Charles University is one of the leading research universities in Central Europe. It sees its raison d'etre as bringing together teaching and research, building on the premise that high-quality education is best ensured when teachers are also active, internationally recognized experts in their respective fields. Research is therefore never regarded as a second-order priority that comes after educational goals, but as an integral, essential part of what a university is and should be.

Charles University - including the German part of the University, when it was split into Czech and German institutions - has been the alma mater or temporary academic home of four Nobel Prize winners (Albert Einstein, Gerty and Carl Cori, Jaroslav Heyrovský), and remains an undisputed leader in Czech research. According to the Web of Science database it is currently the most productive research institution in the country, responsible for about one third of all research results in the Czech Republic and for an even larger share of citations (which are indicators of research quality). In this respect, its only rival is the complex of research institutions run by the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The evaluation of the output of research institutions carried out by the government's Research, Development and Innovation Council, the data of the Czech Statistical Office and the international audit of research in the Czech Republic all show a very similar picture. The simple fact that the most widely recognized global university rankings place Charles University among the top two per cent of the world’s universities testifies first and foremost to the quality and volume of its research.

Among the achievements of Charles University researchers that have recently received considerable publicity are a major contribution to the discovery of the Higgs boson with the aid of the CERN, Atlas detector, the discovery of a unique set of statues of ancient Egyptian high dignitaries buried during the Fifth Dynasty, the successive discoveries of genes responsible for serious hereditary metabolic diseases, and the study of universal species-area relationships in various natural environments.

All research crucially depends on adequate funding. From public finances, Charles University receives what is termed “institutional funding”. The allocated amounts of institutional funding are based on previous research output and are used to finance the Charles University Research Development Schemes (PRVOUK), which are strategically targeted in order to strengthen the principal fields of research at the University. A lesser part of the above-mentioned funds is used as targeted support of (mostly young) researchers at the best-performingCU departments or institutes (see UNCE) and to fund other minor schemes. In addition to these funds, researchers also need specific-purpose grants for individual research projects - whether from national sources (Czech Science Foundation (GAČR), Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TAČR), Internal Grant Scheme of the Ministry of Healthcare etc.) or from abroad (e.g. EU Framework Programmes, including ERC). Independent research by students, especially in doctoral programmes, is funded by the University's own Charles University Grant Agency. To some extent, the funding opportunities are also a function of the institution's potential for transferring new knowledge and technologies into practice, a task entrusted mainly to the University's Centre for Transfer of Knowledge and Technology.

Another important aspect of research work is the academic advancement of University staff. This section of the website therefore also includes information on habilitations and promotions to full professorship. The highest academic titles of “docent” (doc.) and “profesor” (prof.) awarded by Charles University have traditionally been highly valued by the academic community.