge and skills. According to two-thirds of respondents, the greatest barrier to participating in educational courses is workload (68.7%).

5 Pedagogical Competencies of Academic Staff

5.1 Starting Point and Current Situation

The following text is based on a background document prepared for participants of the conference on the quality of teaching and pedagogical competencies held in March 2023 in Ostrava (cf. NAB, 2023). The document remarks that a defining characteristic of higher education institutions, distinguishing them from lower levels of education and purely research-based institutions, is the integration of multiple roles, particularly teaching and research (creative) functions. This integration occurs at the institutional level as well as at the level of individual academic staff. There is extensive debate about the relationship between teaching and research, both in theoretical terms and based on empirical studies. The ideal model is their integration according to the Humboldtian concept of the university, which is also reflected in Czech legislation and practice – academic staff usually perform both roles simultaneously. However, research evidence on the relationship between scientific productivity and teaching quality is rather weak (Marsh, Hattie, 2002; Palali et al., 2019). Nonetheless, it remains true that a quality teacher must have deep knowledge of their field, to which their own research activity contributes.

Modern national and international standards for quality in higher education reflect the need for systemic support of pedagogical competencies. The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) expect universities to take responsibility for the quality of their teaching staff, create favourable working conditions, and support professional development and pedagogical innovation. Czech universities are at various stages of development in terms of the systematic enhancement of teaching and pedagogical skills. Some already offer courses in teaching competencies or services through teaching and learning centres, but participation by academic staff and doctoral students in these programmes is low, and it cannot yet be said that there is truly systematic development (cf. Nekardová, 2020). Recently, there has been progress in career systems, evaluation, and reward mechanisms, especially in relation to efforts to obtain the HR Excellence in Research Award. However, criteria for evaluating teaching activity remain predominantly quantitative, while qualitative assessments often rely on student feedback, the informative value of which is limited (Boring et al., 2016).

There is consensus that universities should deliver not only world-class research but also excellent education. It is, therefore, essential to ensure that selection, evaluation, reward, and professional development systems for academic staff reflect the teaching role as consistently as the research one. For the development

of effective teaching, it is crucial that academics have sufficient time (as high-quality teaching tends to be more time-consuming than traditional approaches), appropriate competencies, and motivation. National and international discussions (e.g. Anderson et al., 2011; Brownell, Tanner, 2012) identify several key tools for supporting teaching in an academic environment:

- Education and training in pedagogy, psychology, and didactics, including hands-on experience in teaching methods and assessment.
- Support for collegial cooperation through peer teaching groups, where academics observe each other's teaching, provide feedback and discuss pedagogical development.
- Teaching and learning centres providing ongoing methodological support to academic staff.
- Reform of criteria for recruitment, promotion, evaluation, and remuneration to take into account not only research performance but also teaching quality. Emphasis should be placed on multi-layered qualitative evaluation of teaching, not just on student evaluations (see Bednaříková 2012).

In both Czech and international higher education, the integration of teaching and research roles represents a significant challenge – both for institutions and individual academics. The current Czech system strongly favours research, which enjoys higher prestige and better financial rewards and forms the core of academic career preparation. Research outputs determine the position of universities in international rankings and in external quality assessments, leading academic career aspirations to focus on research performance. Educational activities, on the other hand, remain in the background – in terms of prestige, financial resources, and time allocation. Yet the ability to conduct excellent research does not automatically mean that an academic is also a high-quality teacher (NAB, 2023).

5.2 Proposal for a Competency Framework for Teaching Competencies in Higher Education

Below is an excerpt from a document created as an output of the Centralised Development Project *Quality Standards for Teaching at Czech Higher Education Institutions* (ROZV/C7/2023). It presents a proposed Competency Framework developed through a year-long collaboration between representatives of 22 Czech universities and the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education in the Czech Republic. It aims to define a shared vision of high-quality university teaching, to map out teaching competencies, and to serve as a basis for tools that support the development of academic teaching practice (cf. Procházková & Vařejková, 2023). Teaching competencies are understood as a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes

necessary for effective teaching (cf. Vašutová, 2004). Their continuous development enables educators to respond to professional challenges in a manner aligned with their personal characteristics, motivation, and work environment. The competency framework will continue to evolve in response to the needs of educators, trends in pedagogy, and changes in education policy at both national and international levels.

Below, six key teaching competencies and their indicators are briefly described. The complete framework is included in the appendix of the monograph.

- *I actively work on shaping my professional identity as a university teacher, my professional development, and the quality of teaching.*

This first competency focuses on the development of a university teacher's self-concept. Specifically, it includes the cultivation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to one's teaching practice, understanding and application of didactic principles and educational and psychological research. That also involves self-awareness, care for the well-being and work-life balance, providing collegial support, understanding the regulations that govern study conditions, and participating in the so-called third mission of higher education institutions.

- *I approach my teaching preparation in a comprehensive and conceptual manner.*

The second competency describes the planning phase of teaching, i.e. what needs to happen before entering the classroom. It includes timely preparation, setting learning objectives aligned with graduate profiles, clarifying how students' knowledge, skills, and competencies will be assessed, providing feedback, structuring the course using appropriate methods and formats, designing content with clarity in mind, and adapting the course to the educational needs of students.

- *I teach purposefully, taking into account the needs of students.*

The third competency concerns the direct engagement of the educator with students during teaching. It involves working with teaching goals, content, methods, and conditions, as well as creating space for active learning. That includes fostering student motivation, responding to their needs, and offering constructive feedback. Collaboration with other educators involved in the teaching process is also an integral part.

- *I use a variety of methods to assess the progress and achievement of students.*

This fourth competency relates to the methods of evaluation of students' learning progress and results. It is based on principles of formative and summative assessment, including the use of assessment criteria, providing constructive feedback, encouraging peer assessment and self-assessment, and employing diverse strategies to ensure fairness and objectivity in evaluating learning outcomes.

- *I create appropriate conditions for learning and build a safe environment and positive relationships.*

The fifth competency focuses on creating a conducive learning environment and cultivating relationships with students. That involves establishing and maintaining a safe space for students, encouraging collaboration and improving peer relations, and ensuring the conditions for all students to succeed. That includes aligning study responsibilities with other areas of their lives.

- *I use reflection as a tool for personal and professional development, both for myself and my students.*

The sixth competency describes the ability to reflect on one's work and actions, as well as the skill of leading students to reflect. That is concretised in the form of so-called reflective practice. That includes reflective teaching, using feedback to innovate and improve instruction concerning learning goals and outcomes, analysing teaching from multiple perspectives, and drawing on various sources for reflection, including collegial feedback.

The presented Competency Framework is intended as a supportive tool for the professional development of higher-education teachers. Regardless of the length of their teaching experience, it helps them focus on specific developmental goals, monitor their progress, and reflect on their practice. However, its usefulness extends beyond individual academic development. The framework can also be applied by other stakeholders within universities, including:

- Mentors supporting the professional growth of early-career educators.
- Department heads who manage and evaluate their teams' teaching activities.
- HR departments involved in the recruitment and professional development of academic staff.
- Departments focused on teaching competencies development, providing training and methodological guidance.
- Institutional leaders responsible for setting strategies to enhance teaching quality.
- Persons responsible for the personnel and development agenda, setting strategies to enhance teaching quality.

The authors of the framework emphasise its broad application within the framework of teaching quality management and professional development. It can be useful, for example, for:

- HR professionals in selection procedures or when defining recruitment criteria for teaching positions.
- Teaching quality managers in setting and monitoring educational standards.
- Academic board members, in evaluating teaching contributions of staff.
- Internal evaluation boards, when assessing the quality of degree programmes.

- Degree programme guarantors who oversee and evaluate teaching in their programmes.
- Development centres in planning support activities for teaching staff based on the framework.

The competency framework is, therefore, a tool:

- For analysing teaching competencies and identifying the educational needs of academic staff.
- For monitoring and setting standards for teaching quality at the university level.
- For planning further education and professional growth of educators.
- For defining criteria for teaching roles during recruitment processes.
- For systematical monitoring of the professional development of educators and their supervisors.
- For supporting professional dialogue within academic boards, working groups, and advisory bodies of universities. (Procházková & Vařejková, 2023)

Furthermore, the framework provides a foundation for institutional-level support for teaching development. It enables universities to formulate strategies for teaching improvement and to create conditions that facilitate the development of teaching skills among academic staff. Its implementation may foster a culture of continuous professional development and innovation in teaching. A significant aspect is the possibility of linking the competency framework to teaching evaluation processes so that feedback from students, colleagues, and management becomes a tool for development rather than merely an administrative obligation. In the context of international higher education, the framework may help Czech universities better respond to rising expectations for teaching quality and enhance their competitiveness within the European Higher Education Area.

6 Competency-Based Development Project for Academic Staff

A crucial group of university employees consists of academic (or academic-research) staff, including doctoral students. Mendel University in Brno has committed to the principles enshrined in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (European Commission, 2006). Subsequently, it became the first Czech higher education institution to receive the prestigious HR Award from the European Commission. This award commits to actively enhance human resource management so that it complies as closely as possible with the principles of the Charter and the Code.

From January to December 2021, a sub-project of the Institutional Plan of Mendel University in Brno was implemented under the title *Development of Strategic Human Resource Management at MENDELU in the Area of Career Development of Employees*. It aimed at designing a system to support staff training and development. The project activities were primarily focused on developing the competencies of this staff group, the managerial skills of leadership personnel, and, importantly, the general competencies needed to orient and prepare employees for work in the academic environment.

6.1 Objectives and Methodology of the Project

The project objective was to design a system for the continuous support of training and professional development for university staff in key areas. The implementation included phased steps distributed throughout the project year. Interim results were regularly presented at meetings of the HR Award working group, chaired by the Vice-Rector for Human Resources Management. The implementation of the project involved mainly the staff of the University's Institute of Lifelong Learning and the Department of Human Resource Management. Detailed information on the development and results of each sub-part of the project is provided in the following chapters, each concluding with a summary. In our work, we drew inspiration from examples at other foreign universities, particularly where interesting educational trends could be observed (for more details, see our study: Adamec & Kryštof, 2022).

The project implementation consisted of a series of interlinked and, in some cases, parallel activities. The most important activities in this sense included:

- Analysis of good practices in education and development at foreign universities,
- Design and development of competency models for academic staff,
- Verification of competency models using both quantitative and qualitative methods,

- Design, development, implementation, and evaluation of pilot training courses,
- Development of an education and development framework tailored to different categories of academic staff.

6.1.1 Examples of Good Practice in Education and Development at Foreign Universities

To develop competency models and design a comprehensive educational framework for academic staff, among other things, we drew inspiration from international universities. The goal was to gain insights and inspiring examples of good practice in the field of staff development systems at other academic institutions. Selection criteria were based on university and college rankings with a focus on agricultural and forestry institutions as well as the region (narrowed to Europe). We utilised the QS Ranking (Agriculture & Forestry) and the Shanghai Ranking (Agricultural Sciences) as the basis for our analysis. For a brief analysis, we selected a total of 10 foreign universities and colleges.

For comparison, the following universities and research institutions were selected (in alphabetical order): Aarhus University, ETH Zurich, Ghent University, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Paris-Saclay University, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, University of Copenhagen, University of Hohenheim, University of Reading, and Wageningen University.

For all selected universities, we analysed publicly available information on staff education and development systems from their websites and related portals. We also identified relevant contact persons (e.g. Vice-Rectors for Human Resources Management, senior staff responsible for academic staff education, etc.) and requested online meetings to conduct more in-depth interviews about their development and training frameworks. However, the response rate to our email requests for online meetings was very limited.

6.1.2 Design of Competency Models for Academic Staff

For the project implementation purposes, we used the HR Award methodology to categorise academic staff into R1, R2, R3, and R4, where R1 represents Ph.D. students, R2 postdocs with the potential for scientific and research activities, R3 junior researchers (in our context associate professors) and R4 senior researchers (in our terminology professors). Through this categorisation, we identified a significant group of academic staff who we provisionally labelled A2. These are individuals who have obtained a Ph.D. but primarily identify as educators rather than researchers. They do not aspire to further academic titles (e.g. associate professor, professor) and generally lack research ambitions. Their focus is predominantly on teaching, while research activities are secondary. We separated the A2 group from the R2 category and focused on it from this perspective.

Our approach was primarily inspired by the competency model developed at The Pennsylvania State University, which delineates competencies for different academic roles. We adapted this model for the needs of our university and expanded it to include attributes related to teaching competencies. The competency models thus comprise several domains, each tailored to the level of academic staff. The selected competency areas are:

- Subject-specific knowledge,
- Responsible approach to scientific work,
- Ability to think critically,
- Data handling skills (statistics),
- Research ethics,
- Communication skills,
- Research leadership and team management,
- Personal effectiveness,
- Teaching.

Naturally, the competency requirements for R4 (Professors) are higher than, for instance, R2 (Postdocs), and so on. All competency models are included in the Appendices of this monograph.

6.1.3 Verification of Competency Models Using Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

The aim of verifying the competency models was twofold: to validate the defined competencies and to pilot an assessment of current competency levels among selected academic staff across the university. We chose the 270° feedback method for data collection. That involved obtaining feedback from the respondent's direct supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates (e.g. research team members or Ph.D. students). We also considered using the 360° feedback method, which includes student evaluation; however, we decided not to choose this option in agreement with university management. The principal reason was the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, due to which most teaching and consultations took place online. That could have significantly distort student evaluation. The 270° method is widely recognised for providing reliable feedback on evaluated respondents.

We selected the respondents in collaboration with faculty representatives involved in the HR Award group. These representatives then offered staff from their faculties or institutes the opportunity to volunteer as participants in the project. Respondents were informed of the benefits, including receiving anonymous feedback on their competencies. Selection was balanced across the categories (R1, R2, R3, R4, and A2), with 10 participants from each organisational unit, two from each category,

resulting in a total of 60 participants. We acknowledge that, given the total number of academic staff, this is not a fully representative sample.

Table 8

Respondent structure by category and gender

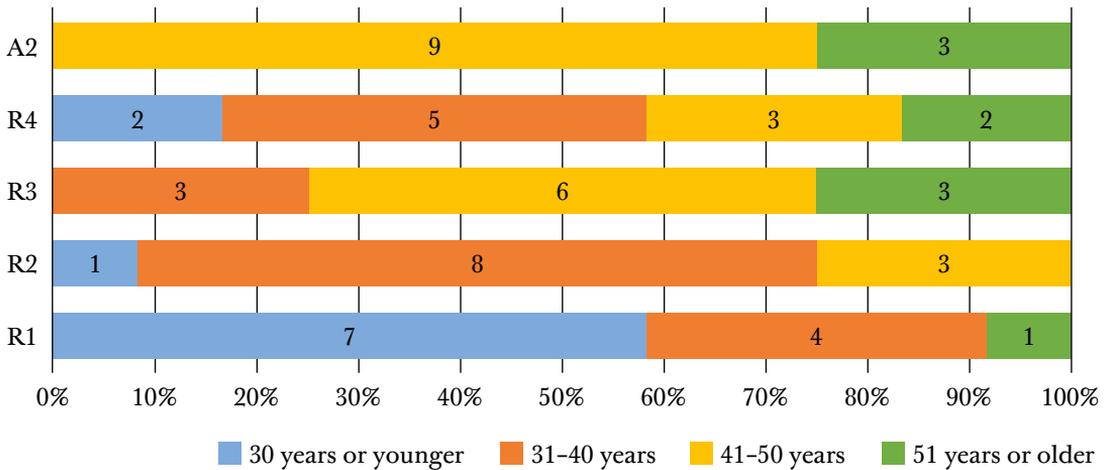
| | men | | women | | total | youngest | oldest | average |
|--------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|--------|---------|
| R1 | 5 | 41.7% | 7 | 58.3% | 12 | 26 | 54 | 32 |
| R2 | 10 | 83.3% | 2 | 16.7% | 12 | 30 | 45 | 38 |
| R3 | 5 | 41.7% | 7 | 58.3% | 12 | 37 | 59 | 45 |
| R4 | 11 | 91.7% | 1 | 8.3% | 12 | 39 | 63 | 50 |
| A2 | 6 | 50.0% | 6 | 50.0% | 12 | 41 | 61 | 47 |
| total | 37 | 61.7% | 23 | 38.3% | 60 | 26 | 63 | 42 |

The ethical aspect of the whole implementation of the evaluation of the people involved was paramount. Breaching anonymity could undermine the trust of the academic staff in similar activities in the future. Therefore, only one staff member (a professional in the field) was solely responsible for the implementation and held exclusive access to all data.

Based on the method (270° feedback) and selected respondents, two questionnaires were created for each respondent. One was for self-assessment of the respondent’s competencies, and the other was distributed to selected evaluators (supervisors, peers, subordinates). A total of 120 questionnaires were administered via Google Forms (external to the university network to avoid potential data breaches). A debated issue was the scaling method. Instead of using the traditional numerical 1-7 scale, a percentage scale was used: 0-10%, 11-20%, 21-30%, 31-40%, 41-50%, 51-60%, 61-70%, 71-80%, 81-90%, 91-100%, 101% and above. While mathematically questionable, the intention was to clearly define the expected level (91-100%), with 101%+ signifying excellence, i.e. that the respondent’s competencies in a given area are higher than required at a given level. The questionnaires also included two open-ended questions that allowed evaluators to provide qualitative feedback and development suggestions.

Chart 7

Representation of age categories in individual groups of academic staff



To select evaluators for each respondent, the respondents themselves were addressed directly. They were given specific instructions to choose at least 4 – 6 individuals who could reasonably be expected to provide relevant feedback on them. They were also informed that the evaluators should ideally include their direct supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates (e.g. research team members or Ph.D. students). It was emphasised that the most reliable results tend to come from individuals who have known the respondent for one to three years. Some respondents indicated that they did not wish to select specific evaluators themselves. In such cases, the selection was made by a staff member who was the only person with access to all relevant data. Using Microsoft O365 applications and the University Information System (hereinafter UIS), this staff member was able to determine with whom each respondent had the most frequent contact and to identify their supervisor, as well as any subordinates or doctoral students.

The overall completion rate for both questionnaires was 80%. Out of 60 individuals, 48 actively participated. Some selected respondents declined to participate despite being contacted either by the faculty or by a member of the HR Award group at their faculty or university institute. Some apologised that they were against it because it reminded them of the evaluation writing period of the previous regime, while others did not respond at all.

All actively involved respondents who completed the self-assessment and had their evaluators' ratings conducted were offered the opportunity for an individual feedback interview. During these sessions, participants received the results of their assessments. These interviews were conducted by the designated staff member who had prepared all the questionnaires and, for ethical reasons, was the only person with access to the data. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the interviews were held online, outside the university's internal systems, via Google Meet. Respondents showed a

strong interest in receiving feedback. In particular, they were often most interested in the responses to the open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire (i.e. positive assessments and recommendations for further development).

As part of the project implementation, a qualitative survey was conducted among the involved individuals from various university faculties. The survey was related to the provision of feedback on the results of the 270° feedback process (based on competency models), followed by semi-structured interviews held with academic staff who had expressed an interest in receiving feedback. The central question posed to staff across all categories was: *“What support would you need from the university? What development activities would be useful for you in your role as an academic staff member?”* All data were anonymised and recorded by the research team.

Following the one-on-one interviews, the implementation staff member compiled a matrix of all the data obtained, which no longer contained names and was thus fully anonymised. The data were then statistically processed by academic staff category (A2, R1-R4), and the outputs are presented in the relevant results chapter.

