

COMMITTEE MEMBER'S EVALUATION NOTES OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES COVERING PERIOD 2020 – 2024

Department: Department of Business Economics and Management

INTRODUCTION

This expert report has been prepared at the request of the Dean of the School of Business Administration in Karviná in order to evaluate the scientific and research activities of the Department of Business Economics and Management (DBEM) during the period 2020-2024 and to provide an informed expert opinion on the proposed Concept of Scientific Research Activities for the period 2026-2030. The Department represents one of the cornerstones of the faculty, both in the breadth of its educational portfolio and in the growing significance of its research profile. The evaluation is particularly important given the department's central role in guaranteeing the faculty's largest study programs, its expanding involvement in international projects, and its strategic importance in connecting research to regional development and business practice.

SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation applies to: (1) the department's overall results in research activities covering period 2020 till 2024 and its conception of research activity in general and (2) the individual department's members which depend for the most part on funding from.

GOAL OF THE EVALUATION

The committee was asked to provide: (1) an overall assessment of the department's research activities and its conception, including specific recommendations towards conceptual or organizational changes for its further development and (2) assessment of the individual members of the department from the point of view of their contribution towards the excellence of the research activities of the department – publication productivity and quality, level of international collaboration, or their overall perspective for further development of the research activity of the department.

The envisaged outcome in part (2) was a ranking of the evaluated department members into several categories according to their performance, from the best to the worst. In order to grade systematically the scientific quality of their research, faculty adopted the following scale for ranking the individuals:

Grade A (excellent) – researcher provides science activities at a high international level of international interest with broad impact within its field and with substantial ratio of high quality publications also in internationally leading journals. The researcher is internationally known as one of leading experts at least in a subfield of his/her interest. The researcher publishes with appropriate frequency. It is expected that the high quality and the frequency of outputs will be preserved in the next years.

Grade B (very good) – researcher provides science activities at an international level with impact within its field and with a reasonable ratio of high quality publications in internationally well-known journals. The researcher has an international reputation within the

field. The researcher publishes with good frequency. It is expected that the quality and the frequency of outputs will be preserved in the next years.

Grade C (good) – researcher provides outputs that are of good standard and impact and at least partially published in well-known journals. An adequate scientific contribution is required. There is a hope for improving the situation in the near future.

Grade D (acceptable) – researcher provides infrequent research outputs of good standard during a longer period of time, the research activities contributes to effort of the department only to a limited extent.

Grade E (insufficient) – researcher provides very low number of publications during observed period. The research activities contributes to the effort of the department in the field of science only to a negligible extent.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT

Scope of scientific activities of the department

Evaluate, whether the scope of scientific activities of the department is in accordance with modern trends in the field of business economics and management; evaluate a research vision and concept of the department for the period 2026–2030.

The Department of Business Economics and Management (DBEM) is an integral unit of the School of Business Administration (SU SBA) at the Silesian University in Opava. It provides the largest share of teaching within the faculty and is actively involved in both research and application-oriented projects. Based on the self-evaluation report for the period 2020–2024, the department demonstrates a stable academic team, a diversified portfolio of study programs in Czech and English, and strong connections with national and international research and business partners. This solid institutional foundation supports DBEM's capacity for further academic growth and regional impact.

Contemporary research and managerial trends are increasingly shaped by the integration of technological innovation, sustainability, new leadership models, and organizational transformation. The greatest challenge for European enterprises, particularly those in countries positioned in the lower half of the DESI 2024 index, including the Czech Republic, remains the digital transformation of business processes, the effective use of data, and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance competitiveness and productivity. These global tendencies also extend to sustainability and ESG compliance as essential strategic components, and to emerging concepts such as *sustainable innovation* and *innovability*, which link innovation processes with environmental and social responsibility. Moreover, organizational flexibility and resilience, strengthened by AI tools, data analytics, and network analysis, have become central to managing uncertainty and interdependence in complex systems. Network-based approaches allow for measuring collaboration, influence, and relationships between entities—whether individuals, organizations, or sectors providing valuable insights into the structural dynamics of the modern economy.

