National Accreditation Bureau
for Higer Education

Strategic Plan
of the
National Accreditation Bureau
for Higher Education
for the period 2026–2029

Introduction

The National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (hereinafter "NAB") was established on July 1, 2025, as a formally new body in the form of an independent public-law institution. Its role is to ensure the quality, development, and international competitiveness of tertiary education in the Czech Republic, primarily through accreditation, evaluation, monitoring, and guidance activities carried out independently, professionally, and transparently in accordance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 111/1998 Coll.) and the Education Act (Act No. 561/2004 Coll.). In many respects, NAB builds on the work of its institutional predecessors, the Accreditation Commission (until 2016) and the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education[1] (2016–2025).

The present strategy defines the basic direction of NAB for the upcoming four-year period, sets out the key priorities for its activities, and establishes a framework for their systematic implementation. The strategy also serves as a tool for managing the organization and communicating with external stakeholders, as well as an expression of NAB's long-term responsibility toward higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools (together referred to also as "institutions"), the state, social partners, the public, and international stakeholders. It follows on the *Action Plan for the External Review of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education*, which in 2022 publicly defined the medium-term priorities for the development of NAB's direct institutional predecessor (an evaluation of this action plan is included in **Appendix 1**). The strategy was developed through dialogue between the governing bodies and experts of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education and, during its preparation, was consulted with representatives of the most significant external stakeholders (see **Appendix 2**).

The present document is being finalized at a time when discussions are beginning on a future fundamental reform of higher education in the Czech Republic, which is likely to have implications for the entire higher education quality assurance system. NAB is actively participating in this debate; however, given the anticipated timeline for drafting the new Higher Education Act, the presented strategic plan was prepared exclusively based on currently valid legislation – it does not anticipate possible future developments. Should significant legislative changes take effect before 2029, it will be necessary to update the present document as appropriate.

A comprehensive evaluation of this strategy will take place no later than 2029 so that it can serve as a basis for preparing the strategic document for the subsequent period.

[1] *Národní akreditační úřad pro vysoké školství*. The English name of the agency has remained unchanged.

Assessment of the Current Situation – SWOT Analysis

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Institutional independence as a fundamental prerequisite for NAB's credibility; • respect within the higher education community, among government institutions, and among the public as well; • long-established accreditation and general evaluation procedures that are predictable from the perspective of higher education institutions; • personnel continuity between the newly established agency and its institutional predecessor, both in the composition of the Board and the Office; • an established and gradually expanding Pool of Evaluators; • affiliation to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), full membership in the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) and in the International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE); • long-standing working relationships with multiple European quality assurance (QA) agencies; • recognition of NAB by several prominent international professional regulators (World Federation for Medical Education, National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation).	• The agency's activities are strongly focused on accreditation; approaches to building quality culture through other processes are developed to a limited extent; • the collection of feedback on NAB's activities from key external stakeholders is not fully systematic and tends to take place on an informal basis; • quality assurance at tertiary professional schools as a new field of work for NAB has so far been only marginally integrated into the agency's activities; • shortcomings in the digitization of both core and support processes, as well as the lack of integration among internal IT systems, which increases the administrative burden associated with accreditation for higher education institutions, tertiary professional schools and NAB itself; • NAB is not a full member of ENQA nor is it registered on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR); • some current European and global trends in quality assurance are reflected only to a limited extent in NAB's activities; • lacking guidelines for using evaluations by widely recognized foreign QA agencies in assessments conducted by NAB.

Opportunities	Threats
• Legislative changes in 2025 fulfilled all the basic conditions for NAB's membership in ENQA and registration in EQAR; • the new higher education accreditation system introduced in 2016 is now sufficiently established, creating room for NAB to focus more intensively on streamlining the work of evaluation committees, enhancing the consistency of evaluations, and providing formative feedback to higher education institutions; • the concurrent high-quality external evaluations of Czech higher education institutions conducted by other national and international bodies allow for utilization of their results in NAB's activities as well; • NAB's new authority in accrediting educational programs at tertiary professional schools creates favorable conditions for strengthening cooperation and permeability between the various segments of tertiary education; • the experience gained from the first thematic analyses contributes to NAB's capacity-building in order to provide more intensive guidance to higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools, including the sharing of best practice examples; • thanks to the legislative amendments currently being drafted, there is an opportunity to incorporate selected proven principles and procedures from advanced European QA systems – and, where appropriate, selected significant changes resulting from the ongoing revision of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) – directly into the Higher Education Act and related subordinate legislation.	• Any further delay in NAB's membership in ENQA and registration on EQAR would weaken the competitiveness of Czech higher education; • increasing "evaluation fatigue" at higher education institutions due to the overlap of various types of institutional-level evaluations in recent years; • the looming excessive strain on NAB's staffing capacity, particularly in the critical years of 2027 and 2028 as a result of the simultaneous introduction of new, demanding tasks (a new cycle of institutional accreditations, a series of applications for domestic authorization from foreign higher education providers, changes in the organization of QA procedures for tertiary professional schools, and, hypothetically, the implementation of changes resulting from upcoming amendments to higher education legislation); • the statutory deadlines for deciding on accreditation applications – which are very short compared to many systems abroad – hinder efforts to provide more comprehensive feedback to applicants.

