



Masaryk University

Masarykova univerzita

Abbreviation in Czech: MU

Address

Masarykova univerzita
Žerotínovo nám. 9
601 77 Brno

Contact Numbers

Phone: +420 549 491 011
Fax: +420 549 491 070
E-mail: info@muni.cz

www.muni.cz



- History** ■ Masaryk University was established in 1919, not long after the creation of an independent Czechoslovak state. But the decision to found it did not come in a sudden burst of revolutionary fervour. Instead, it represented the culmination of many years of effort on the part of Czech society, then in the process of developing rapidly in all fields, to establish a second centre of national education and culture. Behind this campaign stood Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk; back in the 1880s he was already stressing the need for the widest possible variety in scientific and scholarly life, pointing out that the single Czech university then in existence - Charles University in Prague - needed a counterpart within the country if it was to develop properly. For many years the task of establishing a second Czech university was one of Masaryk's main political priorities. He was not alone in this: the university question was taken up not only by professors and students at Charles University, but by the public at large. For decades, motions calling for the establishment of a second university were presented in the Reichsrat in Vienna and the Moravian Diet in Brno.

In Moravia the movement for a second Czech university was linked with the campaign for the reopening of an earlier Moravian university which had been closed down in the middle of the nineteenth century. The location of the proposed university would be Brno, the capital of the province, which offered the best conditions for the development of such an institution. But this question of where it should be sited became a major issue, one on which all efforts to establish a university founded until 1918. The problem was that Brno was a bilingual city, and the German-speakers of Brno,

who controlled the city council, were afraid that the establishment of a Czech university would weaken their position there. No agreement between the two nationalities was possible, and the nationalist conflict erupted in tragic street battles on the occasion of the "Volkstag" in Brno at the beginning of October 1905. As a result, Brno had to wait for its university until the end of World War I and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. By a law of 28 January 1919 a Czech university with four faculties - of law, medicine, science and arts - was established in Brno. From the beginning it took the name of the man who had done more than anyone else to bring it into existence, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. The mission of the new university, in the words of the founding document of 1919, was for it to "live, grow strong and flourish in noble emulation of its older sister in Prague".

From the very beginning, Masaryk University was successful in fulfilling its mission. Most of the professors came from the younger generation of scientists and scholars, who had been educated at Charles University and, to a lesser extent, the Czech Technical University. For these people, the establishment of the new university was a great challenge and a unique opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. Thanks to them, Masaryk University was characterized by great intellectual vigour and ambition, and it quickly won a very high reputation in many fields. The pride of the university was its Law Faculty. The "Brno legal school", based on the normative theory of law, achieved international fame. The man most responsible for its development in the early stages was František Weyr, one of the founders of this school of legal thought. The Law Faculty was also home to Karel Engliš, one of the leading economic theorists and public figures in the First Republic, who worked out his teleological theory of the national economy here. But the other faculties were also very active and successful. At the Faculty of Arts, Slavic Studies was particularly noted, boasting such figures as Bohuslav Havránek, Roman Jakobson and Arne Novák; of the many outstanding fields at the Science Faculty, mathematics claimed pride of place, with professors such as Matyáš Lerch, Eduard Čech and Otakar Borůvka. Among the great teachers in the founding generation at the Medical Faculty were the physiologist Edward Babák, the histologist and embryologist František Studnička and the pathological physiologist Vilém Laufberger, who established a world-class institute for general and experimental pathology. Clinical fields, too, were notably successful, for example surgery (Julius Petřivalský), internal medicine (Rudolf Vanýsek) and paediatrics (Otokar Teyschl).

Right from the beginning the university played an important and forceful role in the scientific, scholarly, cultural and social life of the country. Early in 1925 it awarded its first honorary doctorate, which was given to the composer Leoš Janáček, who had close ties to Masaryk University. He showed this not only in such compositions as his Sonata 1. 10. 1905, dedicated to the struggle for a Czech university in Brno, and the cantata written for the formal laying of the cornerstone of the Law Faculty building, but even more in his generous legacy to the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University. In the 1930s Masaryk University became the holder of copyright to Janáček's musical compositions and literary works, and as such the guardian of his creative legacy.