In this analytical context, the DBEM's main research areas:

1. Business Process Management (BPM),
2. Sustainable Development of Business Entities (SD),
3. Strategic Business Management (SBM), and
4. Consumer Mechanisms (CM)

are well aligned with international research priorities. However, the degree of integration between these domains and current technological advances (digital transformation, AI applications, and network analytics) remains limited. Strengthening these connections would improve the scientific relevance and practical applicability of research outcomes, particularly in the fields of BPM and consumer analytics, where network methods and AI-based models are underexplored. Increasing the focus on the business impact of research, innovation capacity, and transferability of findings to industry is also recommended.

The department's forward-looking research vision for 2026–2030 appropriately addresses contemporary economic challenges in the Moravian-Silesian region, emphasizing artificial intelligence, the green and circular economy, digital transformation, and advanced data processing. Future analysis of the regional business environment, including macroeconomic,

sectoral, and technological factors affecting enterprises' adaptation to digital and sustainable transitions, will be particularly valuable. The application of validated data sources such as DESI, Eurostat, and the European Innovation Scoreboard will enhance the reliability of findings. At the enterprise level, ESG reporting is becoming a formal and analytical necessity, creating a relevant framework for applied research. The proposed mixed-methods approach is methodologically sound, although greater emphasis on secondary data utilization from European and global databases would further strengthen empirical depth.

The research concept is structured around three main directions:

1. Sustainable Development of Business Entities (SD) and Business Process Management (BPM),
2. Strategic Business Management (SBM), and
3. Consumer Mechanisms (CM).

While the structure provides conceptual clarity, there is a degree of inconsistency in the methodological division into quantitative, qualitative, and project-based research dimensions. Greater balance among these dimensions could strengthen the analytical potential of the SBM and CM areas. The term *project research* would benefit from clearer definition, whether it refers to secondary data collection or research embedded within externally funded projects.

The department's progress in acquiring external grants, developing international collaborations, and supporting staff research mobility is highly commendable. The STARS EU program, cooperation with universities in Prague and Pilsen, and active participation in Horizon and COST projects have notably enhanced DBEM's research capacity. Furthermore, the department's growing emphasis on Web of Science and Scopus-indexed publications, active conference participation, and the continued organization of the international DEMSME conference represent significant steps toward greater international visibility and academic recognition. Compared to the previous evaluation period, the department's increased project activity and acquisition of external funding clearly demonstrate its organizational maturity and strategic advancement.

Quantity and quality of publication activities

Evaluate quantity and quality of publication outputs , whether research results are published in international scientific journals listed in WoS or SCOPUS databases; evaluate proportion of papers published in journals with high influence in the relevant field of science (eg journals with a high AIS score)

Based on the evaluation of department members (see Part II), it can be concluded that the Department of Business Economics and Management (DBEM) comprises a smaller group of academics achieving excellent results, who act as key publication and research leaders. These individuals consistently demonstrate above-standard performance in high-quality journals and play an essential role in international collaboration. For this group, it is advisable to continue the current publication strategy while further strengthening their leadership role and focusing on outputs in prestigious journals.

A significant proportion of the academic staff achieves very good results, forming a stable foundation of the department's research activity. Within this group, there remains strong potential for growth through expanding publication in WoS/IF-indexed journals, improving

citation impact, and engaging more actively in international partnerships.

A smaller subset of staff, assessed as “good,” displays partial publication activity and requires targeted institutional support to enhance performance. Recommended actions include increased international mobility, participation in conferences, and stronger involvement in project teams, which can collectively raise the scope and quality of their publications.

The greatest challenge concerns staff and doctoral students evaluated as “insufficient.” This group has not yet reached the expected level of research productivity, particularly in publishing in WoS and Scopus-indexed journals or engaging in project and conference activities. To support this group effectively, structured mentoring, methodological assistance, and closer collaboration with more experienced colleagues are essential. Emphasis should also be placed on transforming dissertation and project outputs into publishable research papers.

Overall, the department benefits from a group of outstanding researchers supported by a stable core of productive academics. However, systematic support for less active members is necessary to balance disparities in performance and strengthen the department’s overall international reputation.

According to the Self-Evaluation Report and the “All Employees” dataset for 2020-2024, a total of 18 journal articles with an Impact Factor (JCR/WoS) were identified:

- the distribution of IF values is moderate: mean 2.19, median 1.1, range 0.7–5.4;
- 9 articles were published in journals with $IF \geq 3$, and 1 in $IF \geq 5$;
- of 22 DBEM employees (including Ph.D. students), 12 have at least one IF publication, and 14 have publications in journals indexed in Scopus.