6.1.4 Implementation of Pilot Courses Including Their Evaluation

Based on the results of our research, new pilot courses were designed and created to support the development of selected competencies among the different categories of academic staff. The pilot courses aimed at verifying the effectiveness of the development of the specific competencies identified as desirable through the analysis. Experienced adult educators (teachers and andragogists) with long-standing experience in the academic environment were involved in the design, delivery, and evaluation of the courses. Each pilot course evaluation took place immediately after the end of the educational event. According to Kirkpatrick’s model of evaluation, attention was paid to satisfaction/dissatisfaction, trainer performance, and identification of potential training needs among the course participants.

Course content focused on topics and competencies suitable for development through training activities. Some competencies are better addressed through methods such as individual coaching, which is more tailored and can offer greater practical benefits to participants. In designing the pilot courses, attention was paid to the principles of adult education (androdidactics), with interactive elements and active learning strategies integrated into the sessions. Training courses were prepared for all staff categories except R4. For the R4 category, a workshop format was chosen, as the goal was to facilitate experience-sharing among the staff of the given category.

The implementation phase was carried out through the Department of Continuing Education at the University Institute of Lifelong Learning. This department

distributed invitations and contacted potential participants, managed registration, and arranged for the printing of handouts and certificates. Academic staff who had participated in the 270° feedback process were given priority registration, though the pilot courses were also open to other academic staff. At the end of each pilot course, feedback was collected via a printed questionnaire. The evaluation results are included in this monograph.

6.1.5 Proposal for a Concept of Education and Development for Individual Types of Academic Staff

In conclusion, a comprehensive concept of the education and professional development of different groups of academic staff was created. The approach and methodology for implementing these activities are provided in detail in the following section. A separate chapter is dedicated not only to specific outcomes but also to an in-depth analysis of the proposed concept, including its theoretical foundations and potential application methods.

This concept took into account not only the current need for the development of pedagogical and research competencies but also long-term trends in higher education, including digitalisation of teaching, interdisciplinarity, and international collaboration. Emphasis was placed on effectively linking theoretical knowledge with practical skills, enabling academic staff not only to respond to current challenges but also to actively contribute to innovations in higher education.

7 Project Results and Outputs

The following chapter presents selected examples of education and development systems for academic staff at different international universities. For institutions where the education system is not separately described, we were unable to discover more detailed information in the English versions of their websites. As previously mentioned, we contacted all ten selected universities via email but were unable to establish further collaboration.

7.1 Examples of Education and Development Systems at Foreign Universities

- **Aarhus University**⁴ offers training and professional development in areas such as the work environment, leadership, language and cultural competencies, academic writing in English, and intensive language courses. Particular emphasis is placed on the pedagogical competencies of academic staff. The university provides not only systematic training and opportunities for reflection on teaching styles via questionnaires but also individual feedback and supervision. Experienced educators observe teaching sessions directly and provide specific recommendations for improvement and implementation of active learning methods.
- **ETH Zurich**⁵ - **Swiss Federal Institute of Technology** organises training through its HR department, focusing on leadership, career planning, communication, soft skills, research project management, and work-life balance. Special attention is paid to leadership development across all academic staff levels, including newly appointed professors and innovation team leaders. A notable part of their offer is lateral leadership, which focuses on influencing others without having a formal leadership role. Career planning includes workshops on academic career paths, building professional profiles, and exploring alternative careers (academia vs. the private sector). The programmes also cover formal and informal requirements in academic careers and facilitate knowledge exchange among scholars.
- **Ghent University**⁶, in its English version of the website, primarily presents special training programmes for Ph.D. students. These faculty-organised courses are a mandatory part of doctoral studies, with each student required to complete at least three courses. The offers mainly focus on subject-specific areas, statistical methods, and the development of specific competencies of doctoral students.

4 Aarhus University - <https://international.au.dk/>

5 ETH Zurich - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology - <https://ethz.ch/en.html>

6 Ghent University - <https://www.ugent.be/en>

- **Norwegian University of Life Sciences**⁷ operates *The Learning Center*, an institute dedicated to supporting academic staff in achieving excellence in teaching and research. The centre presents itself as a partner in professional development for academics, although its website does not publicly detail specific programmes or seminars.
- **Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences**⁸ provides training for academic staff through several internal institutions – the HR department, the *EPU* (similar to the Institute of Lifelong Learning), and the *Gruppen för hållbart ledarskap i akademien* (Group for Sustainable Leadership in Academia). The range of courses focuses on both soft and hard skills, including conflict resolution, project management, and leadership. The *EPU* provides the most extensive training offer, delivering programmes for both Ph.D. students and academic staff. Key topics include student assessment and grading, critical thinking, active e-learning, and research presentations at conferences. A significant component is training for doctoral supervisors, which includes topics such as the structure and objectives of doctoral education, ethical and legal aspects of supervision, and effective leadership of doctoral students.
- **The University of Copenhagen**⁹ offers a comprehensive system of individual professional development, including mentoring and coaching methods. Particularly inspiring is the *Introduction to University Pedagogy* programme, which equips academic staff with the competencies needed to plan, deliver, and evaluate teaching based on proven pedagogical principles. The University has also developed the *Marie Curie* programme, which features a structured self-coaching form designed to navigate Ph.D. students through the various stages of their studies.
- **The University of Hohenheim**¹⁰ particularly emphasises the training of postdoctoral researchers. It offers optional seminars, regular academic networking meetings focused on career development, career counselling, and individual coaching. The seminars cover topics such as conflict management in research teams, negotiation in academia, publication strategies, collaboration with industry, and presentation skills.
- **The University of Reading**¹¹ runs *The Academic Development and Enhancement Team (ADE)*, which supports academic staff in their teaching and educational development. It offers expert consultations, strategic advice, and professional coaching in areas such as pedagogical practice, academic CV writing, and research project funding.

7 Norwegian University of Life Sciences – <https://www.nmbu.no/en>

8 Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences – <https://www.slu.se/>

9 The University of Copenhagen – <https://www.ku.dk/english/>

10 The University of Hohenheim – <https://www.uni-hohenheim.de/en>

11 The University of Reading – <http://www.reading.ac.uk/>

- **Wageningen University & Research**¹² provides education through its *Education Career Path (ECP)* programme, which consists of four levels. The first level focuses on learning by example, the second on goal-oriented teaching, the third on fostering collegial pedagogy, and the fourth, *Effective Teacher*, represents highly experienced educators who contribute to innovation in higher education.

In addition, we contacted partner institutions of Mendel University in Brno – *Louisiana State University* (USA) and *The University of Žilina* (Slovakia) – aiming to map their approaches to academic staff development. **Louisiana State University**¹³ has developed the *LADDER* concept, which enhances selected pedagogical competencies through self-assessment and individual coaching. This approach is gradually being extended to include students as well. **The University of Žilina**¹⁴ offers the *Vademecum* educational programme, which includes courses on HR management, presentation skills, marketing, organisational culture, project management, and the legal aspects of academic work. The programme also offers language education and digital literacy development.

These insights provide valuable inspiration for designing effective academic staff development strategies within our institution.

7.2 Validation of Competency Models for Individual Staff Categories

7.2.1 Model for Staff Category A2

One of the studied groups consisted of academic staff members whose job duties primarily involved teaching. The data collected describe the assessment of competencies for nine staff members in this category. The following text includes graphs for each competency, showing **Self-assessment** (1) – the value each staff member assigned to how they perceived their competency level, and **Average peer assessment** (2) – the average score assigned to each staff member by their colleagues within the given competency.

A total of **9 individuals from the A2 category** participated in the evaluation. Within the 270° feedback framework, these individuals were **assessed by 39 people**, including their colleagues, supervisors, and others. The table below summarises the assessment for each competency within the competency model for category A2. It includes average self-assessment scores, average scores provided by evaluators (colleagues, supervisors, etc.), and a calculated difference between the two

12 Wageningen University & Research – <https://www.wur.nl/en.htm>

13 Louisiana State University – <https://www.lsu.edu/ldi/index.php>

14 The University of Žilina – <https://ucv.uniza.sk/>

(including a plus or minus sign). A **positive value (+)** indicates that the evaluation from others was more favourable than the individual's self-assessment.

Table 9

Competency evaluation – staff category A2

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | Demonstrates depth of knowledge, critically evaluates work and research, challenges dogmas, and sees the broader picture of their academic field. | 8 | 9.2 | +1.2 |
| 2 | Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of methods and approaches. Assists members of the laboratory or department using relevant methods and approaches, both practically and theoretically. | 7.9 | 9.2 | +1.3 |
| 3 | Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. research collaboration, international internships, research data). | 6.7 | 8.6 | +1.9 |
| 4 | Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. | 8.4 | 9.5 | +1.1 |
| 5 | When dealing with others, communicates personal requirements in a polite and respectful manner. | 9.9 | 10.1 | +0.2 |
| 6 | Presents research at conferences in a clear and understandable manner. Mentors doctoral students in presentation skills. Adapts to the audience. | 9.2 | 9.1 | -0.1 |
| 7 | Can review journal articles and academic literature, prepare manuscripts for publication, and respond to editorial queries and feedback. Writes with stylistic and grammatical accuracy. | 7.8 | 9.4 | +1.6 |
| 8 | Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. | 5.5 | 7.5 | +2.0 |
| 9 | Can popularise research to a lay audience and explain broader contexts of the research. Participates in events for the public and various community groups. | 8.6 | 9.5 | +0.9 |
| 10 | Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. | 8.0 | 9.3 | +1.3 |
| 11 | Actively seeks opportunities for improvement and professional growth. Identifies and addresses problems proactively. | 8.0 | 9.2 | +1.2 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 12 | Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. | 9.4 | 9.6 | +0.2 |
| 13 | Sets realistic deadlines for tasks; meets agreed deadlines for tasks, activities, and deliverables. | 8.8 | 9.9 | +1.1 |
| 14 | Approaches others' research with respect. Promotes a positive atmosphere in teams in which is involved. Collaborates willingly with senior researchers on their research. | 9.6 | 9.8 | +0.2 |
| 15 | Is able to define learning objectives. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. | 9.6 | 9.8 | +0.2 |
| 16 | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). | 9.6 | 9.8 | +0.2 |
| 17 | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. | 9.7 | 10 | +0.3 |
| 18 | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. | 9.6 | 9.9 | +0.3 |

Only one competency was rated more positively in the self-assessment than by peer evaluators:

- *Presents research at conferences in a clear and understandable manner. Mentors doctoral students in presentation skills. Adapts to the audience. (C6)*

The greatest differences between self-assessment and peer assessment (differences of 1.5 or more) were observed in the following competencies:

- *Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. (C8)*
- *Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. research collaboration, international internships, research data). (C3)*

- *Can review journal articles and academic literature, prepare manuscripts for publication, and respond to editorial queries and feedback. Writes with stylistic and grammatical accuracy. (C7)*

The lowest-rated competency by both groups was:

- *Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. (C8)*

The highest-rated competency by both groups was:

- *When dealing with others, communicates personal requirements in a polite and respectful manner. (C5)*

In general, the smallest differences between self-assessment and peer assessment were found in the area of **pedagogical competencies**. Both self-assessments and evaluator ratings were very high, with minimal differences (typically between 0.2 and 0.3).

7.2.2 Model for Staff Category R1

The second group assessed in the research study comprised students enrolled in doctoral study programmes. The competencies of these respondents were evaluated across seven key areas tailored to the specifics of this level of study. A total of **10 individuals** from the R1 group participated in the assessment, and **42 evaluators** (including colleagues, supervisors, etc.) assessed them within the **270° feedback** framework. The table below clearly summarises the evaluation of individual competencies based on the competency model for the R1 group. It includes average self-assessment scores and average scores provided by evaluators. For the purpose of interpretation, we took into account external evaluations, and the table presents a column indicating the difference between self- and peer assessments (with the appropriate sign). A **positive value (+)** indicates that the external assessment was more favourable than the individual’s self-assessment.

Table 10

Competency evaluation – staff category R1

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|---|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | Demonstrates detailed knowledge of the research field, critically evaluates sources (literature), and is able to formulate research questions and hypotheses. | 7.9 | 9.7 | +1.8 |
| 2 | Incorporates insights from other scientific disciplines and fields relevant to the research. Further applies this knowledge in the research. | 8.1 | 8.9 | +0.7 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|--|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 3 | Demonstrates the ability to design research projects using adequate methods, data collection, and analysis. Can effectively report and interpret results, including critical discussion. | 7.2 | 9.3 | +2.1 |
| 4 | Demonstrates the ability to place the details of the research within a broader framework, allowing for the formulation of broader and long-term research goals. | 7.8 | 9.0 | +1.2 |
| 5 | Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. | 10.2 | 10.3 | +0.1 |
| 6 | Conducts research according to professional standards and values, including scientific integrity and methodology, in compliance with ethical and legal requirements. Works with own data and sourcing where appropriate and shares data with colleagues. | 9.7 | 10.2 | +0.5 |
| 7 | Understands the vision, mission, goals, and strategy of the University. Recognises the impact and context of decisions and actions on the institution, colleagues, students, and potential clients. | 8.8 | 9.4 | +0.6 |
| 8 | Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. | 8.0 | 9.6 | +1.6 |
| 9 | Actively seeks opportunities for improvement and professional growth. Identifies and addresses problems proactively. | 8.9 | 9.6 | +0.7 |
| 10 | Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. | 9.2 | 9.8 | +0.6 |
| 11 | Collaborates systematically with the supervisor and meets agreed requirements. Can learn from the supervisor. | 9.3 | 9.9 | +0.6 |
| 12 | Is adaptable and flexible in changing research environments. Can adapt to new conditions, whether material, financial or social (interpersonal relationships, workplace atmosphere). | 9.0 | 10.0 | +1.0 |
| 13 | Develops new ideas, applications, or innovative solutions by pushing the boundaries of current knowledge. | 8.2 | 9.1 | +0.9 |
| 14 | Identifies and explores commercialisation opportunities; is willing to take adequate risks. | 7.4 | 8.6 | +1.2 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 15 | Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. international internships, research data). | 8.3 | 9.0 | +0.7 |
| 16 | Effectively sets realistic and measurable goals for research, aligned with time and funding constraints. Works in cooperation with the supervisor. | 8.6 | 9.1 | +0.5 |
| 17 | When leading a research team, supports colleagues in their growth by providing advice, feedback, instructions, and encouragement. | 9.7 | 9.7 | -0.05 |
| 18 | Includes outputs that may not directly relate to their research but may be relevant to colleagues. Shows respect for the work of others. Promotes a positive attitude towards the teams in which involved. | 9.6 | 9.7 | +0.1 |
| 19 | Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. | 9.7 | 9.9 | +0.2 |
| 20 | When dealing with others, communicates personal requirements in a polite and respectful manner. | 10.0 | 10.0 | 0 |
| 21 | Presents ideas clearly, comprehensibly, and specifically to various types of audience in different situations (e.g. interview, group work, conference). | 8.9 | 9.8 | +0.9 |
| 22 | Writes clearly and understandably across different formats (theses, PR, grant proposals, CVs). Writes with stylistic and grammatical accuracy. Structures text with a clear writing style. | 8.5 | 9.7 | +1.2 |
| 23 | Communicates and presents in a foreign language, e.g. English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. | 7.2 | 8.8 | +1.6 |
| 24 | Can define learning objectives based on discussion with the course guarantor. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. | 9.3 | 9.8 | +0.5 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 25 | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). | 8.9 | 9.9 | +1.0 |
| 26 | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. | 8.8 | 10.0 | +1.2 |
| 27 | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. | 9.8 | 9.8 | 0 |

Only one competency was rated slightly more positively in the self-assessment than by peer evaluators (though this difference is statistically insignificant and negligible when rounded to tenths):

- *When leading a research team, supports colleagues in their growth by providing advice, feedback, instructions, and encouragement. (C17)*

The greatest differences between self-assessment and peer assessment were observed in the following competencies:

- *Demonstrates the ability to design research projects using adequate methods, data collection, and analysis. Can effectively report and interpret results, including critical discussion. (C3)*
- *Demonstrates detailed knowledge of the research field, critically evaluates sources (literature), and is able to formulate research questions and hypotheses. (C1)*
- *Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. (C8)*
- *Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. (C23)*

The lowest-rated competencies in the self-evaluation were:

- *Demonstrates the ability to design research projects using adequate methods, data collection, and analysis. Can effectively report and interpret results, including critical discussion. (C3)*
- *Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. (C23)*

The lowest-rated competency from the point of view of the evaluators was:

- *Identifies and explores commercialisation opportunities; is willing to take adequate risks. (C14)*

The highest-rated competency by both groups was:

- *Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. (C5)*

7.2.3 Model for Staff Category R2

The third assessed group consists of postdoctoral staff - assistant professors. For these employees, competencies were also evaluated with a focus on the content of their job positions. In total, nine competency areas were assessed. **Nine individuals from the R2 group** participated in the evaluation, and within the framework of 270° feedback, they were assessed by **41 evaluators**, including colleagues, superiors, etc. The table below provides a clear summary of the evaluation of individual competencies within the competency model for the R2 group. The table contains the average values for self-assessment and peer assessment (i.e. from colleagues, superiors, etc.). For interpretation purposes, we took into account external evaluations, and the table presents a column indicating the difference between self- and peer assessments (with the appropriate sign). A **positive value (+)** indicates that the external assessment was more favourable than the individual's self-assessment.