From its foundation, the university suffered from a lack of funds. The buildings it was housed in were considered provisional, but this situation continued for many decades, even though the law establishing the university in 1919 envisaged the construction of a university campus that would be completed by 1930. But the shaky state of public finances in 1923-1925 and 1933-1934 led to proposals for abolishing faculties, the Faculty of Arts on the first occasion and both it and the Faculty of Science on the second. Only with widespread support from the whole educated public was the university able

to defeat these threats to its integrity. But it was faced with a much greater threat at the end of the 1930s when, like the other Czech universities, it was closed down on 17 November 1939 by the Nazi occupiers. According to an internal order of the Reich Protectorate, Brno University was to be treated as though it did not exist, and in fact this is what happened. During the six years of war, the university suffered incalculable losses. But even greater than the material damage was the loss of professors and other employees of the university, the result of direct Nazi persecution. The number of professors of Masaryk University who were executed or tortured is exceptionally high. This is reflected, for example, in the fact that, as a direct consequence of the Nazi terror, the Faculty of Science lost one whole quarter of its teaching staff.

The successful renewal of university life after the end of the war was brought to a halt in 1948 with the communist putsch. The purges that followed fell particularly hard on the student body: the number of students expelled ranged from 5 per cent at the Faculty of Education to 46 per cent at the Faculty of Law. The purge among employees was less drastic, with the exception of the Faculty of Law, where the dismissal of teachers was only the first step on a path that led to the closure of the entire faculty in 1950. But this was only the first of many insensitive interventions on the part of the state into the structure and activity of the university. In 1953 the Faculty of Education (founded in 1946) was separated from the university. In 1960 Brno University reached the nadir of its existence, being reduced to only three faculties when a government decree in August abolished the Pharmaceutical Faculty, the only such institution of this type in Bohemia and Moravia. At the same time, the university lost its original name, becoming the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Brno.

The sixties were a somewhat happier period in the history of the university. A political thaw led to more favourable conditions for research and teaching. In 1964 the Faculty of Education was reincorporated into the university. Five years later, in 1969, the Law Faculty was re-established, but this was already the beginning of the repressive period of "normalization" that followed the invasion of the country by the armies of the Warsaw Pact in August 1968, with unfortunate results that long continued to have a negative effect on the faculty. The purges of teachers in the early seventies also influenced the character of the whole university for the next twenty years.

It was only after November 1989 that the university was able to leave behind torpidity and stagnation. In 1990 it was given back Masaryk's name. That same year saw the establishment of the Faculty of Economics and Administration, followed in 1994 by the Faculty of Informatics, in 1997 by the Faculty of Social Studies and in 2001 by the Faculty of Sports Studies. Research activities have expanded greatly, as has international cooperation, both bilateral (with individual foreign universities) and within the framework of the *Compostela Group of Universities*. Within the Czech tertiary education sector, Masaryk University is regaining the position it enjoyed in the period between the two world wars.

Structure of the Institution

■ **Masaryk University consists of the following faculties:**

- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Medicine
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Arts
- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of Economics and Administration
- Faculty of Informatics

- Faculty of Social Studies
- Faculty of Sports Studies

Other departments and institutes:

- Office for International Studies
- International Institute of Political Science
- Institute of Computer Science
- University Archives
- University Press
- University Language Centre
- Support Centre for Students with Special Needs
- Regional Development Centre
- Technology Transfer Office
- Institute of Biostatistics and Analyses
etc.

Organization of Studies

- Masaryk University is a public university-type institution of higher education offering:
 - accredited degree programmes at the Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral levels in on-site, combined and distance modes of study;
 - advanced state examinations for graduates of Master's degree programmes;
 - lifelong learning programmes.

The standard length of study is 3 (Bachelor's degree programmes), 2 (Master's degree programmes) or 5 (long-cycle Master's degree programmes) years.

The majority of programmes is offered in both full-time and combined modes of study.

The academic year is divided into two semesters: autumn semester (from mid-September to Christmas) and spring semester (from mid-February to the end of May). Exams generally take place in January/February and June. Most instruction at the university is in Czech; increasing numbers of individual courses are available in English, French and German.

Fulfilment of the requirements of studies in a programme is recorded through a credit system based on the principles of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

All administrative steps connected with studies (as well as tuition) are implemented via the MU Information system – the most extensive and used information system in the Czech Higher Education sphere.

Basic Statistical Data in Academic Year 2007/2008

| Total number of students | 38 989 |
|---|---------------|
| Number of students in Bachelor degree programmes | 21 605 |
| Number of students in long-cycle Master degree programmes | 7 931 |
| Number of students in Master degree programmes | 6 258 |
| Number of students in Doctoral degree programmes | 3 195 |
| Number of foreign students | 3 867 |
| Number of graduates | 6 422 |
| Number of degree programmes | 145 |
| Number of fields of study | 812 |
| Number of applications for studies | 66 667 |