DBEM’s research results are regularly published in international journals indexed in WoS and Scopus. The journal profile remains mixed: while some outputs appear in high-impact titles, a considerable share are in Q3 journals or periodicals with moderate Article Influence Scores (AIS). The median IF of 1.1 and the relatively small proportion of publications with $AIS \geq 0.5$ confirm the department’s solid but uneven research performance. Among those with defined Scopus outputs, the average number of articles per author over five years is approximately 3.23, demonstrating a steady presence of DBEM in international academic publishing.

Correspondence between scientific activities and educational activities

Evaluate whether the focus of the research activities of the department is in accordance with the educational activities of the department

The presented materials demonstrate a strong and coherent alignment between DBEM’s research activities and its teaching portfolio, both in terms of study programs and the content of individual courses. This integration ensures that research findings are systematically transferred into the learning process, reinforcing the department’s applied orientation. At the same time, the Self-Assessment Report notes that DBEM delivers a *Finance, Accounting, and Taxation* track within the *Economics and Management* program. However, the personal data forms submitted by staff show limited research engagement specifically in the areas of finance and accounting. This suggests that the academic responsibilities for this

specialization may be partially distributed among other units within the faculty or that DBEM's internal research capacity in these fields requires further development through targeted staffing and stronger publication output.

Department staff and its development

Evaluate composition of the team, eg whether there is appropriate number of professors, associate professors, assistant professors with Ph.D., assistants without Ph.D. and internal Ph.D. students; evaluate the personnel development of the department in the covering period

Based on the submitted evaluation materials, the DBEM staff consists of 17 academics, with no full professor positions currently in the structure. The team includes five associate professors, 12 assistant professors holding doctoral degrees, and five doctoral students. The presence of Ph.D. students reflects the department's commitment to academic succession and the cultivation of new research talent within the discipline of *Economics and Management*. However, the absence of full professors in a key department represents a structural weakness from the perspective of accreditation, program guarantees, and doctoral supervision, even though the current associate professors effectively ensure academic leadership and substantive oversight.

DBEM's teaching portfolio includes bachelor's and master's programs in Economics and Management, as well as specialized and professionally oriented programs such as *Innovative Business*, *Marketing*, *Management in Social Services (Social Management)*, and *Digital Business*. Within *Economics and Management*, the department offers several specialization tracks—*Trade and Marketing*, *Entrepreneurship*, and *Finance, Accounting, and Taxes*. The academic competencies of the staff are well aligned with these program areas, and the teaching offer in both Czech and English reflects the department's broad professional orientation and international openness.

Between 2020 and 2024, the department demonstrated continuous capacity strengthening. According to the Self-Assessment Report, the student-to-staff ratio (including doctoral students) improved from approximately 50 in 2019 to about 37 in 2024. This progress results from the rational expansion of the team and the inclusion of part-time specialists to support teaching and supervision. Internal promotions, including the successful habilitation of doc. Ing. Martin Klepek, Ph.D., who advanced to the position of associate professor, illustrate the effectiveness of DBEM's internal career development system and its ability to retain high-potential scholars.

The distribution of expertise within the team aligns closely with the department's main research and teaching domains. Personnel documentation confirms that each core study track has designated academic coordinators responsible for content and quality assurance. This structure supports program coherence and ensures professional accountability across the teaching offer.

At the same time, the limited number of senior academics places pressure on the department's capacity for research leadership and accreditation-related tasks. Although the presence of five associate professors provides formal eligibility for program and doctoral supervision, the administrative and teaching workload constrains their availability for intensive research and strategic development. For instance, Associate Professor T. Gongol shows significantly reduced research productivity, which may indicate resource or workload limitations affecting senior staff. In this context, even short-term absences or reduced

engagement from one or two senior academics could create bottlenecks in program management, doctoral supervision, or research coordination. Strengthening the department's senior academic base and supporting workload balance are therefore essential for ensuring long-term stability and sustainability.