Table 11

Competency evaluation – staff category R2

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|---|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | Demonstrates depth of knowledge, critically evaluates work and research, challenges dogmas, and sees the broader picture of their academic field. | 8.4 | 10.0 | +1.6 |
| 2 | Possesses a comprehensive knowledge of methods and approaches. Supports junior colleagues of the department in relevant methods and approaches, both practically and theoretically. | 8.7 | 10.1 | +1.4 |
| 3 | Formulates questions that demonstrate understanding of new information and existing knowledge beyond their discipline. Incorporates multiple disciplines into research. | 8.2 | 9.8 | +1.6 |
| 4 | Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. research collaboration, international internships, research data). | 8.3 | 9.6 | +1.3 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|--|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 5 | Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. | 9.0 | 10.1 | +1.1 |
| 6 | Conducts research according to professional standards and values, including scientific integrity and methodology, in compliance with ethical and legal requirements. Works with own data and sourcing where appropriate and shares data with colleagues. | 9.6 | 10.1 | +0.5 |
| 7 | Understands the vision, mission, goals, and strategy of the University. Recognises the impact and context of decisions and actions on the institution, colleagues, students, and potential clients. | 8.8 | 10.1 | +1.3 |
| 8 | Evaluates results and formulates new hypotheses based on past and current research. Can identify further key unanswered questions in the field. | 8.7 | 9.7 | +1.0 |
| 9 | Designs and conducts hypothesis-based experiments. Evaluates the research protocols of other team members. Can anticipate the scope of experimental results. | 7.6 | 9.8 | +2.2 |
| 10 | Consistently analyses and interprets data. Recognises significant findings and draws appropriate conclusions. | 8.9 | 10.0 | +1.1 |
| 11 | Designs interrelated experiments to address an overarching research question. Formulates specific hypotheses and defines alternative solution approaches based on current findings. | 8.0 | 9.8 | +1.8 |
| 12 | Carries out statistical analyses. Can work with correlations and recognises when further statistical consultation is necessary. | 7.8 | 9.7 | +1.9 |
| 13 | Uses appropriate databases, software tools, and algorithms related to the research project. Identifies suitable resources and involves experts to develop solutions to complex research problems. | 8.3 | 9.7 | +1.4 |
| 14 | Distinguishes between ethical and unethical research practices. Acts ethically. | 9.6 | 10.4 | +0.8 |
| 15 | Applies a moral approach when dealing with ethical issues. Respects plurality of opinions. | 9.7 | 10.2 | +0.5 |
| 16 | Is capable of reporting unethical practices when encountered. Recognises that authorities may not always be right. | 9.0 | 9.7 | +0.7 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|---|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 17 | Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. | 7.6 | 9.7 | +2.1 |
| 18 | When dealing with others, communicates personal requirements in a polite and respectful manner. | 8.8 | 9.9 | +1.1 |
| 19 | Presents research at conferences clearly and comprehensibly. Mentors doctoral students in presentation skills. Adapts to the audience. | 8.7 | 10.2 | +1.5 |
| 20 | Can write article and publications reviews, prepare manuscripts for publication, and respond to reviewers' comments and criticisms regarding submitted manuscripts. Writes in a stylistically and grammatically correct manner. | 8.4 | 10.1 | +1.7 |
| 21 | Can write a grant proposal clearly and comprehensibly with a logical structure of the research plan. Can seek advice from more experienced colleagues if needed. | 8.4 | 9.8 | +1.4 |
| 22 | Can popularise research to a lay audience and explain broader contexts of the research. Participates in events for the public and various community groups. | 7.4 | 10.0 | +2.6 |
| 23 | Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. | 7.4 | 9.6 | +2.2 |
| 24 | Effectively sets realistic and measurable goals for research, aligned with time and funding constraints. | 8.0 | 9.4 | +1.4 |
| 25 | When leading a research team, supports colleagues in their growth by providing advice, feedback, instructions, and encouragement. | 8.6 | 9.9 | +1.3 |
| 26 | Includes outputs that may not directly relate to their research but may be relevant to colleagues. Shows respect for the work of others. Promotes a positive attitude towards the teams in which involved. | 9.0 | 9.7 | +0.7 |
| 27 | Offers effective and creative solutions to problems and provides a framework for evaluating alternatives. Assists junior laboratory/workplace members with the problem-solving process. | 8.9 | 10.1 | +1.2 |
| 28 | Actively participates in resolving conflicts and fosters an environment of a collaborative research team. | 8.4 | 9.5 | +1.1 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 29 | Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. | 7.1 | 9.6 | +2.5 |
| 30 | Actively seeks opportunities for improvement and professional growth. Identifies and addresses problems proactively. | 8.4 | 9.8 | +1.4 |
| 31 | Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. | 8.7 | 9.6 | +0.9 |
| 32 | Sets realistic deadlines for tasks; meets agreed deadlines for tasks, activities, and deliverables. | 7.2 | 9.5 | +2.3 |
| 33 | Is able to define learning objectives. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. | 8.6 | 10.1 | +1.5 |
| 34 | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). | 8.9 | 10.1 | +1.2 |
| 35 | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. | 9.0 | 10.1 | +1.1 |
| 36 | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. | 7.9 | 9.8 | +1.9 |

None of the competencies was rated more positively in the self-assessment compared to the perception of evaluators.

The greatest differences between self-assessment and peer assessment (differences of 1.5 or more) were observed in the following competencies:

- *Can popularise research to a lay audience and explain broader contexts of the research. Participates in events for the public and various community groups. (C22)*
- *Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. (C29)*
- *Sets realistic deadlines for tasks; meets agreed deadlines for tasks, activities, and deliverables. (C32)*

- *Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. (C23)*
- *Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. (C17)*
- *Designs and conducts hypothesis-based experiments. Evaluates the research protocols of other team members. Can anticipate the scope of experimental results. (C9)*
- *In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. (C36)*
- *Carries out statistical analyses. Can work with correlations and recognises when further statistical consultation is necessary. (C12)*
- *Designs interrelated experiments to address an overarching research question. Formulates specific hypotheses and defines alternative solution approaches based on current findings. (C11)*
- *Can write article and publications reviews, prepare manuscripts for publication, and respond to reviewers' comments and criticisms regarding submitted manuscripts. Writes in a stylistically and grammatically correct manner. (C20)*
- *Demonstrates depth of knowledge, critically evaluates work and research, challenges dogmas, and sees the broader picture of their academic field. (C1)*
- *Formulates questions that demonstrate understanding of new information and existing knowledge beyond their discipline. Incorporates multiple disciplines into research. (C3).*

The lowest-rated competency in the self-evaluation was:

- *Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. (C29)*

The lowest-rated competency from the point of view of the evaluators was:

- *Effectively sets realistic and measurable goals for research, aligned with time and funding constraints. (C24)*

The highest-rated competency by both groups was:

- *Applies a moral approach when dealing with ethical issues. Respects plurality of opinions. (C15)*

7.2.4 Model for Staff Category R3

The fourth group of staff members are associate professors. As with the previous group, their evaluation was based on nine competency areas. A total of **11 individuals from the R3 group** participated in the evaluation, and as part of the 270° feedback, **they were assessed by 43 evaluators**, including colleagues, superiors, and others. The table below provides a clear summary of the evaluation of individual competencies within the competency model for the R3 group. It

includes the average values of self-assessment and the average scores given by evaluators (colleagues, superiors, etc.). For interpretation purposes, we took into account external evaluations, and the table presents a column indicating the difference between self- and peer assessments (with the appropriate sign). A positive value (+) indicates that the external assessment was more favourable than the individual's self-assessment.

Table 12

Competency evaluation – staff category R3

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|---|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | Consistently publishes the results of their scientific work to inform the academic community about their research. | 7.7 | 8.9 | +1.2 |
| 2 | Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of methods and approaches and shares it with other members of their research team. | 8.0 | 9.3 | +1.3 |
| 3 | Formulates connections between new and existing scientific knowledge beyond their discipline. Integrates multiple disciplines into research and actively participates in multidisciplinary research projects. | 8.7 | 9.3 | +0.6 |
| 4 | Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. international internships, research data). | 8.8 | 9.4 | +0.6 |
| 5 | Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. | 10.1 | 10.2 | +0.1 |
| 6 | Conducts research according to professional standards and values, including scientific integrity and methodology, in compliance with ethical and legal requirements. Works with own data and sourcing where appropriate and shares data with colleagues. | 9.2 | 10.2 | +1.0 |
| 7 | Understands the vision, mission, goals, and strategy of the University. Recognises the impact and context of decisions and actions on the institution, colleagues, students, and potential clients. | 9.1 | 10.0 | +0.9 |
| 8 | Describes experiments thoroughly within the context of hypotheses and scientific methods. Can prioritise scientific questions. | 8.5 | 9.7 | +1.2 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|---|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 9 | Designs and conducts hypothesis-based experiments with appropriate control mechanisms. Can critically evaluate the research work of others. | 8.7 | 9.6 | +0.9 |
| 10 | Is capable of independently interpreting data. Keeps members of the research team informed about ongoing results. | 8.7 | 9.5 | +0.8 |
| 11 | Plans and carries out interrelated experiments required for research. Can use research data to formulate further research questions. | 9.0 | 9.8 | +0.8 |
| 12 | Distinguishes between ethical and unethical research practices. Acts ethically. Conducts discussions on the principles of ethical research. | 9.6 | 9.8 | +0.2 |
| 13 | Applies a moral approach when dealing with ethical issues. Respects plurality of opinions. | 9.7 | 9.7 | 0 |
| 14 | Is capable of reporting unethical practices when encountered. Is available to doctoral students for guidance on ethical issues. | 8.6 | 9.5 | +0.9 |
| 15 | Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. | 7.9 | 9.7 | +1.8 |
| 16 | When dealing with others, communicates personal requirements in a polite and respectful manner. | 9.2 | 9.9 | +0.7 |
| 17 | Presents research at conferences clearly and comprehensibly. Mentors doctoral students in presentation skills. Adapts to the audience. | 8.6 | 9.3 | +0.7 |
| 18 | Presents their research results at an expert level in the context of the work of others (e.g. articles, monographs). Mentors doctoral students in written communication, such as preparing academic papers. | 8.5 | 9.0 | +0.5 |
| 19 | Can write a grant proposal clearly and comprehensibly with a logical structure of the research plan. Defines specific objectives within the research project. | 8.9 | 9.5 | +0.6 |
| 20 | Can popularise research to a lay audience and explain broader contexts of the research. Learns how to communicate with the media. Participates in events for the public and various community groups. Supports doctoral students in science popularisation. | 7.9 | 8.9 | +1.0 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 21 | Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. | 6.7 | 8.9 | +2.2 |
| 22 | Effectively sets realistic and measurable goals for research, aligned with time and funding constraints. Supports doctoral students in planning their schedules. | 8.2 | 9.6 | +1.4 |
| 23 | When leading a research team, supports colleagues in their growth by providing advice, feedback, instructions, and encouragement. Supports doctoral students in their scientific and research activities. Encourages others to take responsibility for their actions. | 9.3 | 9.5 | +0.2 |
| 24 | Helps create an environment focused on idea sharing, recognising the contributions of individual team members, and constructive negotiation. Shows respect for the work of others. Promotes a positive attitude towards the teams in which involved. | 8.9 | 9.3 | +0.4 |
| 25 | Offers effective and creative solutions to problems and provides a framework for evaluating alternatives. Assists junior laboratory/workplace members with the problem-solving process. | 8.8 | 9.5 | +0.7 |
| 26 | Actively participates in resolving conflicts and fosters an environment of a collaborative research team. | 9.2 | 9.1 | -0.1 |
| 27 | Demonstrates intellectual curiosity when formulating research questions, not only within their own field of expertise but across scientific disciplines. | 8.9 | 9.9 | +1.0 |
| 28 | Can recognize how the findings of others can support interdisciplinary collaboration and can incorporate experts from other fields into their research. | 9.0 | 9.7 | +0.7 |
| 29 | Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. | 8.2 | 9.3 | +1.1 |
| 30 | Actively seeks opportunities for improvement and professional growth. Identifies and addresses problems proactively. | 8.5 | 9.5 | +1.0 |
| 31 | Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. | 9.5 | 9.3 | -0.2 |
| 32 | Sets realistic deadlines for tasks; meets agreed deadlines for tasks, activities, and deliverables. | 8.3 | 9.2 | +0.9 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 33 | Is able to define learning objectives. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. | 9.1 | 9.6 | +0.5 |
| 34 | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). | 9.0 | 9.7 | +0.7 |
| 35 | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. | 9.8 | 9.8 | 0 |
| 36 | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. | 9.3 | 9.9 | +0.6 |

The following competencies were rated more positively in the self-assessment than by peer evaluators:

- *Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. (C31)*
- *Actively participates in resolving conflicts and fosters an environment of a collaborative research team. (C26)*

The greatest differences between self-assessment and peer assessment (differences of 1.5 or more) were observed in the following competencies:

- *Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. (C21),*
- *Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. (C15)*

The lowest-rated competency in the self-evaluation was:

- *Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. (C21)*

The lowest-rated competencies from the point of view of the evaluators were the following (though the values were not low; all were 8.9):

- *Consistently publishes the results of their scientific work to inform the academic community about their research. (C1)*
- *Can popularise research to a lay audience and explain broader contexts of the research. Learns how to communicate with the media. Participates in events for the public and various community groups. Supports doctoral students in science popularisation. (C20)*
- *Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. (C21)*

The highest-rated competency by both groups was:

- *Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. (C5)*

7.2.5 Model for Staff Category R4

The final evaluated group consists of professors. This group of staff members is expected to demonstrate the most comprehensive set of competencies. For this reason, the evaluation includes the highest number of items. A total of **9 individuals from the R4 group participated** in the evaluation, and as part of the 270° feedback, they **were assessed by 41 individuals**, including colleagues, superiors, subordinates, and others. The table below provides a clear summary of the evaluation of individual competencies within the competency model for the R4 group. It includes the average values of self-assessment and the average scores given by evaluators (colleagues, superiors, etc.). For interpretation purposes, we took into account external evaluations, and the table presents a column indicating the difference between self- and peer assessments (with the appropriate sign). A positive value (+) indicates that the external assessment was more favourable than the individual's self-assessment.

Table 13

Competency evaluation – staff category R4

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|---|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | Consistently publishes the results of their scientific work to inform the academic community about their research. | 7.8 | 9.7 | +1.9 |
| 2 | Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of methods and approaches and shares it with other members of their research team. | 9.2 | 9.8 | +0.6 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|--|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 3 | Formulates connections between new and existing scientific knowledge beyond their discipline. Creates and participates in multidisciplinary and international research projects. | 7.6 | 8.9 | +1.3 |
| 4 | Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. international internships, research data). | 9.1 | 9.8 | +0.7 |
| 5 | Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. | 10.2 | 10.1 | -0.1 |
| 6 | Conducts research according to professional standards and values, including scientific integrity and methodology, in compliance with ethical and legal requirements. Works with own data and sourcing where appropriate and shares data with colleagues. | 10.1 | 10.1 | 0 |
| 7 | Understands the vision, mission, goals, and strategy of the University. Recognises the impact and context of decisions and actions on the institution, colleagues, students, and potential clients. | 9.9 | 9.8 | -0.1 |
| 8 | Actively spreads the good name of the University and promotes the brand “Mendel University” not only in the Czech Republic but also abroad. Aims to advance the University’s standing in international comparative rankings of research institutions. | 9.1 | 10.1 | +1.0 |
| 9 | Independently formulates new hypotheses. Lectures and teaches practically the methodology of science. | 8.2 | 9.1 | +0.9 |
| 10 | Leads others to experiment and seek new paths in science. Provides feedback and recommendations to make further experimentation more effective. | 8.0 | 9.3 | +1.3 |
| 11 | Is capable of independently interpreting data. Keeps members of the research team informed about ongoing results. Teaches other team members how to interpret data. | 8.8 | 9.4 | +0.6 |
| 12 | Independently designs, plans, and manages research projects. Utilises research data to develop follow-up scientific and research activities. | 8.6 | 10.0 | +1.4 |
| 13 | Distinguishes between ethical and unethical research practices. Acts ethically. Initiates or conducts discussions on the principles of ethical research. | 9.7 | 10.0 | +0.3 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 14 | Applies a moral approach when dealing with ethical issues. Respects plurality of opinions. Teaches doctoral students an ethical approach through personal example. | 9.8 | 9.8 | 0 |
| 15 | Is capable of reporting unethical practices when encountered. Is available to doctoral students for guidance on ethical issues. | 8.4 | 10.2 | +1.8 |
| 16 | Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. | 9.1 | 9.4 | +0.3 |
| 17 | When dealing with others, communicates personal requirements in a polite and respectful manner. | 9.6 | 9.7 | +0.1 |
| 18 | Presents research at conferences clearly and comprehensibly. Mentors doctoral students in presentation skills connected with a broader scientific perspective. Adapts to the audience. Provides critical feedback on presentations to colleagues/team members. | 9.3 | 9.8 | +0.5 |
| 19 | Presents their research results at an expert level in the context of the work of others (e.g. articles, monographs). Responds appropriately to criticism from others. Mentors doctoral students in written communication, such as preparing academic papers. | 9.6 | 9.8 | +0.2 |
| 20 | Can write a grant proposal clearly and comprehensibly with a logical structure of the research plan. Conducts reviews of research grants and provides constructive feedback on others' grants. | 9.0 | 10.0 | +1.0 |
| 21 | Can popularise research to a lay audience. Appears in media as a scientific expert. Participates in events for the public and various community groups. | 8.7 | 9.5 | +0.8 |
| 22 | Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences), both at formal and informal meetings. Can write academic texts in a foreign language. | 8.9 | 9.6 | +0.7 |
| 23 | When leading research, effectively plans and sets realistic and measurable goals for research, aligned with time and funding constraints. Breaks plans into individual steps. Supports doctoral students in planning their schedules. | 9.2 | 9.6 | +0.4 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|---|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 24 | When leading a research team, supports colleagues in their growth by providing advice, feedback, instructions, and encouragement. Works not only with individuals but also with the entire team. Supports doctoral students in their scientific and research activities. Encourages others to take responsibility for their actions. Leads the team democratically. | 9.2 | 9.7 | +0.5 |
| 25 | Helps create an environment focused on idea sharing, recognising the contributions of individual team members, and constructive negotiation. Shows respect for the work of others. Actively engages in situations where research is not progressing. | 8.9 | 9.6 | +0.7 |
| 26 | Offers effective and creative solutions to problems and provides a framework for evaluating alternatives. Assists laboratory/workplace members with the problem-solving process. | 9.4 | 9.6 | +0.2 |
| 27 | Actively participates in resolving conflicts and fosters an environment of a collaborative research team. | 9.3 | 9.4 | +0.1 |
| 28 | Successfully collaborates with Czech and international scientific research specialists across universities, research institutions, and disciplines. | 8.8 | 9.6 | +0.8 |
| 29 | Successfully evaluates prospects and limitations of other scientific disciplines within potential collaboration. | 8.9 | 9.3 | +0.4 |
| 30 | Collaborates with others in integrating theories, research methods, and knowledge from multiple disciplines. | 7.9 | 9.2 | +1.3 |
| 31 | Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. | 8.6 | 10.0 | +1.4 |
| 32 | Actively seeks opportunities for improvement and professional growth. Identifies and addresses problems proactively. | 8.6 | 9.8 | +1.2 |
| 33 | Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. | 9.0 | 9.4 | +0.4 |
| 34 | Sets realistic deadlines for tasks; meets agreed deadlines for tasks, activities, and deliverables. | 8.9 | 9.9 | +1.0 |
| 35 | Is able to define learning objectives. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. | 9.4 | 9.8 | +0.4 |

| | Competency | Self-assessment | Peer assessment | Difference |
|----|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 36 | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). | 9.4 | 9.8 | +0.4 |
| 37 | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. | 9.4 | 9.7 | +0.3 |
| 38 | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. | 9.7 | 10.0 | +0.3 |

The following competencies were rated more positively in the self-assessment than by peer evaluators:

- *Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. (C5)*
- *Understands the vision, mission, goals, and strategy of the University. Recognises the impact and context of decisions and actions on the institution, colleagues, students, and potential clients. (C7)*

The greatest differences between self-assessment and peer assessment (differences of 1.5 or more) were observed in the following competencies:

- *Consistently publishes the results of their scientific work to inform the academic community about their research. (C1)*
- *Is capable of reporting unethical practices when encountered. Is available to doctoral students for guidance on ethical issues. (C15)*

The lowest-rated competency in the self-evaluation was:

- *Formulates connections between new and existing scientific knowledge beyond their discipline. Creates and participates in multidisciplinary and international research projects. (C3)*

The lowest-rated competency from the point of view of the evaluators was:

- *Formulates connections between new and existing scientific knowledge beyond their discipline. Creates and participates in multidisciplinary and international research projects. (C3), (though the value was not low; it was 8.9).*

The highest-rated competency by both groups was:

- *Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. (C5)*

7.3 Comparison of Teaching Competencies Across Academic Staff Categories

The profession of an academic worker – a university teacher – focuses on two main areas of activity, which stem from the core functions of higher education institutions: teaching and scientific research. The ratio between these two areas is influenced primarily by the academic staff category, the type of institution, and the academic discipline. Teaching activities reflect one of the key functions of a university – the transmission of scientific knowledge to students through instruction. Research activities are closely associated with the requirement for publication activities. These two elements are recognised as the main criteria for evaluating the quality of university teachers and form a prerequisite for the attainment of higher academic degrees. The teaching competencies of university educators are understood as a set of specific and highly expert knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experience that reflect the dynamic nature of educational processes in tertiary education (Vašutová, 2002). The following text is based on a published study, where further details can be found (cf. Adamec & Kryštof, 2022).

A university teacher should possess pedagogical, social, psychological, and ethical skills. Additionally, they should demonstrate didactic, evaluative, organisational and managerial skills, the ability for self-reflection and further personal development, as well as the ability to communicate pedagogically in an appropriate manner, including providing adequate support to disadvantaged students. These requirements are particularly significant for early-career teachers. The *Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic for the period from 2021* anticipates that universities will gradually ensure the development of pedagogical competencies among early-career academic staff (cf. Strategic plan, 2021).