Mission, Vision, Values

Mission

The mission of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education is to ensure the quality, development, and international competitiveness of higher education and tertiary professional education in the Czech Republic, with its main role being:

- to contribute to improving the quality of higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools through independent, expert, and transparent evaluation of their activities and decisions on accreditation,
- to support higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools in fostering institutional accountability for the quality of their activities through guidance,
- to collect and publish reliable information on developments in this sector of education.

Vision

The vision of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education is an integrated system of tertiary education with a strong culture of quality and continuous improvement, which is aligned with European trends and enjoys the trust of both the domestic public and international partners.

Core Values

The activities of NAB are based on the following values, which provide a long-term framework for its decision-making, conduct, and internal operations:

Independence

The NAB carries out its activities independently of political, institutional, and other particular interests. Independence in decision-making is a fundamental prerequisite for the credibility of the quality assurance system.

Expertise

NAB's decision-making is based on expert assessment, respect for academic and professional values and standards, and the use of relevant data, analyses, and international best practices. NAB ensures consistent application of standards and the stability of decision-making practices, which enables institutions to plan and develop their activities over the long term.

Transparency

The NAB strives for clear and open communication regarding its procedures, criteria, and decisions. It is accountable to the state, the public, institutions, and other stakeholders. The NAB views institutions and other stakeholders as partners in the quality assurance system. It promotes open dialogue, respect for the diversity of institutions, and shared responsibility for the quality of tertiary education in both of its specific parts.

Priority 1: Institutional Consolidation of NAB

Context

The transformation of NAB into an independent public-law institution, effective July 1, 2025, has presented the agency with several fundamental changes in its operations. This significant shift, which is a fundamental prerequisite for institutional independence, places increased demands on the structure and operations of the entire organization, particularly because, in addition to its core specialized activities, it must now independently carry out a number of tasks arising from its new legal form. The key task for the 2026–2029 period therefore remains the completion of institutional emancipation and internal consolidation, with the goal of ensuring that the NAB functions as a stable, effective, and trustworthy agency.

Strategic Objectives

1.1 Ensure that all conditions for the existence and effective operation of NAB as an independent agency are met.
1.2 Create an internal quality management system for NAB's activities that will enable the systematic evaluation of process efficiency, quality of decision-making, and the achievement of strategic objectives.
1.3 Deepen the digitization of both core and support processes.
1.4 Strengthen the agency's professional, analytical, and administrative capacity; ensure long-term personnel stability; and systematically develop its staff.

Measures

- Conduct an analysis of all institutional obligations arising from the NAB's new legal form;
- systematize internal regulations, methodologies, and procedures so that they form a comprehensive and understandable framework for the agency's operations;
- introduce an annual plan of activities of the NAB and link its evaluation to the preparation of the annual activity report;
- consistently digitize all basic administrative filings;
- analyze the possibilities for using AI in the NAB's operations;
- introduce an internal employee evaluation system and create a long-term plan for their training and professional development.

Priority 2: Developing Quality Culture in Tertiary Education

Context

Tertiary education in the Czech Republic consists of two distinct components that are only loosely interconnected: higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools. Although each of these components is governed by different legislation (the Higher Education Act and the Education Act, respectively), in the area of quality assurance (QA) both segments operate on similar principles, with a primary emphasis on various types of accreditation and similar mechanisms (state approval, domestic authorization, and the school's registration in the school registry).

In the case of higher education, the QA system underwent a significant change most recently in 2016 and can currently be considered functionally diverse and fully established – within the framework of the NAB's activities, it is professionally guaranteed by evaluators based on the principle of peer review, organizationally and administratively sophisticated, predictable from the perspective of higher education institutions, and integrated into their internal institutional mechanisms. Although this model is procedurally demanding and, by European standards, on the traditional side, it meets the key requirements of the ESG.