Scientific and publication activities of Ph.D. students

Evaluate the involvement of Ph.D. students in scientific activities (eg students grants, publications)

Evaluating the performance of Ph.D. students is challenging due to the limited scope of their documented academic activity. It is unclear whether all doctoral candidates have been continuously affiliated with DBEM since 2020 or at what stage of their studies they currently are. Their publication record shows an absence of articles in Scopus or Web of Science-indexed journals, indicating that their research output is still in an early developmental phase. Nevertheless, their participation in academic conferences, including international events, and the presence of preliminary papers in conference proceedings are positive indicators of emerging research engagement. With appropriate mentoring, methodological support, and stronger integration into departmental projects, these activities could provide a solid foundation for future publications in indexed journals and for building their academic careers.

Scientific projects

Evaluate research projects, consider particularly the results achieved, internalization and the share of projects funded from external resources

Between 2020 and 2024, DBEM implemented a total of 27 research projects, eight of which received external funding, representing a significant increase compared to the 2015-2019 period and a share of external projects of approximately 30% of the entire portfolio over the analyzed period. The funding sources included international and transnational programs (Honorable Mention for Horizon 2020, two COST actions, the Visegrad Fund, and Interreg CZ/PL) and regional instruments (MSK 2017 and MSK 2018, with implementation periods extending into 2020-2021), with funding secured for the first time from the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TAČR). The list of external projects includes, among others: EFFECT-SME (H2020 INNOSUP, 2021-2022), COST CA18115 TRIBES (2020-2023), COST CA23120 ORBIT (2024-2028, continuation of network cooperation in social sciences), Visegrad Fund "HRM in V4 countries" (2023-2024), Interreg "Euregio-info" (2021-2023), and TAČR TQ01000115 "Second Career Entrepreneurship - from Corporate to Unicorn" (2023-2026).

The presented data clearly confirm both a quantitative and qualitative advancement in the internationalization of DBEM's project portfolio, accompanied by a diversification of funding sources beyond the university's internal mechanisms. The scope and intensity of project engagement reflect a mature institutional strategy for research development and external collaboration. The degree of internationalization within DBEM's project activity is notably high and multidimensional.

Participation in COST and Horizon 2020 projects exemplifies the department's ability to operate effectively within international research consortia, contributing both thematic expertise and methodological support. In the COST initiative, Professor Šperka served as a

member of the Management Committee, facilitating the exchange of best practices in research organization and publication strategy. Within the H2020 EFFECT-SME project, Associate Professor Gongol acted as co-leader, supported by an interdisciplinary team drawn from the process-digital and marketing sections, which demonstrates DBEM's capacity for cross-sectoral collaboration and integration of diverse research competencies.

Projects implemented under the Visegrad Fund and Interreg programs further strengthened cross-border academic and institutional partnerships, particularly in the fields of human resource management and public information accessibility, thus aligning with both the regional development agenda and the internationalization of teaching activities. Moreover, the department's participation in TAČR projects, alongside prominent national partners such as VŠE and CzechInvest, highlights DBEM's growing credibility and competitiveness in highly selective national funding schemes.

The scale of staff involvement in external projects is broad, encompassing both independent and junior employees, which demonstrates the diffusion of competencies and the development of career progression. Project outcomes encompass publications, implementations, and services. Articles resulting from research collaborations with external partners, such as Behavio Labs and Dva Mluvčí, were explicitly cited, leading to publications in peer-reviewed journals and, in one case, a conference paper. In parallel, a broad range of contract work translated into tangible products: research reports for ATE System and the Statutory City of Karviná, benchmarking and strategic studies for enterprises (Lanex, WITKOWITZ ENVI, CZ Testing Institute), planning studies for municipalities, as well as software components and documentation for the "Digital Business" project. It was also noted that RPA research resulted in one article and a defended dissertation, which connects the project path with staff development and the doctoral school. The results understood in this way strengthen both the scientific and applied impact in the region and ensure a link with teaching through Business Gate, where 300 Czech and 32 foreign students were trained during the period under review, and from 2023, seven marketing projects for practice were implemented under the "Business Gate Solution" formula.

Overall, the department's project achievements provide convincing evidence of sustained international engagement, effective interdisciplinary cooperation, and strategic alignment with both national and European research priorities.

National and international cooperation

Evaluate national and international co-operation of the department – eg in hether department members are involved in international research teams; incoming and outcoming research mobilities

According to the submitted documentation, DBEM's national and international cooperation demonstrates a systemic and strategically embedded character, reflected in its active participation in consortium projects and academic networks. The department's consistent involvement of staff in international research teams, coupled with regular mobility flows, evidences a mature and well-structured approach to internationalization. On this basis, the criterion of international cooperation merits a high evaluative rating.