From a general perspective, it was not possible to objectively compare the proposed competency models, except for one area. Across all competency models, only the questions/items related to the teaching competencies of academic staff were consistent. Therefore, the comparison below focuses specifically on this area across all academic staff categories (A2, R1-R4). The table below outlines the groups of competencies that define individual sub-competencies.

Table 14*Definitions of individual groups of teaching competencies*

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Competency group 1 | Is able to define learning objectives. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. |
| Competency group 2 | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). |
| Competency group 3 | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. |
| Competency group 4 | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. |

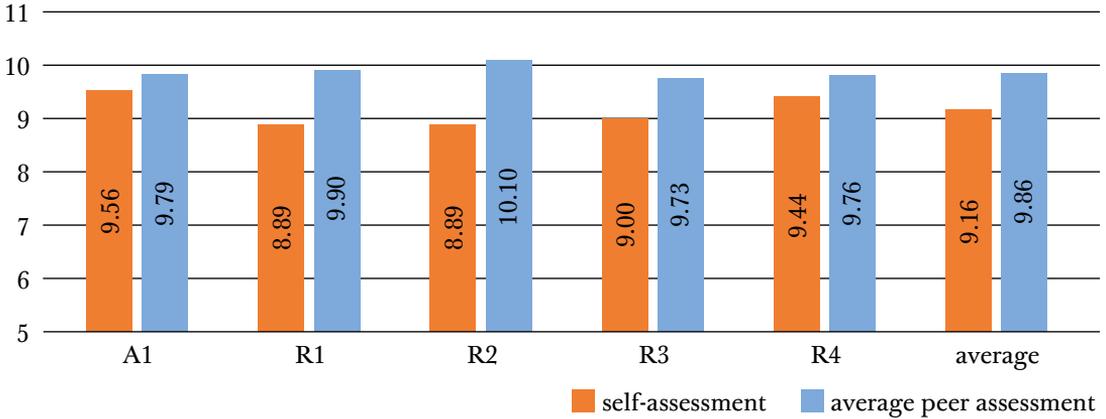
In the following graphs, you will find the average self-assessment scores, i.e. the average ratings by which staff evaluated their competencies within each competency group and the average scores awarded to them by their evaluators (colleagues, superiors, Ph.D. students, etc.).

Chart 8*Average ratings – competency group 1**Source: author's own processing*

Within this competency group, staff in category A2 rated themselves the highest on average (9.56), while those in group R2 rated themselves the lowest (8.56). Paradoxically, group R2 was rated the highest by their peers (10.10), and it was also the largest discrepancy between self-assessment and peer assessment.

Chart 9

Average ratings – competency group 2



Source: author's own processing

Within this competency group, staff in group A2 again rated themselves the highest (9.56), while groups R1 and R2 rated themselves the lowest (8.89). Group R2 received the highest average peer ratings (10.10), and group R2 had again the largest discrepancy between self-assessment and external evaluation (1.21).

Chart 10

Average ratings – competency group 3



Source: author's own processing

In this competency group, staff in category R3 rated themselves the highest (9.80), while groups R1 and R2 rated themselves the lowest (9.00). Group R2 again received the highest ratings from the evaluators and showed the largest difference between self-assessment and peer assessment (1.1).

Chart 11

Average ratings – competency group 4



Source: author's own processing

The evaluation results in this competency group differ from the previous three in several respects. For the first time, we encounter in group R1 that the average self-assessment is higher (10.00) than the average assessment by the evaluators (9.78). This group sees themselves as the strongest in this competency area. Group R2 rated themselves the lowest (7.89), and group R1 received the lowest external rating (9.78). Again, the greatest discrepancy between self-assessment and peer assessment (1.92) was found in group R2.

The results of our findings show, in particular, that academic staff tend to rate their teaching competencies lower than their colleagues, superiors, or students do. That is the most apparent in group R2, which “underestimates” themselves the most despite being rated highest by others.

7.4 Summary of One-on-One Interviews

Below, there is an overview of development needs according to individual categories of academic staff. Some responses appear more than once due to repetition across multiple interviews. A total of 34 one-on-one interviews were conducted with 34 respondents.

Table 15*Areas of development needs of the staff*

| Staff category | Continuous professional development needs |
|-----------------------|---|
| A2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English conversation. • How to build self-confidence and self-assertiveness, and how to overcome fear of public speaking. • Learning project writing and direction in further research from more senior colleagues. • Methodology. • Educational technology introduced in small doses. • Project writing, methodology, and qualitative research. |
| R1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical approach in doctoral student work, English language. • Scientific methodology, statistics. • Mentoring by more experienced colleagues (“What makes a scientist a scientist, a researcher a researcher, a teacher a teacher”). • Meta-perspective on doctoral student work. • Receiving feedback on doctoral student activities – are they being done appropriately, what should be improved? • Communication, rhetoric, and voice projection to engage listeners; how to build authority. • Statistical data processing. • Foreign language. • Coping with stress, time management, communication and collaboration. • MS Office skills (especially Teams and Outlook). • Leading a research team, teaching, and basics of pedagogy. • How to formulate project proposals correctly. • Statistical data processing. • Leadership, people management, understanding others’ needs, emotional intelligence. • English, time management. Realistic output expectations (e.g. publication count). • How to write publications – tips, tricks, handling translations. • Dealing with reviewers and the publication process (navigating through academic publishing) • Rhetoric, vocal hygiene. Using technology in education – synchronous and asynchronous teaching. |

| Staff category | Continuous professional development needs |
|----------------|--|
| R2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertiveness, time management, stress management, building international contacts, support for project writing, and common project-writing mistakes. • One-on-one English conversation, motivating staff, reducing administrative burden. • Language learning, emotional intelligence, assertiveness, team communication, conflict resolution, collaborative research and teamwork, co-teaching, and feedback on teaching. • English language, grant proposal writing, receiving feedback on publishing activities (style correction), patent application support, creating, managing, motivating and terminating project teams. • Teaching and education - facilitation and innovative methods in education. • How to make engaging conference presentations. • Time management, stress management, workplace conflicts, and mutual sharing of experience among colleagues. • How to share data with colleagues. • Conflict resolution, time management. • Project and grant proposal writing, budgeting, and project management. • Professional training. |
| R3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to attend open seminars, creative writing, trends, popularisation style in articles, and mentoring by foreign academics at the same or higher qualification level. • Self-motivation (“Fall ten times, stand up eleven”). • Criticism of funding structures and lack of support for applied research by the university • English language, contractual business support. <p><i>Common responses included: “Reduce administrative burden.” and “Limit interventions in faculty affairs by the rector’s office.”</i></p> |
| R4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading a scientific research team. • Motivational support. • How to find personal motivation. <p><i>“I’m involved in various structures, as well as in several international projects, I review for the European Union, and I’m still far from retirement. Doing another professorship is pointless – I don’t know what else I could achieve at the university.”</i></p> |

7.5 Pilot Courses

As a part of the implementation of a sub-project within the Institutional Plan, four pilot courses were planned for selected groups of academic staff. While four courses were scheduled, only three were carried out. The pilot course for the R4 category was not held due to the lack of registered participants. In light of this situation, one professor was approached with a request for an anonymous interview to explore the reasons behind the lack of interest. The findings from this interview are presented below.

7.5.1 Pilot Courses Implementation

A pilot course titled *How to Build a Respectful Relationship with Students* was created and delivered primarily for category A2. For category R1, the course *What Makes a Scientist a Scientist, a Researcher a Researcher, and a Teacher a Teacher – or What Competencies Should I Have as a Ph.D. Student and How Can I Develop Them?* was offered. For categories R2 and R3, the pilot course *How to Lead a Research Team Successfully – or When 1+1 Equals 3* was implemented. A workshop titled *I'm a Professor – What Next?* was intended for category R4, but it was not realised. The usual time allocation for each course was six hours. Summaries and content of the individual pilot courses are provided below.

Table 16*Characteristics of implemented pilot courses*

| Target group | Course title | Course annotation |
|---------------------|--|---|
| A2 | How to Build a Respectful Relationship with Students | Students are the heart of the university – even though the system of public university funding suggests otherwise. As educators, we spend a great deal of time with students. We have many memories from our studies. Building a respectful relationship is beneficial for both of us, the teachers and the students. A respectful relationship doesn't mean being kind, accommodating, or overly friendly; it's about setting boundaries in communication and collaboration to support the learning process. |
| R1 | What Makes a Scientist a Scientist, a Researcher a Researcher, and a Teacher a Teacher – or What Competencies Should I Have as a Ph.D. Student and How Can I Develop Them? | The aim of this practically focused seminar is to provide an overview of the essential and useful competencies expected of doctoral students at Mendel University in Brno throughout their doctoral studies. Participants will gain insight into how to acquire, develop, and apply selected competencies that will enable them to succeed in the scientific, research, and teaching environment. |
| R2, R3 | How to Lead a Research Team Successfully – or When 1+1 Equals 3 | In the decimal system, 1+1 equals 2 – but in teamwork, the rules are a little different. When scientists and researchers join their efforts, the potential to achieve excellent results increases significantly. For a team to function effectively, it requires a variety of roles to be represented, as well as it requires support, guidance, and sometimes conflict resolution from its leader. This seminar is designed for academic staff who lead research teams and want to feel more confident in their role as principal investigators. |
| R4 | I'm a Professor – What Next? | Becoming a professor in any field requires a tremendous amount of time, energy, and personal and professional compromise. After being appointed by the President of the Republic, there is a sense of relief and satisfaction in a job well done. However, over time, a sense of reality sets in, along with the question of how to continue finding the energy and motivation for future work. Being a professor is the peak of academic qualification – yet retirement may still be a long way off. The aim of this workshop is to share with fellow professors ways of generating positive energy for further creative work and collaboration. |

| Target group | Course content | Date of implementation |
|---------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| A2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What a respectful relationship involves • Specifics of mutually respectful communication • How friendly the student-teacher relationship should be • Setting boundaries in communication and collaboration • Building and maintaining a respectful relationship | 20/10/2021 |
| R1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements for doctoral students at MENDELU • Required competencies at other universities abroad • What individual competencies involve in the context of science, research, and teaching • How to develop selected competencies | 22/06/2021 |
| R2, R3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to effectively set and measure goals within time and financial constraints • How to choose the research team, work with them, and develop team members over time • How to foster teamwork and a positive team atmosphere • Creative problem-solving and conflict prevention | 30/09/2021 |
| R4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content will be tailored to participants' needs | 09/09/2021 |

7.5.2 Results on the Implemented Pilot Courses

Feedback was collected via printed questionnaires immediately after the end of each pilot course. The questionnaires were anonymous. Attention was focused on the following areas: sufficient information before the event, expectations met by the event, satisfaction with the course content, satisfaction with the time allocation, applicability in practice, and inclusion of practical examples and demonstrations in the teaching. Open-ended questions regarding the most valuable insights from the educational event, participants' educational needs, and comments or suggestions for future implementation were also included. A rating scale from 1 to 4 was used, where "1" represented 'definitely satisfied' and "4" 'definitely dissatisfied'.

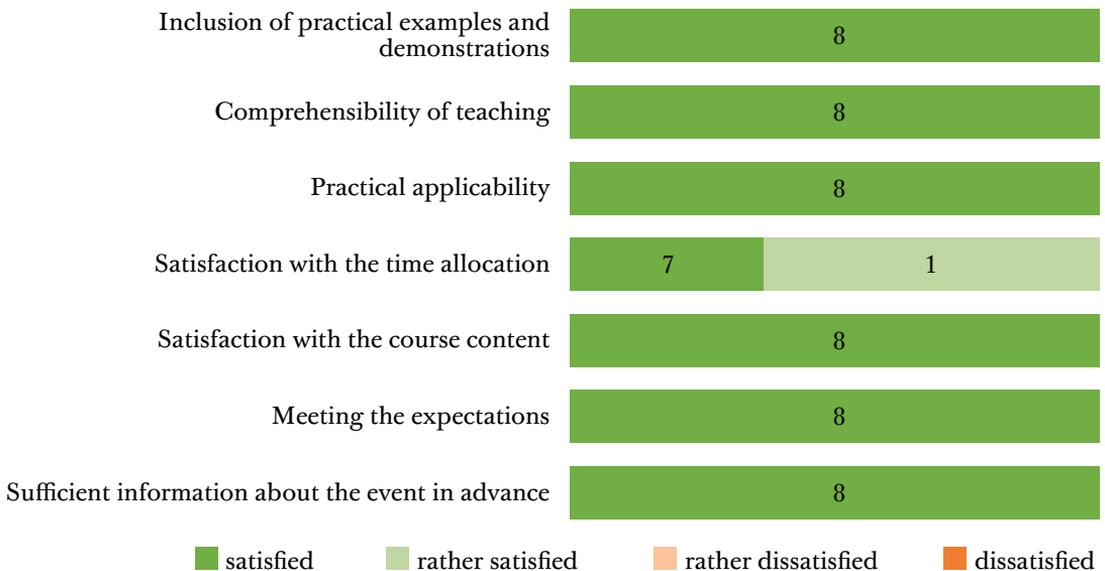
The results from the evaluation of each pilot course are described below. For the educational event *I'm a Professor - What Next?*, which was intended for category R4, a summary of the interview with the selected professor is included.

Course 1: How to Build a Respectful Relationship with Students

Ten participants took part in the pilot course; eight completed and submitted the questionnaire.

Chart 12

Satisfaction with the attributes of the course How to Build a Respectful Relationship with Students



Which information and insights from the event did you find the most interesting?

- Overall useful.
- Setting rules (contracts), dealing with specific situations, psychological games and how to get out of them.
- Sexual harassment by students and subsequent formulation of accusations.
- Contract, psychological games.
- How to set boundaries.
- Practical examples and insights. (2x)
- The contract was very interesting topic, where I learnt which position my approach to students falls into. I can continue to work on myself in this regard.

Which other topics would you be interested in?

- Issues related to communication with students, assertiveness.
- Academic counselling.
- Anything aimed at improving teaching.

Comments/suggestions regarding the course, organisation, or the lecturer

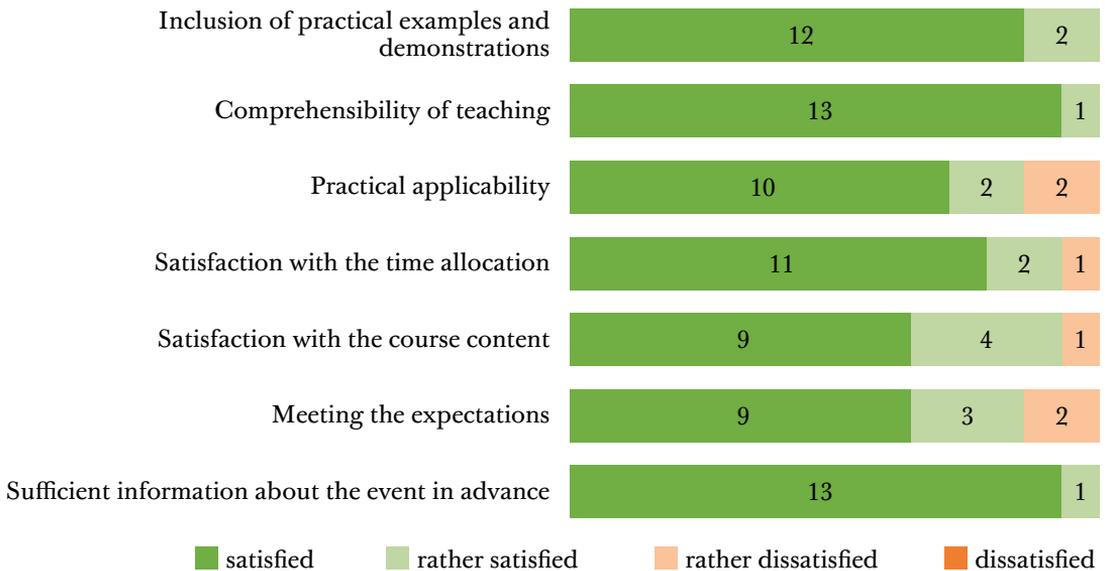
- Excellent course, the lecturer was outstanding again! I look forward to more courses.
- Thank you, very inspiring :-)
- I was very satisfied with the course. I appreciate connecting theory and practice, and participation in the discussion.

Course 2: What Makes a Scientist a Scientist, a Researcher a Researcher, and a Teacher a Teacher – or What Competencies Should I Have as a Ph.D. Student and How Can I Develop Them?

Fourteen participants took part in the pilot course.

Chart 13

Satisfaction with the attributes of the course What Makes a Scientist a Scientist, a Researcher a Researcher, and a Teacher a Teacher – or What Competencies Should I Have as a Ph.D. Student and How Can I Develop Them?



Which information and insights from the event did you find the most interesting?

- Integrating individual parts into a single unit.
- Key competencies a doctoral student should have; the teaching style of the lecturer – a model example.
- The lecturer’s personal experience.
- That it is better to admit we don’t know something than to make something up.
- Competency model – framework. (4×)
- Identifying problems and learning how to resolve them.
- Getting into contact with other Ph.D. students.
- Seminar structure – helped organise information (brought more clarity).

Which other topics would you be interested in?

- Topics dealing with “How to publish”.
- Research methods.
- University-level teaching. (6×)
- Ethics in science and education.
- Further development opportunities, data management, competencies.
- Development of specific competencies of a Ph.D. student. (2×)
- Statistics and methodology.
- Writing quality projects, building interdisciplinary research teams.
- Use of technology in teaching.

Comments/suggestions regarding the course, organisation, or the lecturer

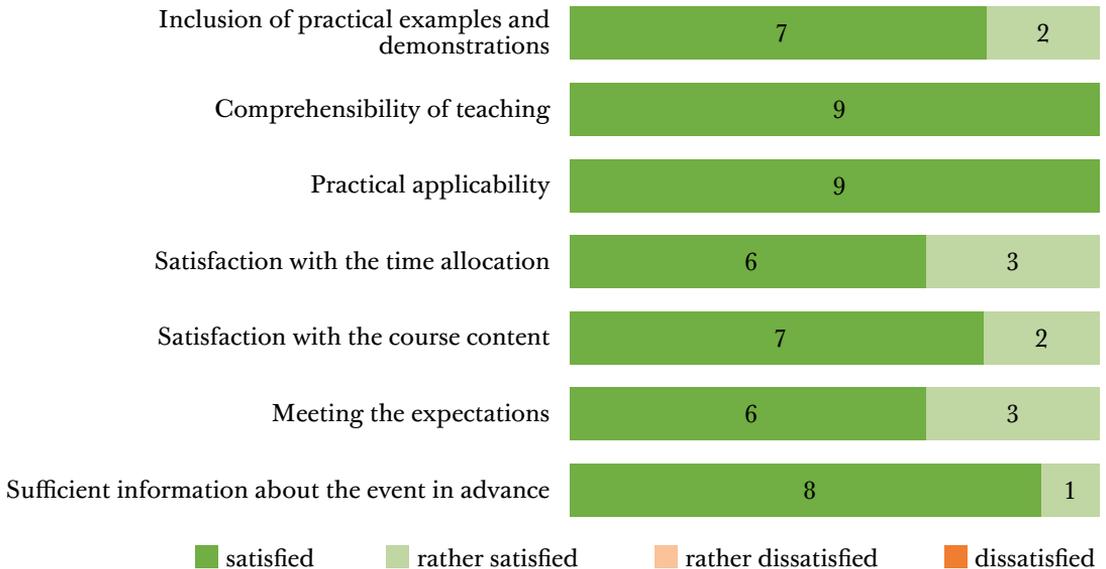
- More practical insights.
- Great :-) (2×)
- Excellent organisation, experienced lecturer.
- Shorter duration.
- I would include the course at the beginning of doctoral studies when we still know very little. Now, some of the content was demotivating for me, because I know it won't work for us anyway.
- Dr. Kryštof is highly intelligent, with excellent rhetoric, and presents information from both perspectives – I would definitely attend another course led by him.