In the case of tertiary professional education, to which the ESG do not explicitly apply, the quality assurance model that has been in place since the 1990s is currently in a transitional phase. While the basic parameters of educational program accreditation have remained largely unchanged, the entire institutional context is undergoing significant transformation – the NAB has recently taken over this field of work, and the standing Accreditation Commission for Tertiary Professional Education will be dissolved in 2028 and replaced by a system of ad hoc evaluation committees similar to that in higher education. This further harmonization of accreditation procedures also paves the way for strengthening cooperation and permeability between the two segments of tertiary education.

Furthermore, in both sectors, the overall dominance of accreditation mechanisms disproportionately limits the scope for other tools for building quality culture, such as formative assessment, the sharing of examples of good practice, or the timely identification and incorporation of broader trends in education.

Strategic Objectives

2.1 Modernize institutional and program evaluation at higher education institutions.
2.2 Develop a new evaluation system for tertiary professional schools and fully integrate it into NAB's operations.
2.3 Create conditions for closer cooperation between higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools.
2.4 Introduce thematic evaluations as an integral part of the NAB's activities.
2.5 Strengthen the data foundation for informed evaluation and decision-making.

Measures

- Complete a comprehensive revision of accreditation standards in higher education and support their implementation through guidelines for both applicants and evaluators;
- modernize procedures for evaluating higher education study programs for accreditation purposes (clustering of applications, on-site visits, a shift toward a more formative approach to evaluations, and, in the case of professionally oriented study programs, more intensive involvement of employers);
- launch the second cycle of institutional accreditations for higher education institutions, strengthening the audit components therein, particularly for those applicants who have already been granted institutional accreditation in the past and are applying for it a second time;
- harmonize the basic evaluation and accreditation procedures for tertiary professional schools with those established in higher education (ad hoc evaluation committees involving various types of stakeholders, on-site visits, etc.);
- adapt the quality assurance system for tertiary professional schools to new types and forms of education (particularly dual-track educational programs and authorized 1- to 2-year programs);
- support the evaluation of the quality of tertiary professional education at the institutional and regional levels, and encourage greater employer involvement in the evaluation process;
- facilitate networking and cooperation between higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools by sharing examples of best practices and developing guidelines;
- establish rules for the use of evaluations of Czech universities by renowned foreign agencies in accreditation proceedings and external evaluations;
- regularly adopt a plan for thematic analyses;
- assess the potential impact on the administrative burden of institutions before introducing new elements into the accreditation, evaluation, and monitoring of higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools;
- strengthen mechanisms for sharing examples of best practices and support the development of internal quality assurance systems at higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools.

Priority 3: Strengthening NAB's Transparency and Stakeholder Trust

Context

Trust in the quality assurance system for tertiary education is an essential prerequisite for its long-term effectiveness. The NAB considers transparency and open dialogue with external stakeholders to be fundamental to strengthening trust, quality, clarity, and legitimacy of its activities. While in the higher education sector NAB can count on a high degree of respect – in part due to its continuity with the work of its predecessors – and utilize long-established communication channels with higher education institutions and their representative bodies, the process of building similarly constructive partnerships in the tertiary professional education sector is still in its infancy. The NAB also has great potential in its relationship with the broader public, which would rightly expect an organization established specifically to ensure the quality of tertiary education to have a stronger voice in the public debate on the current state and development of education in our country.

Strategic Objectives

3.1 Strengthen methodological support for higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools in evaluation and accreditation.
3.2 Strengthen the mechanisms for direct feedback from higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools regarding NAB's activities (accreditation, evaluation).
3.3 Modernize the NAB's communication with the public.

Measures

- Consistently publish the reports used for decision-making;
- introduce regular, structured consultations with key stakeholders (higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools, students, employers), systematically evaluate feedback and use it as a basis for improving the NAB's operations;
- systematically involve external stakeholders in the preparation and revision of standards and guidelines; establish transparent procedures for consultation on all materials that significantly affect higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools; in the case of professionally oriented education, involve employer representatives on a structured basis;
- strengthen methodological support for higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools, by organizing regular conferences, webinars, and public consultations; sharing examples of best practices; and making guidelines more accessible on the NAB website, etc.;
- provide cooperation to the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of the Czech Republic in modernizing the registry of higher education study programs and the public section of the Register of Schools and Educational Institutions with the aim of improving the public record of accredited study and educational programs;
- modernize the NAB's website;
- modernize the NAB's annual activity report;
- more actively engage the NAB in the public debate on education.