The self-assessment report confirms DBEM's participation in Horizon 2020 and COST projects, as well as the acquisition of its first TAČR grant, marking an important milestone in national-level research competitiveness. Since 2023, the European University STARS EU consortium has served as the department's overarching strategic framework for international

cooperation, providing opportunities for both academic staff and students in mobility, joint course delivery, Blended Intensive Programs (BIPs), and collaborative preparation of grant proposals under the Horizon Europe scheme. In parallel, DBEM sustains an extensive network of national partnerships with universities and development agencies, reinforcing the two-way flow of knowledge and enhancing the faculty's regional integration. Collectively, these elements illustrate a significant degree of organizational maturity and the deep internalization of international research and teaching practices.

Participation in international research teams takes both project-based and community-based forms. Within the COST framework, DBEM contributes to the Management Committees of the *TRIBES* and *ORBIT* Actions, providing direct input into the research agenda and facilitating network development. Under Horizon 2020, the department served as a content partner in the *EFFECT-SME* project. Additional collaborations through the Visegrad Fund and Interreg programs, implemented with partners in Poland, Ireland, Romania, and Mexico, have generated peer-reviewed publications, conference outputs, and teaching exchanges, reinforcing the interdisciplinary and applied orientation of DBEM's research.

Bilateral collaborations further exemplify the department's international embeddedness. Notable partnerships include: Poznań University of Technology (joint publications, research stays in Karviná, and two-way mobility), Jagiellonian University (joint grant applications), University of Bucharest (co-authored papers and book chapters), Universidade Aberta and University of Malta (COST-related cooperation), Institute of Minority Entrepreneurship Dublin and TU Dublin (minority entrepreneurship research), and Shanxi University of Finance and Economics (co-publications and short-term mobility). Moreover, DBEM co-organizes the cyclical international conference DEMSME, which strengthens its international visibility and engagement in the global research community. Documentation of these collaborations confirms interdisciplinary cooperation across Europe, with selected extensions to non-European partners.

Outgoing staff mobility is continuous and encompasses research, lecturing, and participation in BIPs across institutions with diverse disciplinary profiles, thereby facilitating the diffusion of competencies and best practices. Documented examples include a short research stay at the University of Malta (Klepek); multiple research trips to Romania and Ireland (Duháček Šebestová); a research stay at the Institute of Informatics, University of Tartu (Šperka); internships and lectures at University of Szeged (Bauerová) and JF Oberlin University, Tokyo (Adámek); and multiple mobilities to Malta, Romania, Spain, and Turkey (Matusšínská), as well as a guest lecture in Shanxi (Zapletalová). These activities collectively demonstrate the effective use of international mobility for the enhancement of both research and teaching content, particularly in DBEM's key domains of consumer behavior, business process management, and entrepreneurship.

Inbound mobility and the internationalization of the local academic community are equally visible. DBEM regularly organizes scientific seminars with the participation of international researchers and journal editors and hosts short-term visits from partner institutions, such as Poznań University of Technology. Between 2020 and 2024, a series of seminars featured speakers from Poland, Romania, Germany, and Slovakia, fostering the exchange of best practices in methodology and publication. Ongoing collaborations with WSB University in Dąbrowa Górnicza and the Faculty of Management, Rzeszów University of Technology, through international student seminars conducted in English, further attest to DBEM's

commitment to integrating international perspectives into its educational environment.

At the national level, the department maintains active networking with approximately twenty faculties of economics in Poland and the Czech Republic, primarily in the field of marketing. It also engages in project-based cooperation with major national universities and development institutions, including the Prague University of Economics and Business and CzechInvest under the TAČR project, Tomas Bata University in Zlín in research on online shopping behavior, and Czech University of Life Sciences (ČZU) in the development of the *Innovative Entrepreneurship* program based on the *Team Academy* methodology. Furthermore, ongoing relationships with ECSB, professional associations, and regional innovation organizations complement DBEM's expanding network of practice-oriented partnerships.

Overall, DBEM demonstrates a high level of institutional internationalization, combining active participation in European research structures with an expanding portfolio of bilateral and multilateral partnerships that enhance both academic reputation and regional impact.