Course 3: How to Lead a Research Team Successfully – or When 1+1 Equals 3

Ten participants took part in the pilot course; nine completed and submitted the questionnaire.

Chart 14

Satisfaction with the attributes of the course How to Lead a Research Team Successfully – or When 1+1 Equals 3



Which information and insights from the event did you find the most interesting?

- Leadership models (3×) and types of roles in a team.
- Everything.
- Personality model in a team, SMART.
- Approaches to leadership, awareness of core principles, what is important to focus on.
- Definition of roles (2×), introduction of models.

Which other topics would you be interested in?

- Working with individuals, time management.
- How to successfully write a project proposal. (2×)
- Assertive communication, conducting meetings.
- How to lead a research team in terms of research work.

Comments/suggestions regarding the course, organisation, or the lecturer

- Thank you! (2×)
- Try to make fewer jokes at the beginning – it doesn't make a good impression.
- More time.
- More practical examples.

Course 4: I'm a Professor – What Next?

As already mentioned, this pilot course was planned as a workshop during which staff in the R4 category would have the opportunity to share their experiences. The topic of the workshop was chosen based on the results of semi-structured interviews, which identified self-motivation as a key area of need. Staff in this category noted that they had already reached the highest possible academic qualification, were collaborating with international institutions, and were involved in activities such as evaluating research proposals or commenting on prepared legislation. All of this while being aware of having around 10–15 years left until retirement and no further prospect of formal career advancement.

The planned workshop was offered to all professors at our university via a special email. The workshop was not publicly advertised due to its specialised focus on the singular category of academic staff. As no one registered for the event, the workshop was cancelled. One professor was approached with a request for an anonymous interview to gain further insight into the development needs of academic staff in the R4 category.

A key idea that emerged from the interview was that academic staff in the R4 category tend to place their trust in individuals with the same qualification level – namely, other professors. Therefore, even when educational activities are led by highly competent lecturers who, on the other hand, do not hold a professorial title, the events are likely to be unsuccessful. Training sessions for the R4 category should thus be led by individuals with the title of professor.

During the interview, the professor suggested that the university could support R4-level academic staff by facilitating their involvement in international evaluations of scientific and research projects, where they could serve as reviewers. The main benefit of this would be that they could then share insights with their colleagues about the required structure and writing style of such applications.

7.6 English Language Courses and Coaching

As previously mentioned, in addition to designing and piloting new courses, the project also included language education and coaching. The table below provides an overview of the total number of participants involved, broken down by the faculty and department.

Table 17

Number of people involved in education and development activities by organisational unit

| Pilot courses | Participants | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------------------|------------|
| | FA | FFWT | FH | FBE | FRDIS | ILL | UFE | MGMT/ REC and UWD | TOTAL |
| Coaching | 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 28 |
| Individual English | 10 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 39 |
| Cambridge English exams | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 15 |
| Digital Academy | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 15 | 31 |
| Total | 25 | 16 | 8 | 15 | 17 | 7 | 4 | 21 | 113 |

Legend:

FA Faculty of AgriSciences

FFWT Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology

FH Faculty of Horticulture

PEF Faculty of Business and Economics

FRDIS Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies

ILL..... Institute of Lifelong Learning

UFE University Forest Enterprise

Mgmt/REC and UWD Management/Rectors's Office and University-wide departments

7.6.1 English Language Courses

Basic Information

The internationalisation of the university environment is one of the main priorities of our university, and language proficiency among staff is a key condition for its successful development. Proficiency in English is essential for academic staff to fulfil key job responsibilities such as teaching, studying, academic publishing, presenting at conferences, and communicating with international partners. Given that the current level of language skills among most employees is insufficient and that existing language course offer does not meet their needs, English language

training was incorporated into the project. Lessons were delivered individually, either online or in person, in an intensive format (more than two lessons per week) or a standard format (two lessons per week), with a strong focus on conversation and practising subject-specific terminology. Courses were led either by Czech tutors or native speakers.

Employees in managerial positions at the university and its departments were offered to voluntarily enrol in the English language course. A minimum entry level of B1 was required. A public tender was held to select a provider, with the company **Skřivánek s.r.o.** winning the contract. From February to July 2021, a total of 39 employees participated in the courses. The total duration of the course was 40 lessons (1 lesson = 45 minutes).

Participant Feedback

According to the evaluation of feedback questionnaires, the majority of participants were satisfied with the English courses. However, three employees expressed dissatisfaction with the teaching methods or personality of their lecturer. These cases were addressed immediately, and their lecturer was replaced. One-third of participants felt that the 40-lesson allocation was insufficient and would have appreciated its increase. On the other hand, two-thirds of participants had difficulty using up the full allocation. The lesson schedule was adapted to the individual needs and availability of both lecturers and staff. Most participants averaged two lessons per week, while some followed a more intensive schedule with up to four lessons weekly. All participants were offered the opportunity to complete the course by taking a **Cambridge English exam**. Fifteen employees took advantage of this opportunity (10 took the **FCE**¹⁵ and 5 the **CAE**¹⁶). The exams took place in December 2021. The English language training was met with highly positive feedback. Employees who took part appreciated the opportunity and expressed interest in more regular, long-term education to help improve or at least maintain their language skills.

7.6.2 Individual Coaching Implementation

Basic Information

Coaching was selected for pilot testing to support the development of managerial competencies. Employees in leading positions at the university and its institutes were offered to try out this method and assess whether it should be included as a permanent part of the university's staff development offer. Coaching took place either online or in person and consisted of four sessions. The goal was to enhance managerial and personal competencies based on the individual needs of the participants, such

15 First Certificate in English

16 Certificate in Advanced English

as improving communication skills, increasing personal productivity, improving workplace relationships, preventing burnout, finding work motivation, or balancing personal and professional life. Coaches were selected based on positive references from people who had personal experience with them. Our intention was to offer the participants a diverse range of coaches in terms of gender, age, experience, and location. A total of 8 coaches were approached for collaboration. Between March 1 and July 31, 2021, 28 people took part in the coaching programme, with each participant attending four sessions (lasting 60 minutes each).

Participant Feedback

The feedback questionnaire was completed by 25 participants. Everyone was satisfied with the range of coaches offered (a choice of nine people) and the way their coaching approaches were presented. All respondents were also happy with the choice of the coach and the coaching style. The most valued qualities in the coaches were professionalism, empathy, and the ability to actively explore and analyse topics. Most participants found the allocation of four sessions insufficient (16 responses) and would welcome an increase to approximately 6–10 sessions over the course of a year, with greater intervals between them (e.g. every two months).

The coaches helped 21 or 22 participants with self-awareness and to decide to do things differently. The most frequently cited areas of improvement were managerial practice (18 responses) and personal development (17 responses). Specific coaching topics were not investigated. No one responded negatively to questions on readiness for change, willingness to try new approaches, or belief in one's success. Most participants also stated that these changes would not have been possible without the coach. Six participants are not interested in continuing coaching, while the rest would like to continue. Most would prefer to remain with the same coach, while three would like to try a different one.

Eleven participants expressed interest in mentoring and fifteen in managerial skills training. Some even specifically mentioned the names of the mentors. The majority evaluated the coaching experience as highly beneficial. On a scale from 1 (the least beneficial) to 7 (the most beneficial), 80% gave a rating of 6 or 7. Opinions varied regarding who should ideally receive or be offered coaching – whether it should be aimed at new or senior management or even students.

7.7 Concept of Education and Development Proposal

The proposed concept is based on the competency models developed and subsequently tested in practice across individual departments at MENDELU (these models are included in the appendices to the relevant report). Our activities

focused exclusively on academic staff and their scientific, research, and teaching activities. It is important to note that academic staff also take on managerial roles (as heads of institutes, deans, vice-deans, vice-rectors, or rectors).

The reason for developing this concept is the current absence of any comprehensive educational or development programme at the University to support academic or academic management staff in their roles. We consider the managerial domain to be crucial for human resources development at the University, which is why it is integrated into this proposal.

The proposed concept is thus generally divided into the education of **academic staff** and the **academic management**.

The development of academic staff is further systematised separately for **doctoral students** (R1 category of academic staff), **academic-research staff** (largely encompassing categories R2, R3, and R4), and **higher education teachers** (part of R2, R3, R4, and a significant part of category A2 staff). In the system, we deliberately avoid referring to R1-R4 and A2 categories to prevent potential labelling.

Education and development of academic staff and academic management also include **individual development** facilitated by experts in relevant fields (mentoring, coaching). When including such formats in staff development, it is important for the University to ensure confidentiality and a high level of professionalism in the services offered.

Language education is not included in the proposed system. However, we believe it is a key competency that supports the University’s internationalisation and may improve its standing in international higher education institutions’ rankings.

Table 18

Proposed groups in the education and development system

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Academic staff | Education and development of doctoral students |
| | Education and development of academic-research staff |
| | Education and development of higher education teachers |
| Academic management | Education and development of academic management |

In the future, it is advisable to focus more closely on a **system of categorising academic staff**. During the implementation of the project, we identified a group of academic staff we **provisionally refer to as “A2”**. These are academics who have obtained a Ph.D. qualification but do not fully align with the expectation that they should engage in research and publishing at the required level alongside their teaching responsibilities. Often, these are employees who refer to themselves as “teachers” and specifically mention that they enjoy teaching and working with students because they see the university’s primary role in educating students and preparing them for practical life. If the A2 category were formally recognised in

the future, it would mean that such staff would not be required to undertake the same level of research and publishing as their colleagues but would instead carry a greater share of teaching and supervision responsibilities. It is evident that this is a highly sensitive topic that deserves discussion within the academic community. This issue is not explored further in this text, as it is beyond its scope.

7.7.1 Concept of Education and Development for Doctoral Students

Given that doctoral study is four years long, we propose a comprehensive education programme **over the first three years of study** so that doctoral students are not overburdened at a time when they should be fully focusing on completing their dissertation.

In the course of our work, we discovered that MENDELU **does not have a clearly defined role for supervisors**. Their responsibilities and duties are not specified. Each supervisor guides their doctoral students “in their own way”. We received feedback from some doctoral students that they lacked basic information on what they were expected to do. When asked what their supervisor told them, one student replied: “*Well, he said that when he was a doctoral student, he also had to figure everything out on his own, so why should he make things easier for me?*” As the first step, we recommend defining the role of a supervisor and their responsibilities.

The educational concept we propose for doctoral students does not focus on subject-specific training, as we consider this the supervisor’s responsibility. For example, the supervisor should, among other things, direct the student on how and where to publish. The concept assumes that doctoral students would begin teaching classes in the second year of their studies.

Based on international models, we recommend working with doctoral students on **three levels**:

- **Systematic educational programme**

see the table with the proposed content below

- **Possibility of individual mentoring**

For this purpose, it would be useful to create an internal network of experienced academics willing to provide individual consultations to doctoral students across the university. Alternatively, roundtables could be held where successful academics would present their methods of work and share how they established collaborations with foreign universities or secured research funding. Such consultations should be organised centrally to avoid overwhelming individual academics. A designated person responsible for doctoral education and development would match students with suitable academic mentors.

- **Possibility of individual coaching**

It is a widely used approach to doctoral development at foreign universities. Coaching is not counselling; rather, it supports the doctoral student in finding their own solutions. It can be a

particularly useful method, for example, when a student is working on their dissertation and experiencing a so-called creative block.

The proposed educational topics are designed as **one-day seminars, each lasting seven teaching hours**. Attendance at these seminars should be mandatory for doctoral students unless their supervisor decides otherwise. Each seminar should be evaluated in terms of participant satisfaction and knowledge gained. The scope of individual consultations would be determined according to the specific needs of each Ph.D. student.

Table 19

Education and development proposal for doctoral students

| | Educational topics | Mentoring | Coaching |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st year of Ph.D. studies | Doctoral student competencies - What Should I Do and What I am expected to do | available throughout the entire studies | available throughout the entire studies |
| | How to write a research project or grant proposal | | |
| | Responsible approach towards science, research ethics | | |
| | Statistical data analysis | | |
| | Fundamentals of teaching at university I (lesson planning, didactics) | | |
| | Basics of effective communication, assertiveness, and negotiation | | |
| 2nd year of Ph.D. studies | Research Management I (planning and project work) | | |
| | Research Management II (leading a team and problem-solving) | | |
| | Fundamentals of teaching at university II (effective teaching, dealing with classroom situations) | | |
| | Supervision of theses and dissertations | | |
| | Personal effectiveness (time management, stress management, conflict management) | | |
| 3rd year of Ph.D. studies | Self-motivation and personal development | | |
| | How to develop useful networking for scientific practice | | |
| | Connecting research with the application sphere | | |
| 4th year of Ph.D. studies | | | |

There should be a time interval of at least 3-4 weeks between individual educational events to avoid overwhelming Ph.D. students and to maintain their motivation for further development.

7.7.2 Concept of Education and Development for Academic-Research Staff

Academic-research staff include employees in the R2, R3, and R4 categories. As described above, education and development represent a specific aspect of their professional activities. The development framework for this group is divided into two core areas: **educational activities** and **individual development through coaching**. The educational segment tends to be broader and often serves more as a **refresher of knowledge** rather than the acquisition of new competencies. Coaching does not equate to counselling; instead it provides **support in defining plans, goals, and individual steps** to achieve desired outcomes.

In contrast to the doctoral students' development, training for academic and research staff should be **more voluntary**. The training system should be **integrated into the staff evaluation system**. Enrolment in educational and development activities should ideally take place in **consultation with a superior**, who, based on feedback, may recommend specific training. Alternatively, the manager, in cooperation with the employee and coach, may propose developmental areas for the academic staff member to work on with the coach. However, **academic-research staff should also have the opportunity to enrol in training independently** on a voluntary basis.

Training events for this group should be conducted **in a developmental and discussion-based manner**, providing opportunities for participants to **share experience** within the university context. It would be a mistake for these sessions to focus solely on theoretical content. Educational activities could be held **once a month** (see proposed table below). Of course, additional topics may be included, depending on current needs.

The proposed education topics are designed as **one-day seminars** consisting of **7 teaching hours**, with a **maximum of 15 participants per session**. **After approximately four years**, the topics should be **reviewed**, and an **analysis of the needs of academic staff** should be conducted to update and revise content accordingly. **Individual coaching** should be offered on an ongoing basis.

A specific target group for development is **professors**. As we have identified, they are more likely to accept development activities led by people with the same qualification level. For this category of academic staff, we recommend implementing **discussion-based round tables led by professors**. These could focus on topics such as:

- Keeping self-motivation for further academic work,

- How to participate in project evaluation at the international level and how to effectively disseminate the acquired knowledge at your workplace,
- Exploring opportunities for collaboration to achieve a **synergistic effect**.

Table 20

Topics proposal for education and development for R2, R3, and R4 staff category

| | Educational topics | Coaching |
|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| September | How to motivate yourself for academic work | available year-round |
| October | Leading a research team and addressing arising issues | |
| November | Workplace communication and assertiveness | |
| December | How to write a research project/grant proposal properly | |
| January | Wellbeing and work-life balance | |
| February | Presentation skills or how to impress at a conference | |
| March | Fostering teamwork and effective communication among team members | |
| April | Effective time management and using tools for effective scheduling | |
| May | Managing conflicts and stress | |
| June | Building networks with other research institutions and the application sector | |
| July | - | |
| August | - | |

7.7.3 Concept of Education and Development for Higher Education Teachers

Teaching activities apply to all academic staff; however, this area is primarily focused on the **A2 category** of staff and partially on **R2, R3, and R4**. Due to the **funding structure of public universities**, institutions should establish **teaching standards** that all academic staff are expected to meet. These standards should be **regularly monitored by supervisors** (e.g. heads of departments, vice-deans for education). The proposed concept includes three areas:

- **Thematic education**

- **Individual feedback**

Based on a lesson observation, an educational specialist will provide feedback on observable competencies and suggest further development as needed.

- **Individual consultations with an education specialist**

Advisory support in addressing teaching-related challenges – from lesson planning and setting educational goals to handling conflicts during the classes and assessing students.

Training could be provided in **regular cycles** (see the table below), and additional areas may be included arising from current needs. The proposed training sessions are designed as **one-day seminars (7 teaching hours each)**, with a **recommended maximum of 15 participants** per session. Topics should be reviewed approximately every four years based on an updated analysis of the educational needs of academic staff.

Table 21

Topics proposal for education and development of higher education teachers

| | Educational topics | Feedback on teaching | Individual consultations |
|------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| September | How to conduct classes and motivate students - activation methods in teaching | available throughout the academic year | available year-round |
| October | Using didactic tools in teaching | | |
| November | Technology in education | | |
| December | - | | |
| January | - | | |
| February | Supervising final theses | | |
| March | Setting the boundaries of cooperation with students | | |
| April | How to approach oral and written examinations, assessment criteria | | |
| May | Planning lessons and setting educational goals | | |
| June | Building confidence and talking in front of the class | | |
| July | - | | |
| August | - | | |

7.7.4 Concept of Education and Development for Academic Management

The education and development of **academic management** are also crucial for effective human resource development at the University. Based on all available information, there is currently a lack of support for developing **managerial competencies at the University**, particularly among **newly elected or appointed academic staff**. Furthermore, through our ongoing work with academic staff across various departments at Mendel University in Brno, we have identified that many unpleasant and conflict situations stem primarily from **the lack of experience on the part of managers**.

Systematic training for academic management should be provided on a **voluntary basis**. It should have a **recommendatory nature on the part of the superiors of these managers**.

Education and development would consist of two components. The first would be oriented towards regularly recurring education focused on **basic managerial activities**, and the second part on **organisational consulting**, which would take place individually according to the specific needs of the academic management. It would, therefore, be focused on addressing the current situations they are facing.

An **analysis of educational needs** among academic management should be conducted **every two years** and used to adapt and expand the training programme accordingly.

Table 22

Topics proposal for education and development of academic management

| | Educational topics | Organisational consulting |
|------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| September | HR management for academic leaders | available year-round |
| October | Labour law in the university environment | |
| November | Planning and its importance | |
| December | - | |
| January | Work organisation and task allocation | |
| February | Situational leadership - when and how to apply it | |
| March | Coaching approach and delegation | |
| April | How to deal with conflicts and problematic situations in the workplace | |
| May | Providing constructive feedback and employee evaluation | |
| June | Supervisory activities within the university environment | |
| July | - | |
| August | - | |

7.8 Summary of the Project Implementation and Results

During the project implementation, examples of good practice were analysed at ten foreign universities that are similar in focus to Mendel University in Brno and are also evaluated highly in international rankings. Some of these institutions served as inspiration for our own efforts, particularly in the development of competency models for specific groups of academic staff.

Competency models were created and defined for five specific categories of academic staff. These models were subsequently verified through self-evaluation and 270° feedback. The self-evaluation phase included 48 academic staff members, including doctoral students from all faculties and units of MENDELU. Feedback on their competencies was provided by 206 colleagues, supervisors, and others (see the table below for more details). In addition, 34 individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with academic staff who expressed interest in receiving individual feedback.

Table 23

Representation of respondents by category and return rates

| Group | Self-assessment | 270° feedback |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| A2 | 9 | 39 |
| R1 | 10 | 42 |
| R2 | 9 | 41 |
| R3 | 11 | 43 |
| R4 | 9 | 41 |
| Total | 48 (of 60 possible) | 206 |

The self-evaluation and feedback phases provided valuable insights into **which competencies were perceived to be stronger or weaker** within each category, how academics perceive themselves, and how these perceptions differ from how they are viewed by others. Based on these findings, **new pilot courses** were designed and developed to support the development of specific competencies across academic staff categories. These courses were subsequently evaluated.