Priority 4: International Engagement

Context

The international dimension of quality assurance is an integral part of the European Higher Education Area. NAB's active involvement in international structures contributes to improving the quality of its activities, strengthens its professional authority and relevance in both the domestic and European contexts, and indirectly contributes to building international trust in Czech higher education institutions and tertiary professional schools, as well as their graduates. Through its engagement on the international level, the NAB is able to adapt international best practices and trends in quality assurance to the Czech context.

Finally, NAB's recognition by foreign professional regulatory bodies improves the standing of Czech higher education institutions and facilitates access to regulated professions abroad, particularly in the field of general medicine through NAB's recognition by the World Federation for Medical Education and the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation.

Strategic Objectives

4.1 Achieve full membership in ENQA and registration on EQAR.
4.2 Create conditions for implementing the principles and commitments arising from membership in the EHEA.
4.3 Strengthen the international reputation of NAB as a respected authority in the field of QA of tertiary education.
4.4 Transfer current European and global trends in quality assurance to the Czech context.

Measures

- successfully pass the external review of NAB's compliance with the ESG;
- develop effective cooperation at both the international and national levels with the aim of fulfilling the commitments of the Bologna Process and the conferences of ministers responsible for education;
- deepen targeted involvement in international networks, projects, and working groups;
- intensify bilateral cooperation with agencies in neighboring countries, particularly with regard to the activities of branches of foreign universities;
- provide information and methodological support regarding the implementation of current trends from abroad;
- increase the participation of international experts in NAB's activities, including greater involvement of foreign evaluators.

Appendix 1: Evaluation of the Action Plan for External Review of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (2022)

Area	Objectives	Results achieved
Independence of NAB	Achieve organizational independence from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.	**Achieved**. Act No. 52/2025 amended the Higher Education Act, and on July 1, 2025, the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education was established as an independent legal person of public law.
	Enhance operational independence.	
	Establish a legal definition of the nature of NAB.	
	Ensure NAB´s autonomy in managing resources.	
Aligning external quality assurance processes with the ESG	Adjust the procedures to make better use of the evaluators' and staff capacities.	**Partially fulfilled**. Since 2026, NAB has been piloting a model for clustering applications for the accreditation of study programs.
	Incorporate site visits as a fixed part of the peer-review method in program accreditation.	**Completed**. Act No. 52/2025 explicitly incorporated the option of on-site visits into the Higher Education Act; since 2025, NAB has been conducting on-site visits as a mandatory part of all accreditation proceedings for new study programs.
	Make the review reports more comprehensive.	**Completed**. The initial training of evaluation committees has been modernized, and the guidelines for writing evaluation reports have been revised.
	Ensure publication of peer review reports.	**Completed**. Act No. 52/2025 explicitly incorporated the obligation to publish the evaluation reports into the Higher Education Act and NAB is fulfilling this obligation.
Further development of the Pool of Evaluators	Achieve high expertise of the evaluators.	**Implemented on an ongoing basis**. NAB has been enrolling new evaluators in the Pool, paying special attention to recruitment of student experts. The initial training model has been modernized as well as the continuous work with evaluators over the course of the evaluations.
	Solidify a core of reliable, involved, and experienced evaluators.	
	Provide contextualized assessment sensitive to the specifics of disciplines.	
	Ensure a meaningful role of students and their active engagement in external QA procedures.	

Thematic analysis	Play a greater role in shaping higher education policy. Share NAB´s expertise and data with the public and stakeholders. Improve NAB´s activities on the basis of impact analysis.	**Partially fulfilled**. In 2026, NAB approved the conducting of the first three thematic analyses, and is finalizing the first of them. Thematic analyses will be the main tool through which NAB can actively contribute to shaping the state's higher education policy and share expertise and unique data from its own activities.
Revision of accreditation standards	Update the government regulation on accreditation standards. Incorporate the accumulated experience with application of the standards in external QA procedures. Make standards easier to read and more relevant for every-day use.	**In progress**. NAB gathered input for the revision of the standards and, based on this input and following discussions with key stakeholders, proposed a revised version in 2026. The legislative process is underway, with approval by the government expected by the end of 2026.

Appendix 2: List of external stakeholders consulted during the preparation of the strategy

Association of Tertiary Professional Schools
Czech Rectors' Conference
Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of the Czech Republic
Council of Higher Education Institutions
Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic