



Charles University in Prague

Univerzita Karlova v Praze

Abbreviation in Czech: UK

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History

Prague University was founded by the King of Bohemia and the Romans, Charles IV, by a charter of the 7th of April, 1348, as the first university (*studium generale*) on the European continent north of the Alps and East of Paris. Charles university is therefore one of the oldest universities in Europe. It was organised on the model of the universities in Bologna and Paris and soon achieved international fame. It had four faculties: theology, the free arts (today the philosophy and arts faculty), law and medicine.

Charles's son and successor Wenceslas IV exerted increasing influence on the university and by the Decree of Kutná hora of 1409 radically strengthened the influence of domestic members of the academic community in the affairs of the university.

Not long afterwards, Prague University became a focal point of the Hussite reform movement, which prefigured the European Reformation. The rector Master Jan Hus became a major influence on events, and in the following social and political revolution the university was reduced to a single faculty of free arts.

One important period in the history of Prague University was the reign of Rudolf II, who chose Prague as imperial seat and turned the city into a cultural metropolis where university learning flourished alongside the court.

At the beginning of the 17th century the university came under the strong influence of the Bohemian Estates. Their defeat brought major change for the university. In 1654, the victorious Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia Ferdinand III ordered the merger the remnant of Charles University with the Jesuit University in the

Clementinum in a university that bore the new name Karl-Ferdinand University (the name remained up to 1918). This revived the activities of all the four faculties that had existed before the Hussite movement, and developed from the former free corporation of learned men into a state educational institution - a process that culminated in the 1780s with the reforms of the absolutist regime of Emperor Josef II.

Reforms in the years 1848/49 recast the university into the model of a modern higher educational institution. The development of rival nationalist movements among Czechs and Germans in the Bohemian Lands resulted, in 1882, in the division of the Prague Karl-Ferdinand University into two separate institutions, one Czech and one German. At the turn of the 19th/20th century the two universities had both reached a high academic standard.

Charles University, as the Czech University was renamed in the independent state (foundation of Czechoslovak Republic in 1918), took advantage of the new conditions to develop scientific research to an internationally recognised level of excellence.

The occupation of Czechoslovakia by Hitler's Germany was a catastrophe. After student demonstrations on the 28th of October 1939 and the funeral of the medical student Jan Opletal (shot at the demonstration), the Czech universities were all shut down on the 17th of November 1939 and a wave of persecution of Charles University students and teachers followed.

It was only with liberation and the end of the war that Charles University was able to re-open. The German University in Prague, which had joined the union of German Reich universities in 1939, shared the fate of the Reich and was abolished.

The free development of the activities of Charles University was to be curtailed after the communist take-over in February 1948. For decades the regime exercised ideological and political control over teaching and research, international contacts were severed and the stimulus of intellectual interchange with the West was lost. Eventually, however, it was the students, loyal to their old traditions of freedom, who on the 17th of November 1989, held the demonstration against the totalitarian system that triggered mass protest and the fall of the regime.

After 1989 a modern university life developed rapidly, especially on the basis of international co-operation. A new Law on Universities of 1990 re-established university autonomy and freedom of research and teaching. Since then, Charles University has been continuing systematically to develop academic co-operation and has joined the programmes and networks bringing together universities in Europe and the world.

Structure of the Institution

- Charles University has 17 faculties. 14 of these are in Prague, one in Plzeň (Medical Faculty), and two in Hradec Králové (Medical Faculty and Pharmaceutical Faculty).

Faculties of Charles University

- Catholic Theological Faculty - www.ktf.cuni.cz
- Protestant Theological Faculty - web.etf.cuni.cz
- Hussite Theological Faculty - www.htf.cuni.cz
- Faculty of Law - whois.cuni.cz/cgi-bin/who/.en?db=uk&ask=!UK.858
- 1st Faculty of Medicine - www.lf1.cuni.cz/?nLanguageID=2
- 2nd Faculty of Medicine - www.lf2.cuni.cz/homepage.htm
- 3rd Faculty of Medicine - old.lf3.cuni.cz/english

- Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen - www.lfp.cuni.cz
- Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové - www.lfhk.cuni.cz
- Faculty of Pharmacy in Hradec Králové - www.faf.cuni.cz/en
- Faculty of Philosophy & Art - www.ff.cuni.cz
- Faculty of Science - www.natur.cuni.cz/www/en
- Faculty of Mathematics and Physics - www.mff.cuni.cz
- Faculty of Education - www.pedf.cuni.cz
- Faculty of Social Sciences - fsveng.fsv.cuni.cz
- Faculty of Physical Education and Sport - www.ftvs.cuni.cz/eng
- Faculty of Humanities Studies - www.fhs.cuni.cz

CU also has:

- 3 university institutes
- 6 other departments for teaching, scientific, research, development and other creative activities, or for provision of information services
- 5 administrative centres serving the whole university

Faculties and other facilities of Charles University are not concentrated on a single large campus as is usual for universities abroad. Both in Prague, and in the case of the CU faculties in Plzeň and Hradec Králové, its buildings are organically integrated into the town agglomerations, often in their historic centres.

CU has a total of 160 buildings used for teaching, science, research, administration, accommodation, cafeterias, sports facilities and training centres.

Organization of Studies

- The CU has more than 300 accredited degree programmes with roughly 660 study subjects (in all forms of degree)

Charles University in Prague offers accredited degree programs at bachelor, master and Ph.D. levels. Another possibility to study at the university is to take part in short-term courses of various types offered by the faculties within the framework of lifelong education programs. Graduates of these courses will obtain certificates or credits. Students may also spend a part of their studies at CU on the basis of intergovernmental agreements, exchange programs or study abroad programs.

Studies at the university can be undertaken in the form of full-time or part-time studies.

Bachelor Studies

Bachelor studies at CU are normally 3 to 4-year programs (full time or part time), and may be self-contained degrees orientated to future employment, or taken as a first step towards a masters degree. Graduates are awarded a bachelor's diploma and the title Bachelor (Bc.). Graduates may continue their studies on masters level.

Master's Studies

Master's studies take 4 to 6 years, or 2-3 years (in case of the studies following on from the bachelor degree). The submission and defence of the master thesis and a state examination complete the Master's study programme.

The graduates of masters studies in the arts and philosophy, social sciences, natural sciences, and theology are awarded the title Master (Mgr.). Graduates from medical faculties (the studies last 5 to 6 years) are awarded the title of Doctor of General Medicine (MUDr.) or Doctor of Dental Medicine (MDDr.).

Ph.D. Studies

Postgraduate Doctoral Studies usually last 3 years and culminate in a doctoral examination and public defense of a doctoral thesis. The graduates obtain the academic title of Doctor (Ph.D.)

Teaching is organised using a university-wide credit system for bachelor's and master's studies which is formulated in line with the rules of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

Thanks to the credit system, students are able to choose lectures or seminars in other subjects or taught at other faculties alongside their obligatory courses. This is increasing the flexibility and interdisciplinary character of studies at the university.

Charles University in Prague offers a variety of degree programs in Czech. International students wishing to study in Czech study under the same conditions as Czech students (that is, free of charge) but they have to pass the admissions examinations in subjects related to their future studies. The entrance examinations are set in Czech.

Charles University welcomes applications from all international students. Some international students come to study at the university on their own initiative; others through a wide range of schemes, inter-governmental programs, exchange programs or study abroad programs.

Lifelong Learning

CU annually organises more than 300 courses in lifelong learning - preparatory courses, language courses, courses orientated to professional needs, courses of further education for teachers, and many others. On average, around 15,000 people attend these courses annually.

The lifelong learning programmes include what is known as the University of the Third Age - a set of educational courses for older people that are advertised each year by the individual faculties (roughly 70 courses a year overall).

International co-operation

Currently CU has a total of 730 bilateral agreements in the framework of the EU LLP/ Erasmus Programme and approximately 190 international partnership agreements with foreign universities.

Annually CU sends around 4,000 of its students to study abroad for a certain period.

In terms of attractiveness to incoming academic staff, CU is in first place in Europe.

CU has the highest percentage of foreign students of all Czech universities (almost 13%, while the average in the Czech Republic is 7%).

In the most respected international rankings of world universities (The Shanghai University Index and the Index compiled by the British Times newspaper), Charles University was the best rated Czech university, and has been ranked around 250th place out of more than 17,000 universities throughout the world, i.e. in the top 2% of world universities.

It is the only university in the Czech Republic to have been included in the prestigious Top 100 European Universities list compiled by Leiden University.

Research

Charles University wishes to be known as a research university. CU has many top research teams that work extensively with centres abroad. Their results are published in international journals and monographs, and they have won prestigious international awards.

Today the research production of Charles University represents almost one third of the research production of the whole CR, and it has increased seven-fold since the period before the revolution in 1989. In 2007, academics and researchers at CU published a total of 2,569 articles in impact journals (journals included in the Web of Science Database), which is the highest number in CU's history.

Currently 29 major overall research plans started in 2005 are being implemented at Charles University. According to an assessment undertaken in 2007 by specialist commissions of the Ministry of Education, 19 were rated in Category A, i.e. the best.

Another eight major overall research plans were initiated in 2007.

At present Charles university is directing research involving other institutions in 13 research centres, while it is contributing to research projects in a further 28 centres based outside the university.

International co-operation in science and research is of course a priority for CU. Great attention is being devoted to the 7th EU Framework Programme designed to support excellent European research, research staff mobility and the creation of a European employment market for research workers. Currently 25 projects in the 7th Framework Programme involving CU participation have been recommended for EU funding.

CU staff are involved, for example, in the research projects at CERN, the European Atomic Research Organisation.

Basic Statistical Data for Year 2007

■ Total number of students	48 982
Number of students of bachelor study programmes	15 537
Number of students of master study programmes	25 708
Number of students of doctoral study programmes	7 637
Number of foreign students	6 410
Total number of graduates in 2007	7 216
Total number of academic staff	4 459