Social significance of scientific activities

Evaluate scientific activities and their impact on society in the covering period 2015 – 2019 – eg whether there is a positive impact of the department's research activities on society

Based on the submitted documentation, DBEM's research activities in the period 2020–2024 demonstrate a substantial and verifiable social impact, particularly at the regional level. The department's most significant contributions include support for public policies, consultancy for local governments and enterprises, the enhancement of students' entrepreneurial competencies, and the professionalization of the regional innovation ecosystem.

In the area of public policy and administration, DBEM implemented a series of applied research and expert projects for municipalities and regional authorities. Notable examples include the periodic maintenance of the *Financial Stability of Municipalities in the Moravian-Silesian Region* application (2020–2023, with continuation through 2026), business environment diagnostics for Karviná and Opava, and updates to local development strategies. Members of the department actively participated in regional innovation councils, municipal working groups, and the ministerial *Education Group* at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MPSV), focusing on social entrepreneurship. In addition, DBEM representatives contributed as evaluators to regional support programs such as *Innobooster*, *Vouchers for Entrepreneurs*, and *Startup Voucher*. The collected evidence confirms the practical application of research outputs in local development planning, assessment of public service quality, and the design of entrepreneurship support instruments.

In the economic and social domains, the department maintained an extensive portfolio of contract and project-based research with private and non-governmental organizations. Outputs of these activities include analytical reports, feasibility studies, international benchmarks, educational software components, and co-authored peer-reviewed publications produced in collaboration with partners such as Behavio Labs, Dva Mluvčí, Net Direct, WITKOWITZ ENVI, and ATE System. Activities at the intersection of scientific research and social innovation were also identified, including the *Archa Intergenerational Centre* project in Karviná. These initiatives align with regional priorities for economic transformation and the transfer of technologies and competences into practice, indirectly enhancing both business competitiveness and the quality of public services.

A particularly visible mechanism of social engagement is Business Gate, which has functioned as a key platform for entrepreneurial mentoring, start-up consulting, and the integration of practical education. Between 2020 and 2024, Business Gate launched the *Business Gate Solution* initiative, operating as a student-led marketing agency, and supported the implementation of seven business projects directly connected to the local socio-economic environment. These activities illustrate the systematic interconnection between research, education, and the labor market, contributing to the development of students' practical skills and generating measurable social and economic benefits. The department's expanding international collaboration further enhances its capacity to influence practice in socially relevant domains such as innovative entrepreneurship, human resource management, and process digitalization, thereby strengthening the regional knowledge ecosystem.

At the same time, the documentation provides limited systematic quantification of impact understood as outcomes and effects rather than merely outputs. While the provided evidence comprehensively enumerates reports, consultancy activities, participant numbers, and community engagements, it offers less empirical confirmation of verified changes among beneficiaries—such as the implementation of public policy recommendations, budgetary adjustments at the municipal level, improvements in quality-of-life indicators (e.g., among seniors), employment or revenue growth in partner companies, survival rates of start-up initiatives, or measurable adoption of IT tools developed within DBEM projects. Establishing impact measurement frameworks in these areas would strengthen the evidence base for future research and increase publication potential in high-impact journals.

Cooperation of the department with the application sphere

Evaluate the most significant interactions with the non-academic application/corporate sphere. Take into consideration how the evaluated department looks up for and cooperate with application partners.

Based on the submitted documentation, DBEM's collaboration with the application sector demonstrates a structured and systemic character, encompassing continuous contract research for local governments and enterprises, long-term relationships with regional partners, and established mechanisms for the involvement of practitioners in teaching and student projects.

During the period under review, the department implemented several applied initiatives, including the ongoing maintenance of the *Financial Stability of Municipalities in the Moravian-Silesian Region* application (extended for 2024–2026), analyses of the business environment for the cities of Karviná, Opava, and Ostrava, as well as a series of commissioned projects for companies and organizations such as CZ Testing Institute, WITKOWITZ ENVI, Net Direct, ATE System, Enotep, and TSK. In parallel, startup consulting activities were carried out under the Business Gate framework. The continuity and breadth of these tasks confirm DBEM's deep integration with the regional innovation ecosystem and its regular involvement in public policy and economic development agendas.

A pivotal role in these interactions is played by Business Gate, which operates in partnership with the city of Karviná as a permanent university–business interface. Within this framework, DBEM provides mentoring, consultancy, and project management services. Since 2023, the *Business Gate Solution* pillar has expanded to include a student marketing agency, further reinforcing the department's role in applied education and regional development. Moreover, the active participation of DBEM representatives in regional advisory and evaluation bodies strengthens the department's visibility and facilitates the co-

creation of policy and business development agendas.