Based on all the findings, results and implemented activities described above, a comprehensive education and development concept was proposed for various types of academic staff (including doctoral students) and academic management. The education and development model includes not only seminars and workshops but also opportunities for individual development guided by experts in relevant fields (e.g. mentoring, coaching, and supervision).

As a result of the whole process, the following key findings and recommendations for the next period are also provided:

- Academic staff development at Mendel University currently lacks a clear structure, goal, or system. Sometimes, training activities with similar content are organised independently by different university departments. That highlights the need for better coordination in areas such as mutual awareness of needs and motivation, processes, and consistent offer of development activities.
- Academic staff development is often funded by various developmental or operational projects and other similar sources, which do not allow for long-

term, systematic, university-wide implementation. It would be highly beneficial to link participation in these activities with regular performance evaluations.

- Information about development and training opportunities should be **centralised within a dedicated university department** responsible for **coordinating this agenda university-wide**. This department should be consulted whenever a project proposal includes educational activities for academic staff, particularly when there is a **high risk of overlapping efforts** by other university units. That would not restrict individual units from organising their educational activities but would **ensure alignment and synergy**.
- As previously mentioned, the role of the doctoral supervisor needs to be more precisely defined, including their duties and responsibilities, and it should take into account also the doctoral student's (and possibly the supervisor's) development. An open discussion is also needed to clarify the job content of different academic roles (academic categories), including their responsibilities and teaching duties. This discussion should include setting teaching standards, i.e. the requirements for the teaching activities of the academic staff.
- Perhaps the most pressing issue for implementing the proposed concept is the willingness, method (source), and scope (number of activities) of financing the proposed education and development system. Questions also remain regarding the human (expert), material, and organisational resources required to manage this agenda, including its place within the University's organisational structure.
- In future phases, it would be advisable to develop a special concept for language education of academic staff. Ideally, every academic staff member should have the opportunity to develop their language skills based on their current proficiency level, regardless of their academic rank. That should include both written and spoken communication. The university should also support staff in taking language exams (e.g. FCE, CAE), which was identified as a highly motivating factor during the project implementation.

We believe that the information and findings presented in this report will serve as a valuable source of inspiration, ideas, and support not only for the university management but also for faculty management, individual departments, and the wider academic community. We hope these results will be put to practical use in the near future, contributing to further work and future initiatives related to this important area.

8 Application of the Project Results at the University in the Years 2022-2024

8.1 Activities and Outputs in 2022

The promotion of development activities was carried out intensively, especially at the beginning of 2022, through mass emails, information displays, promotional events in the university canteen (e.g., stands with pens), and other marketing tools. At the beginning of the winter semester 2022/2023, a further campaign was launched, including mass email communication, the distribution of leaflets and pens in the staff canteen, and presentations on university information panels.

In 2022, based on the project results, 10 seminars were held for academic and research staff. The evaluation of educational activities took place on an ongoing basis, and based on the data obtained, recommendations for further improvements were discussed with the lecturers. After the programme ended, a comprehensive assessment was carried out, and a summary report was prepared, including recommendations for the upcoming period.

Table 24

Seminars for academic and research staff held in 2022

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|------------|---|------------------------|
| 26/01/2022 | Well-being and work-life balance | 3 |
| 22/02/2022 | Presentation skills or how to impress at a conference | 6 |
| 22/03/2022 | Fostering teamwork and effective communication among team members | 11 |
| 21/04/2022 | Effective time management and using tools for effective scheduling | 14 |
| 12/05/2022 | Managing conflicts and stress | 14 |
| 09/06/2022 | Building networks with other research institutions and the application sector | 7 |
| 14/09/2022 | How to motivate yourself for academic work | 3 |
| 13/10/2022 | Leading a research team and addressing arising issues | 7 |
| 09/11/2022 | Workplace communication and assertiveness | 11 |
| 07/12/2022 | How to write a research project/grant proposal properly | 15 |

Three video spots were created and are available at icv.mendelu.cz/rozvoj. The website was regularly updated and underwent a complete redesign during the year as a part of the university web redesign.

Eight seminars were held for higher-education teachers – their list is provided in the table below.

Table 25

Seminars for higher-education teachers held in 2022

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 10/02/2022 | Supervising final theses | 2 |
| 10/03/2022 | Setting the boundaries of cooperation with students | 1 |
| 07/04/2022 | How to approach oral and written examinations | 7 |
| 05/05/2022 | Planning lessons and setting educational goals, assessment criteria | 6 |
| 07/06/2022 | Building confidence and talking in front of the class | 2 |
| 08/09/2022 | How to conduct classes and motivate students – activation methods in teaching | 4 |
| 19/10/2022 | Using didactic tools in teaching | 1 |
| 15/11/2022 | Technology in education | 5 |

Nine seminars were prepared for academic management, accompanied by one-minute scripts and support materials distributed as part of the training activities. Despite lower interest in group seminars, 52 hours of individual consultations focused on organisational development were carried out. Managers from all faculties appreciated the opportunity for individual approach and addressing specific managerial issues.

Table 26

Seminars for academic management held in 2022

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 19/01/2022 | Work organisation and task allocation | 2 |
| 16/02/2022 | Situational leadership – when and how to apply it | 1 |
| 16/03/2022 | Coaching approach and delegation | 2 |
| 13/04/2022 | How to deal with conflicts and problematic situations in the workplace | 1 |
| 10/05/2022 | Providing constructive feedback and employee evaluation | 2 |
| 08/06/2022 | Supervisory activities within the university environment | 3 |
| 23/11/2022 | Planning and its importance | 3 |

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 02/09/2022 | Individual and group activities as part of one-day seminars for the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Business and Economics | individually |
| 24/11/2022 | Individual and group activities as part of one-day seminars for the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Horticulture | individually |

Individual coaching was offered on a continuous basis, amounting to a total of 103 hours for 18 people across the University. In addition, 44 hours of feedback on teaching were provided to 21 academic staff members, along with 50 hours of individual consultations and supervision for the same number of participants. Consultations most frequently focused on teaching strategies, student activation methods, and addressing problematic classroom situations.

8.2 Activities and Outputs in 2023

For the year 2023, a total of 20 seminars were planned and delivered, divided again into three main areas: development of higher-education teachers, development of academic management, and development of academic staff. Within the higher education teaching development area, 8 seminars were held; 4 focused on the development of managerial staff, and 8 aimed at employee development. 63 people attended the seminars for higher-education teachers, 25 people took part in the managerial seminars, and 62 attended the staff development seminars. The total number of participants in educational activities, therefore, reached 150.

Information about the available seminars and development opportunities was continuously shared with university staff via internal communication channels, including the University display screens and document server (or University Information System, where relevant). The website icv.mendelu.cz/rozvoj was regularly updated and included an overview of all available training opportunities.

Eight seminars were held as a part of the professional development programme for higher-education teachers:

Table 27

Seminars for higher-education teachers held in 2023

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 23/03/2023 | How to conduct classes and motivate students - activation methods in teaching | 12 |
| 20/04/2023 | Using didactic tools in teaching | 7 |

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 04/05/2023 | Assessment criteria: How to approach oral and written examinations | 14 |
| 05/09/2023 | Planning lessons and setting educational goals | 5 |
| 12/09/2023 | Technology in education | 5 |
| 11/10/2023 | Building confidence and talking in front of the class | 4 |
| 14/09/2023 | Higher-education pedagogy in a nutshell | 10 |
| 14/09/2023 | Activation methods in teaching | 10 |

Within the development of academic management in 2023, four seminars were held. These included the following topics:

Table 28

Seminars for academic management held in 2023

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 21/03/2023 | Fostering teamwork and effective communication among team members | 6 |
| 27/04/2023 | How to successfully lead employees at a university | 7 |
| 30/05/2023 | Supervisory activities within the university environment | 4 |
| 13/12/2023 | Providing constructive feedback and employee evaluation | 8 |

During the organisation of the seminars, there were repeated instances of participants cancelling at the last minute or failing to attend without providing notice. As a part of the development programme for academic-research staff, eight seminars were organised. These included the following topics:

Table 29

Seminars for academic-research staff held in 2023

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 30/03/2023 | Presentation skills or how to impress at a conference | individually |
| 12/04/2023 | Effective time management | 6 |
| 26/04/2023 | Managing conflicts and stress | 13 |
| 03/05/2023 | How to deal with conflicts and problematic situations in the workplace | 12 |
| 10/05/2023 | How to motivate yourself for academic work | 10 |
| 20/06/2023 | How to write a research project/grant proposal properly | 6 |
| 07/09/2023 | Networking: How to build a professional contact network | 5 |
| 08/11/2023 | Workplace communication and assertiveness | 9 |

Individual counselling sessions for university employees were initially planned for 75 hours. However, 96 hours were actually delivered, representing an increase of 21 hours. These sessions covered a wide range of topics, including workplace relationships with supervisors and colleagues, career development, and building self-confidence.

Individual consultations for university teachers in the areas of pedagogy, didactics, and student engagement were originally planned for 50 hours, but 59 hours were provided, i.e. 9 hours more than anticipated. These included class observations followed by feedback and suggestions for activation methods in teaching, as well as consultations on the structure of the educational process, teaching strategies, and summative assessment of students.

8.3 Activities and Outputs in 2024

For 2024, a total of 12 seminars were initially planned, covering the development of academic staff, academic management, and higher-education teachers. Due to the staff requests, we have implemented certain changes. Two additional seminars were organised, bringing the total number of seminars delivered to 14.

Table 30

Seminars for academic staff held in 2024

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 28/02/2024 | Fostering teamwork and effective communication among team members | 7 |
| 13/03/2024 | How to deal with conflicts and problematic situations in the workplace | 13 |
| 10/04/2024 | How to motivate yourself for academic work | 3 |
| 24/04/2024 | How to successfully lead employees at a university | 4 |
| 15/05/2024 | Effective time management | 13 |
| 17/09/2024 | How to deal with conflicts and problematic situations in the workplace | 6 |
| 25/09/2024 | Workplace communication and assertiveness | 8 |
| 13/11/2024 | Managing conflicts and stress | 15 |
| 11/12/2024 | Effective time management | 10 |

We promoted the seminars through direct email communication from the Vice-Rector for Human Resources and internal affairs (emails sent to all university staff), as well as via noticeboards located throughout the University. In the case of the workshop on contemporary communication in teaching, a targeted email was

also sent to all staff and students of the University. The website icv.mendelu.cz/rozvoj was continuously updated.

Table 31

Seminars for higher-education teachers held in 2024

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 20/03/2024 | Higher-education pedagogy in a nutshell | 14 |
| 02/05/2024 | Assessment criteria: How to approach oral and written examinations | 11 |
| 11/09/2024 | How to conduct classes and motivate students - activation methods in teaching | 15 |
| 09/10/2024 | Building confidence and talking in front of the class | 6 |
| 17/09/2024 | How to teach students in a combined study programme | 5 |

The workshop *How Are We Successful in Teaching Generation Z?* featured six speakers (three academic staff members and three students) and was attended by approximately 40 participants, primarily academic staff from across the University. Following this event, two further workshops were organised in the format of good practice sharing among academic staff. These were titled *How We Set Assessment Criteria* and *How We Motivate the Current Generation in the Classes*. Despite adequate promotion, attendance at each of these workshops was low.

Table 32

Workshops held in 2024

| Date | Title | Number of participants |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 02/04/2024 | How are we successful in teaching Generation Z? | 6 + 40 |
| 24/09/2024 | How we set assessment criteria | 3 |
| 13/11/2024 | How we motivate the current generation in the classes | 3 |

In addition to educational seminars, individual counselling was provided, amounting to a total of 60 hours. Organisational counselling for managerial staff was also delivered, totalling 40 hours. University teachers received 40 hours of individual counselling focused specifically on educational development.

8.4 Summary of Outputs Implementation and Reflection on Them

The implemented educational activities can be evaluated on several levels. Using Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation, it can be stated that the educational system performed well at the first level – reaction. Participant satisfaction with the organisation, content focus, and delivery by lecturers was very positive.

A specific issue within the reaction level concerned the time allocation. Some participants expressed lower satisfaction due to time constraints. As a result of participant feedback, the duration of training sessions was reduced from six hours to four. However, several participants disagreed with this reduction, stating that the shorter sessions did not allow enough time for the practical application of what they had learnt.

Looking at the second level of Kirkpatrick's model – learning – specific knowledge acquisition would need to be identified. Knowledge tests were not administered due to the target audience; instead, practical exercises and guided discussions were used. Responses to open-ended questions indicate that participants feel that the intended learning goals were reached. The subjective evaluation of “usefulness in practice” was also rated very positively. Thus, the educational system can be considered effective at this level as well.

The third level of Kirkpatrick's model focuses on behavioural change – whether and how participants apply what they learnt in practice. To assess this level, it would be necessary to carry out direct observations of selected staff members who had attended training, supplemented by interviews with the individuals and their direct supervisors. Observations and interviews would need to be conducted both before the training and again around six months later. Due to the time and organisational demands, this level was not assessed.

The fourth and final level of Kirkpatrick's model evaluates results – the impact on the organisation as a whole. For a university, such indicators could include job satisfaction, career advancement, staff turnover, and student evaluations of teaching staff. However, these indicators would only be relevant if a larger sample of training participants were available. In total, around 200 staff members attended seminars over the years, representing roughly 13% of Mendel University employees. As such, evaluation at this level is not considered meaningful.

Based on the above, it is clear that evaluation in accordance with Kirkpatrick's model can reasonably be applied at the first and second levels. At these levels, the educational system can be considered appropriate – it is designed to elicit positive participant reactions and thereby encourage continued interest in personal development. The responses also suggest that the learning objectives are being met. It is important to note that participation in the training sessions

was voluntary. Participants were intrinsically motivated to learn and develop their competencies. In rare cases, some individuals reported that they were attending based on their supervisor's recommendation, often as part of a career discussion. These individuals frequently continued to voluntarily attend further seminars.

An analysis of seminar registrations over the years shows a steady increase in demand for further education. The educational offer has gradually become well-established among academic, technical-administrative, and managerial staff. There is a noticeable growth in academic staff and higher-education teacher participation. However, interest from managerial staff remains relatively low. Among university managers, there appears to be a reluctance to share experiences across departments and faculties – a tendency most evident among senior academic staff. That sentiment was captured in one participant's comment: *“At the university, you never know which of your subordinates might be your superior tomorrow.”* Senior academic staff tend to prefer one-to-one consultations, which should be continued. In contrast, technical-administrative managers are more open to group training, valuing the opportunity to share experiences and information.

A key issue for the future implementation of the development and education system is the voluntary nature of participation. Over the three years from 2022 to 2024, a relatively small group of internally motivated staff consistently attended training events. Yet the university employs a much larger number of staff whose work influences its operation. From a strategic management perspective, it would be advisable to involve managerial staff at all levels more actively in the training system and encourage them to support their team members' participation in relevant seminars. Attending them would be beneficial both for individual departments and the University as a whole. Given planned changes to the accreditation process by the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education – particularly those focused on teaching activities – it is more important than ever to support the pedagogical competencies of University teachers. One related challenge is how to address the frequent issue of participants registering but then failing to attend without notice. That was a recurring problem, even though all participants received a reminder email one week prior. In cases of high demand and waiting lists, participants were asked to reconfirm their attendance so that their spots could be offered to others if necessary. Nonetheless, statistics from each year show that a significant number of participants did not show up without an apology.

The content focus of educational seminars should align with established competency models and reflect the current needs of both participants and the university. Competency models should be revised approximately every five years based on broad discussion across faculties. The *Rector's Commission for Educational Activities* and the *Rector's Commission for Staff Development* would provide suitable platforms for this. Greater collaboration with the *Department for Educational Activities and Quality* – both with the *Educational Activities Office* and especially with the *Quality*

Assurance Office – would also be beneficial. There is future potential in developing specific training and development activities for staff, particularly academic staff, involved in delivering specific study programmes. It would also be highly desirable for the university to establish a centralised staff portal providing information on training and development opportunities. Currently, the offer is highly fragmented, and staff are often overwhelmed by the volume of information, which paradoxically reduces engagement.

In the long term, the four-hour seminar format has proven effective. While it is impossible to satisfy all participants – and some argue this length is insufficient for practical training – experience shows that full-day seminars tend to attract less interest due to their length. As a result, we recommend offering follow-up practical workshops focused on hands-on training for a maximum of eight participants. These could include sessions on communication skills, staff management, or handling conflict and stress. Workshops centred on sharing good practices are particularly valuable for university teachers. They allow for mutual inspiration and professional enrichment, particularly in subject-specific didactics and experience with course planning, delivery, and evaluation. These workshops offer opportunities to exchange effective teaching methods, which is invaluable not only for preparing teaching materials but also for student assessment and evaluating learning objectives and competencies. Ultimately, such workshops support the professional development of academic staff and contribute to improving the overall quality of education at the university.

8.5 Recommendations for Further Development

For future implementation, we recommend maintaining the three existing areas of training and development, namely education and development of the **university employees**, education and development of **academic management**, and education and development of **higher-education teachers**. In addition, we suggest the following:

- a) Continue with the current education system, including the training for the university employees (a combination of soft skills for both academic and technical-administrative staff) and for university teachers (focused on current topics related to student education). The training for academic management should be adapted to the specific needs of individual units (e.g. faculties) or delivered in the form of individual consultations. Open development seminars for this group are relatively poorly attended and not particularly effective.
- b) Centralise the education offer, for example, through a unified web portal providing comprehensive information about all training opportunities available to university employees. At present, the offer is highly fragmented and provided by several departments, including the Department for Further Professional

Education at the Institute of Lifelong Learning, the Counselling and Career Centre, the Institute for Scientific and Pedagogical Information and Services (the library), the Project Centre, individual faculties, and others.

- c) The content focus of educational activities should align with the established competency models for both academic and technical-administrative staff. These models should be updated regularly to remain in line with the University long-term strategy. The content should also reflect requirements set by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and the National Accreditation Bureau. In light of anticipated changes, more frequent training in higher-education pedagogy is desirable, and a greater number of staff should participate. However, this need should be communicated by the managers and programme guarantors, who should give suggestions to the university unit responsible for employee education and development.
- d) Maintain the current scope of individual seminars at a total of four hours. Although some participants have viewed this duration negatively, the majority prefer it. We therefore recommend the introduction of follow-up, practically oriented seminars focused solely on case studies and practical training.
- e) Expand the offer of workshops organised as a sharing of best practices among employees. These workshops should last approximately 90 minutes and be held at least once every 2–3 months. Each session should be moderated.
- f) Continue to offer individual development opportunities for university staff using coaching methods. We also recommend increasing support for individual psychological counselling. A key question is the extent to which the services of the University Counselling and Career Centre should be used, as many employees mistakenly believe that the centre is intended mainly for students rather than employees.

9 Conclusion

Continuous education, development and learning of employees should be considered a natural (and often mutual) investment in every institution and organisation, an investment that will yield competitive advantages in the future. Institutional support for employee development, ideally within a human resources development model adapted to competency-based management, is a necessary prerequisite for the effective functioning of any organisation, including universities. From a broader perspective, the professional, technical, and personal development of all human resources at a university is emphasised. A university is not composed solely of academic and research staff but also of technical and administrative professionals whose work is equally vital to the institution's operation. Therefore, it is essential to ensure appropriate support for all types of staff. These aspects should be incorporated into staff development plans and recognised within human resource management processes.

Universities have long faced a variety of challenges, which may have both positive and negative impacts. Among the key issues are operational demands, staffing, and, above all, funding. Other common problems in higher education include low completion rates, concerns about the quality of education, inequality in access to higher education, partial underfunding, ineffective governance and management, problematic admissions procedures, and a relatively low proportion of university-educated individuals in the population. A notable negative phenomenon at some institutions is academic inbreeding, which can adversely affect the quality of teaching and research. Another challenge is the evaluation of scientific outputs – the current system undoubtedly influences the motivation of academic staff, particularly in terms of the quality and quantity of their teaching activities. Some of these issues also apply to lower levels of education, such as the preparedness of students entering university, especially in fields known as STEM¹⁷ (cf. Matějů, 2009).

One of the most critical factors in the higher education environment is the academic staff – those in the “front line.” The future of universities depends on their approach to work, motivation, and opportunities for professional development. The professional development of staff within higher education (and beyond), as well as within human resources management and talent management, should be strongly supported and systematically explored. Some institutions have been focusing on these areas for a long time (see Veteška & Kursch, 2018; Veteška & Tureckiová, 2020).

17 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

We believe this publication will be a valuable contribution to the professional discourse on staff development and further education in higher education institutions. We hope it will offer helpful insights for further research and serve as inspiration for practitioners and policymakers in the field of human resource development. The publication should serve as an incentive for further deepening of knowledge and innovation in higher education and contribute to a better understanding of the challenges we face in this context.

Summary

This monograph focuses on the issue of education and professional development of academic staff in the context of higher education. It describes how academic institutions, such as universities, adapt to changes in the economic, technological, and social environment and how they ensure high-quality education and development opportunities for their employees. Universities, both in the Czech Republic and internationally, are increasingly focusing on the competencies of academic staff, emphasising not only scientific expertise but also the enhancement of pedagogical skills.

Teachers, as well as researchers, are encouraged to pursue continuous professional and personal development, with competencies becoming a key factor in career advancement, evaluation, and ensuring quality in teaching. A significant trend is the development of doctoral students and early-career researchers, who are now expected to acquire not only professional expertise but also pedagogical competencies. An important element in ensuring quality education is cooperation and reflection between academic institutions and ministries, which set strategic objectives for improving the competencies of academic staff.

This process also includes the development of new methods and approaches, such as mentoring, coaching, and supervision, i.e. the forms of individual counselling that support personalised development. Emphasised is the importance of training for doctoral students and academic management, who should follow a structured educational programme supported by mentoring and coaching.

The aim of these activities is not only to enhance pedagogical and research skills but also to develop the leadership capabilities essential for the effective management and advancement of higher education institutions. The text highlights, among other things, the need to harmonise the organisation and processes of academic staff development at universities, both through seminars and through systematic development facilitated by dedicated specialists across various disciplines. Currently, such training is often fragmented and funded through diverse projects, which complicates its long-term sustainability and overall coordination.

One of the key outcomes is that, for institutions to function effectively, it is necessary to establish a clear development system that includes regular updates to competency models and the provision of a unified platform for managing and organising educational activities within higher education institutions. Universities should invest in the continuous development of their staff and provide the necessary support and opportunities for both personal and professional growth, thereby contributing to an overall improvement in the quality of education.

A central part of the text is the description of the implementation and outcomes of a project carried out at a university in the Czech Republic. The project focused on addressing the specific educational needs and development of selected groups of academic staff. Based on the analysis of the current situation and the identification of key competencies that need to be developed within these groups, not only competency models were created, but an education and development concept was also proposed, taking into account the specific needs of each target group. The project outputs include a detailed analysis of training needs, the development of tailored training programmes, and the implementation of educational activities aimed at developing the required skills. The education concept has been designed not only to support current development needs but also to enable the long-term professional growth of staff.

In conclusion, despite the many challenges faced by higher education institutions (such as funding, staffing, and quality assurance), it is crucial that they continue to focus on delivering a high-quality educational process. This process should encompass not only academic and research skills but also the professional and personal development of all staff members. Such an investment in human resources will prove to be a key factor in ensuring the future competitiveness and quality of higher education institutions.

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Appendix

Glossary of Terms

Lifelong learning (education) - LL - A concept emphasising the possibility or necessity of learning and education throughout the entire life, whenever appropriate or needed. The purpose of lifelong learning is to ensure that individuals possess the competencies (see below) required for a high-quality professional or personal life. The responsibility for engaging in such development lies mainly with the individual, and learning and education may take various forms: within the formal education system, in non-formal education, through self-study, or by attending courses, conferences, etc.

Professional development - The development of specific competencies required for the successful execution of a particular profession.

A2 - A research worker holding a doctorate who, in future, does not plan to primarily focus on scientific research but rather on teaching activities.

R1 - A Ph.D. student engaged in preparatory tasks related to teaching activities, who also performs specialist jobs in scientific and research activities under the guidance of a supervisor. They carry out partial research, development, or artistic tasks in their respective field and publish the results. They work in a research team. They conduct background research or annotations from scholarly sources. They are enrolled in a doctoral study programme. They participate in teaching activities.

R2 - Postdoctoral researcher independently solves complex scientific, research, development, or artistic tasks in their field, with results published in reviewed journals. They work in research teams, including collaboration with international researchers. They also perform reviews and assessments of projects within their field. They are involved in teaching activities.

R3 - Junior researcher - associate professor. An associate professor conducts seminars and lectures, guarantees study programmes and courses, and supervises student coursework, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral theses. They participate in the implementation of study programmes and assess written assignments, tests, and oral exams. They conduct independent research, address complex scientific tasks, and apply the results of basic research. They lead research teams, coordinate research efforts and strategies in their field, and actively engage in grant projects. Their work is disseminated through academic publications and conference participation.

R4 - Senior researcher - professor. A professor delivers seminars and lectures and guarantees and develops study programmes and courses. They are involved in the implementation of bachelor, master, and doctoral programmes, supervise and review theses at all levels, and assess written and oral examinations. They conduct advanced scholarly, creative, or artistic work, independently carry out research, solve complex scientific problems, and apply basic research findings. Professors lead research teams, coordinate research activities, define research strategies, and proactively seek and manage grant projects. Their outputs are presented through academic publications and conference contributions.

Competency model - A competency model outlines all the competencies, i.e. qualities, qualifications, experiences, knowledge, abilities, skills, and personality traits, necessary for the effective performance of tasks and the overall success of an organisation. A competency model acts as a crucial bridge between an organisation's strategy and human resource management. For an organisation, it defines what employees must know and be able to do to ensure the organisation's success. It also identifies competencies that may be lacking or need development. The organisational competency model can be broken down into specific job roles, i.e. a job competency model details the qualities, experience, knowledge, abilities, skills and personality characteristics needed to perform a particular position effectively.

Competency - Competency (also referred to as capability or ability) generally refers to the prerequisites or ability to perform a task or profession. Competency, therefore, denotes the ability to carry out a specific role, to be able to perform it, to be qualified in the relevant area, and to have the necessary knowledge and skills. This concept emphasises an internal quality resulting from personal development, relatively independent of external factors, which enables an individual to perform at a required or standard level. It encompasses a combination of required attributes, experience, knowledge, skills, motivation, attitudes, and personality characteristics. The concept of competency is broader than qualification, which refers more to formal certification of learning outcomes. Competency, on the other hand, also includes other personality traits of a person.

360° feedback - 360° feedback is a method of anonymous performance evaluation of an individual (their competencies) using a questionnaire-based survey. The assessment includes feedback from within the organisation: each individual is evaluated by colleagues, subordinates, and supervisors, and also by students. Additionally, the individual completes a self-assessment, resulting in a comprehensive set of evaluations. Typically, 7-9 anonymous questionnaires are completed per person. That enables the individual to compare self-assessment with the perception of others, offering valuable feedback on their competency levels. Competencies are rated on a scale indicating the degree of competency of the individual in specific areas.

270° feedback - A variant of the 360° feedback method, excluding students from the evaluation. Typically, 5-7 questionnaires are completed per assessed individual.

Focus group - Focus groups (or group discussions) are a method of qualitative data collection involving moderated group discussions aimed at exploring attitudes, opinions, and perceptions. Unlike quantitative surveys, they yield in-depth insights that might otherwise remain undiscovered, offering a deeper understanding of issues. This method allows researchers to investigate employees' views on a certain issue, what opinions prevail, and what influences them. However, the extent or frequency of opinions is not measurable through this method, nor is it its objective.

Pilot course - An educational activity designed to test individual course elements (length, structure, content, methodology, materials, learning space, and assessment tools) before its official launch. The pilot is conducted with the same or a similar target group as the intended final course, occasionally in a shortened format. Throughout and after the pilot course, its various components are evaluated from multiple perspectives (lecturer, participant, organiser).

Pilot course curriculum - The curriculum is understood broadly as the content of education and the process of acquiring it, i.e. the learner's overall experience within the educational environment, including all associated learning and assessment activities.

Study support material - A specialised educational material (or a set of materials) designed for adult learners. It may be brief or more extensive (such as a coursebook) and either printed or in electronic form. Unlike regular texts, study support materials are tailored to the specifics of adult education: they should be visually and functionally well-designed, clearly structured, and supplemented with questions and tasks (including feedback), additional and extended resources, and other motivational and engagement elements.

Pilot course evaluation - An evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the pilot course. The evaluation examines whether the educational objectives were achieved in the desired quality and quantity and in an optimal way. It typically involves the following levels:

- reaction: whether participants were subjectively satisfied with the course,
- learning: whether participants acquired the intended knowledge and skills,
- behaviour: whether participants apply what they have learnt in practice,
- results: whether the educational activity delivered the expected performance outcomes.

The evaluation generally covers the lecturer(s), learning materials, learning environment, organiser, and many other aspects. Methods may include questionnaires, interviews, and observation.

Competency models

Competency Model for Staff Category A2

Subject-specific knowledge

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Current scientific knowledge | Demonstrates depth of knowledge, critically evaluates work and research, challenges dogmas, and sees the broader picture of their academic field. |
| Methodology | Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of methods and approaches. Assists members of the laboratory or department using relevant methods and approaches, both practically and theoretically. |
| Networking | Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. research collaboration, international internships, research data). |

Communication skills

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Open communication | Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. |
| Presentation skills | Presents research at conferences in a clear and understandable manner. Mentors doctoral students in presentation skills. Adapts to the audience. |
| Written communication | Can review journal articles and academic literature, prepare manuscripts for publication, and respond to editorial queries and feedback. Writes with stylistic and grammatical accuracy. |
| Communication in a foreign language | Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. |
| Communication with the general public | Can popularise research to a lay audience and explain broader contexts of the research. Participates in events for the public and various community groups. |

Personal effectiveness

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Resilience and perseverance | Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. |
| Initiative | Actively seeks opportunities for improvement and professional growth. Identifies and addresses problems proactively. |
| Self-reflection | Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Time management | Sets realistic deadlines for tasks; meets agreed deadlines for tasks, activities, and deliverables. |
| Collaboration | Approaches others' research with respect. Promotes a positive atmosphere in teams in which is involved. Collaborates willingly with senior researchers on their research. |

Teaching

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Lesson planning | Is able to define learning objectives. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. |
| Teaching implementation | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). |
| Teaching assessment | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. |
| Supervision of final theses | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. |

Competency Model for Staff Category R1

Research skills and knowledge

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Disciplinary knowledge | Demonstrates detailed knowledge of the research field, critically evaluates sources (literature), and is able to formulate research questions and hypotheses. |
| Interdisciplinary knowledge | Incorporates insights from other scientific disciplines and fields relevant to the research. Further applies this knowledge in the research. |
| Research competencies | Demonstrates the ability to design research projects using adequate methods, data collection, and analysis. Can effectively report and interpret results, including critical discussion. |
| Vision | Demonstrates the ability to place the details of the research within a broader framework, allowing for the formulation of broader and long-term research goals. |

Responsible conduct in research

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Responsible research | Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. |
| Research integrity | Conducts research according to professional standards and values, including scientific integrity and methodology, in compliance with ethical and legal requirements. Works with own data and sourcing where appropriate and shares data with colleagues. |
| Integrity within the university | Understands the vision, mission, goals, and strategy of the University. Recognises the impact and context of decisions and actions on the institution, colleagues, students, and potential clients. |

Personal effectiveness

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Resilience and perseverance | Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. |
| Initiative | Actively seeks opportunities for improvement and professional growth. Identifies and addresses problems proactively. |
| Self-reflection | Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. |

Professional development

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Flexibility | Is adaptable and flexible in changing research environments. Can adapt to new conditions, whether material, financial or social (interpersonal relationships, workplace atmosphere). |
| Creativity | Develops new ideas, applications, or innovative solutions by pushing the boundaries of current knowledge. |
| Entrepreneurial thinking | Identifies and explores commercialisation opportunities; is willing to take adequate risks. |
| Networking | Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. international internships, research data). |

Research and research team leadership

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Planning and organisation | Effectively sets realistic and measurable goals for research, aligned with time and funding constraints. Works in cooperation with the supervisor. |
| Managing people | When leading a research team, supports colleagues in their growth by providing advice, feedback, instructions, and encouragement. |
| Collaboration | Includes outputs that may not directly relate to their research but may be relevant to colleagues. Shows respect for the work of others. Promotes a positive attitude towards the teams in which involved. |

Communication skills

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Open communication | Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. |
| Presentation skills | Presents ideas clearly, comprehensibly, and specifically to various types of audience in different situations (e.g. interview, group work, conference). |
| Working with text | Writes clearly and understandably across different formats (theses, PR, grant proposals, CVs). Writes with stylistic and grammatical accuracy. Structures text with a clear writing style. |
| Communication in a foreign language | Communicates and presents in a foreign language, e.g. English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. |

Teaching

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Lesson planning | Is able to define learning objectives. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. |
| Teaching implementation | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). |
| Teaching assessment | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. |
| Supervision of final theses | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. |

Competency Model for Staff Category R2

Subject-specific knowledge

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Current scientific knowledge | Demonstrates depth of knowledge, critically evaluates work and research, challenges dogmas, and sees the broader picture of their academic field. |
| Methodology | Possesses a comprehensive knowledge of methods and approaches. Supports junior colleagues of the department in relevant methods and approaches, both practically and theoretically. |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Interdisciplinarity | Formulates questions that demonstrate understanding of new information and existing knowledge beyond their discipline. Incorporates multiple disciplines into research. |
| Networking | Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. research collaboration, international internships, research data). |

Responsible conduct in research

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Responsible research | Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. |
| Research integrity | Conducts research according to professional standards and values, including scientific integrity and methodology, in compliance with ethical and legal requirements. Works with own data and sourcing where appropriate and shares data with colleagues. |
| Integrity within the university | Understands the vision, mission, goals, and strategy of the University. Recognises the impact and context of decisions and actions on the institution, colleagues, students, and potential clients. |

Critical thinking ability

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Insight | Evaluates results and formulates new hypotheses based on past and current research. Can identify further key unanswered questions in the field. |
| Experimentation | Designs and conducts hypothesis-based experiments. Evaluates the research protocols of other team members. Can anticipate the scope of experimental results. |
| Data interpretation | Consistently analyses and interprets data. Recognises significant findings and draws appropriate conclusions. |
| Designing a research programme | Designs interrelated experiments to address an overarching research question. Formulates specific hypotheses and defines alternative solution approaches based on current findings. |

Data handling skills

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Basic statistical analysis | Carries out statistical analyses. Can work with correlations and recognises when further statistical consultation is necessary. |
| Use of tools | Uses appropriate databases, software tools, and algorithms related to the research project. Identifies suitable resources and involves experts to develop solutions to complex research problems. |

Research ethics

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Knowledge of responsible research | Distinguishes between ethical and unethical research practices. Acts ethically. |
|-----------------------------------|---|

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Ethical decision-making | Applies a moral approach when dealing with ethical issues. Respects plurality of opinions. |
| Moral courage | Is capable of reporting unethical practices when encountered. Recognises that authorities may not always be right. |

Communication skills

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Open communication | Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. |
| Presentation skills | Presents research at conferences clearly and comprehensibly. Mentors doctoral students in presentation skills. Adapts to the audience. |
| Written communication | Can write article and publications reviews, prepare manuscripts for publication, and respond to reviewers' comments and criticisms regarding submitted manuscripts. Writes in a stylistically and grammatically correct manner. |
| Preparation of grant proposals | Can write a grant proposal clearly and comprehensibly with a logical structure of the research plan. Can seek advice from more experienced colleagues if needed. |
| Communication with the general public | Can popularise research to a lay audience and explain broader contexts of the research. Participates in events for the public and various community groups. |
| Communication in a foreign language | Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. |

Research and research team leadership

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Planning and organisation | Effectively sets realistic and measurable goals for research, aligned with time and funding constraints. |
| Managing people | When leading a research team, supports colleagues in their growth by providing advice, feedback, instructions, and encouragement. |
| Collaboration | Includes outputs that may not directly relate to their research but may be relevant to colleagues. Shows respect for the work of others. Promotes a positive attitude towards the teams in which involved. |
| Problem solving | Offers effective and creative solutions to problems and provides a framework for evaluating alternatives. Assists junior laboratory/workplace members with the problem-solving process. |
| Conflict resolution | Actively participates in resolving conflicts and fosters an environment of a collaborative research team. |

Personal effectiveness

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Resilience and perseverance | Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. |
| Initiative | Actively seeks opportunities for improvement and professional growth. Identifies and addresses problems proactively. |
| Self-reflection | Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. |
| Time management | Sets realistic deadlines for tasks; meets agreed deadlines for tasks, activities, and deliverables. |

Teaching

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Lesson planning | Is able to define learning objectives. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. |
| Teaching implementation | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). |
| Teaching assessment | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. |
| Supervision of final theses | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. |

Competency Model for Staff Category R3

Subject-specific knowledge

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Current scientific knowledge | Consistently publishes the results of their scientific work to inform the academic community about their research. |
| Methodology | Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of methods and approaches and shares it with other members of their research team. |
| Interdisciplinarity | Formulates connections between new and existing scientific knowledge beyond their discipline. Integrates multiple disciplines into research and actively participates in multidisciplinary research projects. |

| | |
|------------|--|
| Networking | Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. international internships, research data). |
|------------|--|

Responsible conduct in research

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Responsible research | Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. |
| Research integrity | Conducts research according to professional standards and values, including scientific integrity and methodology, in compliance with ethical and legal requirements. Works with own data and sourcing where appropriate and shares data with colleagues. |
| Integrity within the university | Understands the vision, mission, goals, and strategy of the University. Recognises the impact and context of decisions and actions on the institution, colleagues, students, and potential clients. |

Critical thinking ability

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Insight | Describes experiments thoroughly within the context of hypotheses and scientific methods. Can prioritise scientific questions. |
| Experimentation | Designs and conducts hypothesis-based experiments with appropriate control mechanisms. Can critically evaluate the research work of others. |
| Data interpretation | Is capable of independently interpreting data. Keeps members of the research team informed about ongoing results. |
| Designing a research programme | Plans and carries out interrelated experiments required for research. Can use research data to formulate further research questions. |

Research ethics

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Knowledge of responsible research | Distinguishes between ethical and unethical research practices. Acts ethically. Conducts discussions on the principles of ethical research. |
| Ethical decision-making | Applies a moral approach when dealing with ethical issues. Respects plurality of opinions. |
| Moral courage | Is capable of reporting unethical practices when encountered. Is available to doctoral students for guidance on ethical issues. |

Communication skills

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Open communication | Communicates assertively. Engages effectively in face-to-face discussions with one or more people with different research interests. Shows skill in both verbal and non-verbal communication and listens actively. |
|--------------------|--|