Internal academic seminars—featuring editors and international researchers—and the organization of the DEMSME conference constitute additional mechanisms for building professional networks and stimulating demand for applied research. The scope of collaboration covers the full spectrum of applied and practice-oriented activities, including the preparation of expert opinions and analytical reports, feasibility studies, international benchmarking, the development of IT tools for educational and analytical use, guest lectures, internships, thesis topics, and co-teaching with practitioners.

The department's cooperation extends beyond regional boundaries to include commercial enterprises and non-governmental organizations, resulting not only in applied outputs but also in peer-reviewed scientific publications. Collaborations with Behavio Labs and Dva Mluvčí led to co-authored academic articles, while projects with Net Direct provided empirical data for a postdoctoral dissertation. Benchmarking and analytical engagements with WITKOWITZ ENVI, ATE System, and related entities diversified DBEM's portfolio of research and consultancy services. Furthermore, cross-border and transnational projects, notably Interreg CZ/PL, strengthened partnerships with Polish institutions and facilitated knowledge exchange in the areas of human resource management, entrepreneurship, and digitalization.

While the documentation provides a comprehensive list of projects, partners, and tangible outputs (reports, studies, implementations), it offers limited performance metrics such as client return rate, revenue structure from contract research, time from inquiry to contract signing, partner satisfaction levels, or the proportion of applied projects resulting in publications in Q1-Q2 journals. In addition, there is insufficient evidence of formalized data-sharing agreements with business partners, which could represent a potential barrier to the scalability and continuity of future collaborative projects. Establishing systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures in these areas would enhance the department's ability to demonstrate measurable impact and sustain long-term research–practice integration.

Overall assessment and recommendations

Summarize here the key findings of your assessment in the context of the whole evaluation and suggest concrete recommendations for improvement and progress.

Based on the available evidence, DBEM demonstrates clear organizational maturation between 2020 and 2024. The department has sustained a stable academic core, implemented extensive undergraduate and graduate programs, and consistently aligned its research activity with four thematic pillars of its teaching profile: Business Process Management (BPM), Sustainable Development of Business Entities, Strategic Business Management, and Consumer Mechanisms. This alignment between research and pedagogy ensures the continued relevance of study programs and reflects a coherent academic identity.

The department maintains a balanced ratio of approximately 37 students per academic staff member, indicating an equilibrium between teaching and research obligations. Project collaborations have become increasingly internationalized and diversified, accompanied by a notable rise in publication output and visibility in international databases.

Strengths

- Stable scientific staff, with four PhD students completing their doctoral degrees (Ing. Radka Bauerová, Ph.D.; Michal Halaška, Ing. et Ing., Ph.D.; Petra Krejčí, Ing., Ph.D.; Dalibor Šimek, Ing., Ph.D.).
- Well-defined and contemporary teaching and research directions.
- Growing visibility of staff publications in major international databases (Scopus, Web of Science).
- Active participation in conferences featuring research presentations.
- Significant expansion of the project portfolio, with 27 research projects, including eight externally funded (H2020, two COST actions, TAČR, and Visegrad/Interreg).
- Engagement in the STARS EU consortium and periodic seminars with international researchers, which have strengthened publishing competencies and academic mobility.
- Effective integration of scientific and practical dimensions through the Business Gate (Solution) initiative, bridging academia and business.

Weaknesses

- A relatively high proportion of articles published in Q3 journals, including one publication in a predatory journal and two in journals withdrawn from Scopus.
- Modest median Article Influence Scores (WoS-based) for indexed journals.
- Discontinuation of DEMSME conference proceedings from Scopus indexing.
- Insufficient strengthening of senior academic staff with professorial titles, which may pose challenges in future accreditation processes.
- Fragmented and inconsistently documented records of inbound mobilities, complicating comparative analysis.
- Limited frequency of research seminars featuring external guests.
- Lack of a formalized mechanism for transforming project collaborations and applied research into co-authored publications in high-impact (Q1–Q2) journals.
- Sporadic activity of the internal working paper series.
- Absence of Silesian University (SU) in major international university rankings.
- Declining institutional performance of SU in the Scimago Institutions Rankings across all major dimensions (Overall, Research, Innovation, and Societal Impact).