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Presentation skills | Presents research at conferences clearly and comprehensibly. Mentors doctoral students in presentation skills. Adapts to the audience. |
| Written communication | Presents their research results at an expert level in the context of the work of others (e.g. articles, monographs). Mentors doctoral students in written communication, such as preparing academic papers. |
| Preparation of grant proposals | Can write a grant proposal clearly and comprehensibly with a logical structure of the research plan. Defines specific objectives within the research project. |
| Communication with the general public | Can popularise research to a lay audience and explain broader contexts of the research. Learns how to communicate with the media. Participates in events for the public and various community groups. Supports doctoral students in science popularisation. |
| Communication in a foreign language | Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences). Can write academic texts in a foreign language. |

Research and research team leadership

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Planning and organisation | Effectively sets realistic and measurable goals for research, aligned with time and funding constraints. Supports doctoral students in planning their schedules. |
| Managing people | When leading a research team, supports colleagues in their growth by providing advice, feedback, instructions, and encouragement. Supports doctoral students in their scientific and research activities. Encourages others to take responsibility for their actions. |
| Collaboration | Helps create an environment focused on idea sharing, recognising the contributions of individual team members, and constructive negotiation. Shows respect for the work of others. Promotes a positive attitude towards the teams in which involved. |
| Problem solving | Offers effective and creative solutions to problems and provides a framework for evaluating alternatives. Assists junior laboratory/workplace members with the problem-solving process. |
| Conflict resolution | Actively participates in resolving conflicts and fosters an environment of a collaborative research team. |

Scientific and research collaboration

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Openness to new ideas | Demonstrates intellectual curiosity when formulating research questions, not only within their own field of expertise but across scientific disciplines. |
| Collaboration | Can recognize how the findings of others can support interdisciplinary collaboration and can incorporate experts from other fields into their research. |

Personal effectiveness

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Resilience and perseverance | Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. |
| Initiative | Actively seeks opportunities for improvement and professional growth. Identifies and addresses problems proactively. |
| Self-reflection | Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. |
| Time management | Sets realistic deadlines for tasks; meets agreed deadlines for tasks, activities, and deliverables. |

Teaching

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Lesson planning | Is able to define learning objectives. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. |
| Teaching implementation | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). |
| Teaching assessment | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. |
| Supervision of final theses | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. |

Competency Model for Staff Category R4

Subject-specific knowledge

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Current scientific knowledge | Consistently publishes the results of their scientific work to inform the academic community about their research. |
| Methodology | Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of methods and approaches and shares it with other members of their research team. |
| Interdisciplinarity | Formulates connections between new and existing scientific knowledge beyond their discipline. Creates and participates in multidisciplinary and international research projects. |
| Networking | Develops and maintains networks of contacts within and outside the university, using them to gain further knowledge and opportunities (e.g. international internships, research data). |

Responsible conduct in research and towards the institution

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Responsible research | Conducts research in accordance with university policies and procedures, e.g. occupational health and safety, fire regulations, etc. |
| Research integrity | Conducts research according to professional standards and values, including scientific integrity and methodology, in compliance with ethical and legal requirements. Works with own data and sourcing where appropriate and shares data with colleagues. |
| Integrity within the university | Understands the vision, mission, goals, and strategy of the University. Recognises the impact and context of decisions and actions on the institution, colleagues, students, and potential clients. |
| Responsibility towards the university | Actively spreads the good name of the University and promotes the brand “Mendel University” not only in the Czech Republic but also abroad. Aims to advance the University’s standing in international comparative rankings of research institutions. |

Critical thinking ability

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Insight | Independently formulates new hypotheses. Lectures and teaches practically the methodology of science. |
| Experimentation | Leads others to experiment and seek new paths in science. Provides feedback and recommendations to make further experimentation more effective. |
| Data interpretation | Is capable of independently interpreting data. Keeps members of the research team informed about ongoing results. Teaches other team members how to interpret data. |
| Designing a research programme | Independently designs, plans, and manages research projects. Utilises research data to develop follow-up scientific and research activities. |

Research ethics

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Knowledge of responsible research | Distinguishes between ethical and unethical research practices. Acts ethically. Initiates or conducts discussions on the principles of ethical research. |
| Ethical decision-making | Applies a moral approach when dealing with ethical issues. Respects plurality of opinions. Teaches doctoral students an ethical approach through personal example. |
| Moral courage | Is capable of reporting unethical practices when encountered. Is available to doctoral students for guidance on ethical issues. |

Communication skills

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Open communication | Presents research at conferences clearly and comprehensibly. Mentors doctoral students in presentation skills connected with a broader scientific perspective. Adapts to the audience. Provides critical feedback on presentations to colleagues/team members. |
| Presentation skills | Presents research at conferences clearly and comprehensibly. Mentors doctoral students in presentation skills connected with a broader scientific perspective.. Adapts to the audience. Provides critical feedback on presentations to colleagues/team members. |
| Written communication | Presents their research results at an expert level in the context of the work of others (e.g. articles, monographs). Responds appropriately to criticism from others. Mentors doctoral students in written communication, such as preparing academic papers. |
| Preparation of grant proposals | Can write a grant proposal clearly and comprehensibly with a logical structure of the research plan. Conducts reviews of research grants and provides constructive feedback on others' grants. |
| Communication with the general public | Can popularise research to a lay audience. Appears in media as a scientific expert. Participates in events for the public and various community groups. |
| Communication in a foreign language | Communicates and presents in a foreign language, primarily English, at academic events (e.g. conferences), both at formal and informal meetings. Can write academic texts in a foreign language. |

Research and research team leadership

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Planning and organisation | When leading research, effectively plans and sets realistic and measurable goals for research, aligned with time and funding constraints. Breaks plans into individual steps. Supports doctoral students in planning their schedules. |
| Managing people | When leading a research team, supports colleagues in their growth by providing advice, feedback, instructions, and encouragement. Works not only with individuals but also with the entire team. Supports doctoral students in their scientific and research activities. Encourages others to take responsibility for their actions. Leads the team democratically. |
| Collaboration | Helps create an environment focused on idea sharing, recognising the contributions of individual team members, and constructive negotiation. Shows respect for the work of others. Actively engages in situations where research is not progressing. |
| Problem solving | Offers effective and creative solutions to problems and provides a framework for evaluating alternatives. Assists laboratory/workplace members with the problem-solving process. |
| Conflict resolution | Actively participates in resolving conflicts and fosters an environment of a collaborative research team. |

Scientific and research collaboration

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Openness to collaboration | Successfully collaborates with Czech and international scientific research specialists across universities, research institutions, and disciplines. |
| Collaboration | Successfully evaluates prospects and limitations of other scientific disciplines within potential collaboration. |
| Integration | Collaborates with others in integrating theories, research methods, and knowledge from multiple disciplines. |

Personal effectiveness

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Resilience and perseverance | Works effectively under time pressure. Manages stress well. Remains focused on achieving objectives despite obstacles, setbacks, opposition, or distractions. |
| Initiative | Actively seeks opportunities for improvement and professional growth. Identifies and addresses problems proactively. |
| Self-reflection | Critically reflects on own behaviour and attitudes. Is open to receiving feedback. Can learn from the feedback and views it as a means for personal growth. |
| Time management | Sets realistic deadlines for tasks; meets agreed deadlines for tasks, activities, and deliverables. |

Teaching

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Lesson planning | Is able to define learning objectives. Plans teaching with regard to the target group, course aims, content, expected outcomes, and related disciplines. Knows and uses appropriate forms and methods of teaching, teaching aids, and other material didactic resources for individual teaching topics. |
| Teaching implementation | Structures lessons and lesson segments appropriately. Combines methods and teaching tools effectively. Responds to questions, and explains educational content in an appropriate manner with regard to the target group. Manages common classroom challenges (technical, environmental, participant-related). |
| Teaching assessment | Creates space for objective and fair assessment of students. Formulates clear and specific questions (in oral and written exams) that reflect the set educational goals. |
| Supervision of final theses | In collaboration with students, defines the scope of student theses, sets an effective schedule, and provides timely, structured and professional feedback. |

Project Implementation Timeline

| Activity (in 2021) | January | February | March | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December |
|--|---------|----------|-------|-------|-----|------|------|--------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| Analysis of education and development at other universities | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Identification of universities (12 in total) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Web analysis, contacting institutions, studying materials, compiling an overview | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Creating a glossary of terms | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Analysis of ongoing activities at Mendel University | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Competency models | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Competency model R1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Competency model A2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Competency model R2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Competency model R3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Competency model R4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pilot testing of 270° feedback | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Development of online questionnaires | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data processing for assessed individuals | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Provision of individual feedback to those assessed | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Analysis for the project purposes | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pilot courses development | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Course 1 preparation (R1) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Course 1 implementation and evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Course 2 preparation (A2) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Course 2 implementation and evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Course 3 preparation (R2, R3) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Course 3 implementation and evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Course 4 preparation (R4) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Course 4 implementation and evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Development of an education concept for R1-R4 and A2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Preparation of final report and project financial statement | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Proposal of the Competency Framework of Pedagogical Competencies of Higher-Education Teachers

1. I actively work on shaping my professional identity as a university teacher, my professional development, and the quality of teaching

- 1.1 I set specific goals for developing my pedagogical competencies and proactively seek ways to enhance the quality of my teaching.
- 1.2 I engage students and colleagues in discussions about teaching quality, actively contributing to improving the quality of teaching at my workplace. I actively contribute to the development of study programmes and individual courses.
- 1.3 I keep up to date with trends in education and thoughtfully integrate relevant ones into my teaching practice.
- 1.4 I apply findings from pedagogical and psychological research in my teaching. I seek them out, critically review, and interpret them.
- 1.5 I draw on my subject knowledge and skills to ensure high-quality teaching content and expand them through my creative activities.
- 1.6 I enhance my self-awareness, shaping my teaching approach to align with my personality, values, and beliefs.
- 1.7 I consciously maintain my well-being and work-life balance using various strategies and self-care tools.
- 1.8 I support colleagues who need assistance in their teaching.
- 1.9 I am familiar with key strategic documents and regulations governing study conditions (e.g. study and examination regulations) and adhere to them.
- 1.10 I understand how my teaching contributes to achieving the graduate profile. I know which study programmes include my courses and I am familiar with the syllabi of my own and follow-up courses.
- 1.11 I use the services of specialised university centres (e.g. counselling centre, centre for students with specific needs support, and pedagogical development centre) to improve my teaching.
- 1.12 I connect teaching with other activities within the third role of the university (e.g. popularisation of science, lifelong learning programmes, public enlightenment etc.).
- 1.13 I follow the principles of professional ethics when collaborating with students, colleagues, and other partners.

2. I approach my teaching preparation in a comprehensive and conceptual manner

- 2.1 I plan and prepare teaching so that students receive timely and clear information about the course.
- 2.2 I define both short-term and overall teaching goals, aligned with the graduate of the study programme profile – clarifying what students should achieve in terms of skills, knowledge, and competencies.
- 2.3 When planning teaching, I clarify how students' knowledge, skills and competencies will be assessed, their scope, criteria used, and how and when feedback will be provided to the students.
- 2.4 I structure teaching with a clear beginning, comprehensible content, and purposeful conclusion.
- 2.5 I use diverse forms of teaching. When preparing lessons, I select forms and methods appropriate to the course objectives, content, the number of students and their character, available resources, and timing. I avoid monotony and arbitrary changes in activities.
- 2.6 I design course content and materials to be comprehensible for students, focusing on essentials relative to learning objectives and students' entry-level competencies.
- 2.7 I plan lessons flexibly, allowing adjustments in response to real-time developments and I have alternatives ready.
- 2.8 I identify and periodically review individual students' educational needs and build these into my teaching plans.
- 2.9 I consider support for students with specific needs in my lesson planning, and I know where to seek help or consultation.
- 2.10 I am able to prepare teaching in face-to-face, distance, combined, or hybrid formats, ensuring each format fulfils its goals and responds to the format-specific needs.

3. I teach purposefully, taking into account the needs of students

- 3.1 I inform students about what they are expected to learn (in relation to the graduate profile, course block, or specific course or course segment), how they can continuously verify what they have learnt, according to what criteria and how their results will be assessed. I actively seek confirmation of their understanding of the information and requirements.
- 3.2 I actively guide students towards achieving desired learning objectives (in terms of knowledge, skills, and competencies), continuously monitoring and evaluating their progress.
- 3.3 I create opportunities for active student learning, encourage learners to take responsibility for their learning and foster their intrinsic motivation and collaboration.
- 3.4 To stimulate students' learning, I use appropriately challenging tasks aligned with the course objectives and the nature of the subject matter. I provide clear instructions so that students fully understand their purpose and do not fulfil them only formally. I verify that students have understood the assignments and instructions.

- 3.5 When developing knowledge and skills, I plan activities with a focus on different levels of difficulty (e.g. according to Bloom's taxonomy), matching the learning objectives.
- 3.6 I provide ongoing, concrete, criterion-based feedback, helping students recognise their progress and learn from mistakes to foster their further growth.
- 3.7 I effectively choose and use traditional and modern teaching aids (e.g. whiteboards, handouts, multimedia, apps, models, and teaching aids).
- 3.8 I adapt teaching environments to suit student needs and planned activities.
- 3.9 I encourage independent study and continuous home preparation to complement classroom work and to make learning more effective. I ensure materials are accessible, functional and logically structured, and they support active learning through navigation aids, comprehensible examples, summaries, self-check questions, etc.
- 3.10 When collaborating with other lecturers (e.g. tandem teaching, parallel seminar groups, lecturers of preceding or follow-up courses), we regularly coordinate to meet student needs and the study programme graduate profile requirements.

4. I use a variety of methods to assess the progress and achievement of students

- 4.1 I understand the principles of formative and summative assessment. I use these forms of assessment appropriately to the learning objectives, students' needs, and the set assessment criteria.
- 4.2 In assessment, I apply relevant criteria based on the learning objectives that are known and comprehensible to the students.
- 4.3 I provide students with timely (preferably continuous), objective, specific, and constructive feedback based on the set criteria, not only regarding their achieved results but also how they achieved them. I guide students in reflecting on their learning processes and participation in classes.
- 4.4 As a part of the students' assessment, I also use peer assessment and self-assessment.
- 4.5 From the range of methods used to verify learning outcomes (tests, oral examinations, written assignments, portfolios, etc.), I choose those that are appropriate to the aims of teaching and expected learning outcomes; where necessary, I combine multiple methods. I ensure that the student understands the assessment results.
- 4.6 I ensure equal summative assessment conditions for all students. I am aware of the factors that can reduce the level of objectivity of the assessment (e.g. fatigue, time of day, test question phrasing, etc.) and I take measures to promote fairness and objectivity.
- 4.7 I take the necessary steps to ensure that the summative assessment process is transparent, comprehensible, predictable, and conducted in a respectful manner that avoids unnecessary stress. I offer students support in preparing for assessments (consultations, tools for self-checking of knowledge, etc.).
- 4.8 I compare the planned learning outcomes with the actual ones achieved. When assessing students' results, I also evaluate the effectiveness of my teaching.

5. I create appropriate conditions for learning and build a safe environment and positive relationships

- 5.1 I ensure that teaching is governed by clear, meaningful, and fair rules that are appropriate to the subject matter and are set in advance, preferably in agreement with all participants.
- 5.2 I support and deliberately create a safe environment in my teaching, where mutual respect prevails. I strive to ensure that students feel comfortable in my lessons and are not afraid to engage in communication, express opinions, ask questions, take risks, or make mistakes.
- 5.3 I act with empathy towards students. I take an interest in their opinions, attitudes, and feelings, and approach situations in their academic and personal lives with sensitivity.
- 5.4 I intentionally create opportunities for cooperation, group cohesion, and mutual learning among students. I support teamwork among students.
- 5.5 I employ various strategies to enhance relationships within the student group and between students and the educational institution (e.g. emphasising initial introductions, providing consultations, timely communication, resolving conflicts timely, early intervention in team issues, fair assessment, etc.).
- 5.6 I deliberately create opportunities for all students to succeed. I recognise different learning needs, personal characteristics, and student potential, and adapt my teaching accordingly.
- 5.7 I create learning conditions that help students harmonise their academic, personal, family, and, where applicable, work lives.
- 5.8 I can recognise situations in which it is necessary to contact professionals (e.g. disability services providers, psychologists, etc.) to provide appropriate and targeted support for students requiring a specific approach.

6. I use reflection as a tool for personal and professional development, both for myself and my students

- 6.1 I continuously innovate my teaching, not randomly, but based on reflection, feedback, professional literature, participation in training courses, and sharing best practices with colleagues.
- 6.2 I pay attention to what happens during lessons and how the teaching experience is perceived by both myself and the students.
- 6.3 I systematically analyse my teaching experience and use it to improve my future teaching and student learning.
- 6.4 To recognise good practices and opportunities for development, I reflect not only on what went wrong in my teaching but also on what goes well.
- 6.5 In reflecting on my teaching, I consider my own experience, the planned and achieved objectives, the learning outcomes, the specific characteristics of the student group, and other relevant factors.

- 6.6 I use a variety of resources and tools to reflect on my teaching (e.g. peer feedback, observation, surveys, discussions with students, open classes, keeping a reflective journal, etc.).
- 6.7 I share the results of my teaching reflection with my colleagues.
- 6.8 I systematically and consciously create opportunities for students to engage in reflection and self-reflection.

Source: Procházková & Vařejková, eds. (2023)

About authors



David Krystof, Ph.D., PCC is a trained andragogist, educator and sociologist. He graduated from Palacký University in Olomouc and currently works at Mendel University in Brno. As part of his further education, he completed training in coaching and the psychological approach of transactional analysis. His professional focus is on the development of individuals, entire teams and organizations through the coaching method and transactional analysis in application in organizations.

Thanks to his expertise, he is able to connect the requirements of various groups of employees with a clear focus on the strategic goals of the organization within the framework of an educational needs analysis. He has many years of experience at various universities in the Czech Republic with the development of employees on academic campuses, both academic and non-academic staff.

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Petr Adamec, Ph.D., MBA graduated in Teaching Vocational Subjects for Secondary Schools with a focus on Business and Services from the University of Ostrava and earned his doctorate in Education from Masaryk University. He has extensive experience in both academia and educational management, having served as Manager of Lifelong Learning at Masaryk University and currently as a university lecturer and Director of the Institute of Lifelong Learning at Mendel University in Brno. His work bridges theory and practice, combining pedagogical

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Competency-Based Professional Development of Academic Staff does an admirable job of explaining that the time has long passed when a degree earned decades ago could sustain a faculty member for an entire career. As the monograph reveals, knowledge is perishable. In a world where up to 80% of today's technologies will be obsolete in a decade, what matters is not just what our academics know, but what they can do with that knowledge. To remain vital, universities must become learning organizations in every sense of the word, modeling the lifelong learning they expect from their students. This monograph provides the blueprint for that essential transformation. In my opinion, the text eloquently states that competency-based development is the heartbeat of the modern university. This approach is an investment in people, in potential, and in the very future of higher education itself.

Dr. Leslie Blanchard

The publication is a successful and unique contribution to addressing the challenges of professional education and human resource development within Czech higher education. It will stand as a worthy example and a hallmark of meaningful, high-quality scientific research and sound pedagogical practice by our experts. The results presented are current, well-founded, academically valuable, and engaging, delivered in a clear and readable form. The publication offers well-founded and inspiring insights into the system of education and professional development within the Czech academic environment, opening them to experts and the wider academic community in an international context.

Prof. Pavel Krpálek

The monograph is a valuable work that combines theoretical knowledge with practical experience, offering an inspiring path to the systematic development of academic staff. The author clearly demonstrates that competency models are not merely a theoretical construct, but a tool that can significantly enhance the quality of pedagogical and scientific activities at universities.

Dr. Tomáš Langer



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