Recommendations

Strengthening DBEM's development trajectory requires a strategic institutional focus on positioning Silesian University in Opava within international academic rankings. At present, SU is listed in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings as a "reporter," indicating partial data submission or insufficient compliance with evaluation criteria. Attaining a numerical position necessitates consistent Scopus-indexed publication output (minimum 100 items annually across five years) and comprehensive institutional data submission.

For inclusion in rankings based on Web of Science (WoS), such as the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), US News Best Global Universities, and CWTS Leiden Ranking, the university must expand its WoS-indexed publication volume and ensure representation across SCIE/SSCI categories. A coherent publication strategy emphasizing Q1–Q2 journals and indexed conference proceedings, particularly the reinstatement of DEMSME in Scopus, is recommended.

Global rankings hold instrumental, not merely symbolic, significance. Higher ranking status enhances student and doctoral recruitment, research collaboration potential, and the university's credibility among academic and industrial partners. It strengthens grant competitiveness, facilitates data access, and supports the formation of recognized research schools. For smaller institutions, a clear thematic specialization and concentration of high-quality research outputs constitute a competitive advantage.

To optimize institutional performance, DBEM should identify two or three strategic research themes aligned with regional context and staff expertise. Each theme should have formally appointed academic leaders (associate professors or equivalent) responsible for publication strategy, grant acquisition, and doctoral supervision. Reducing thematic dispersion would improve coherence, visibility, and recognition within international scholarly communities.

Research development and workload management

Sustained research productivity requires transparent workload policies. Assistant professors should have structured growth pathways with moderated teaching duties in the initial years, reduced by up to 50% in semesters linked to active grants or publication preparation. Associate professors should receive prioritized access to research time and administrative support, ensuring that operational responsibilities do not compromise research outcomes.

DBEM would benefit from institutionalized editorial and methodological support. Establishing internal "submission-ready" peer reviews, methodological workshops, and a rotating seminar series would enhance publication quality and replication standards. Every research project should include a data and code repository and a documented methodological charter, ensuring transparency and reproducibility.

Investment in shared research infrastructure, such as an administrative and business data warehouse with standardized schemas, version control, and data protection protocols, would support empirical research and attract external collaborations.

Funding and Internationalization

The department's funding strategy should integrate three tiers of project acquisition:

1. Seed grants for exploratory research;
2. National projects to consolidate institutional leadership; and
3. International consortia for reputational advancement.

Support functions for budgeting, compliance, and technology transfer should be centralized, and part of indirect overheads reinvested into the originating research teams.

Internationalization efforts should emphasize depth over breadth, fostering long-term partnerships with a limited number of complementary institutions. Agreements should include joint doctoral training, co-taught modules, and structured mobility for 2–6-week research visits tied to publication pipelines. Clear annual goals, such as co-authored papers with international collaborators, at least two leadership roles in consortia, and measurable increases in indexed outputs should guide progress monitoring.

Teaching and Socio-Economic Integration

Teaching should reinforce, rather than compete with, research reputation. Study programs should prioritize analytically intensive subjects—such as econometrics, data analytics, quantitative finance, and strategy under uncertainty—and integrate data-driven projects with external partners. Expanding the English-language offer and introducing a research-oriented student track would enhance international visibility.

Partnerships with socio-economic stakeholders should be guided by the research agenda, ensuring academic integrity and measurable societal impact. A limited number of strategic collaborations with public and private entities should be formalized, including transparency clauses for funding, publication, and data management.

Implementing CRIS (Current Research Information System) and adopting ORCID and ROR identifiers across staff and projects would improve visibility, documentation, and reporting quality.

Finally, a unified academic brand, consistent affiliations, open-access author profiles, and public dissemination through online seminars and annual reports, would strengthen DBEM's institutional identity and external recognition.

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

The committee provided individual assessment of each department member based on her/his contribution towards the excellence of the research activities of the department. Each member also received a grade on the scale A - E. For reasons of the personal data protection the personal assessments are not presented. The following table summarizes frequency of individual grades of all 17 department members.

Overview of the individual grades

A	B	C	D	E
4	6	4	1	2

September 30, 2025

Prof. Maryna Solesvik



Prof. Anna Ujwary-Gil



Ass. Prof. Ladislav Rolinek

