

SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN CZECH REPUBLIC

1. School and educational system in the Czech Republic.

1. 1. The system of lower education.

Lower education in the Czech Republic has been regulated by three basic acts:

- the Act on School Institutions (the Act No. 76/1978)
- the Act on the System of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Higher Vocational Schools (the Act No. 29/184)
- the Act on State Administration and Self Administration in Lower Education (the Act No. 564/1990).

Lower education of children begins at the age of 6 years and is obligatory for 9 years, i.e. until the age of 15 years. Obligatory lower education is provided by primary schools of stage 1 (for the first 5 years) and by primary schools of stage 2 (for another 4 years).

After 9 years of obligatory lower education it is possible to continue with the study for 2 - 4 years at a secondary school. Secondary school education institutions are: *grammar schools*, *technical secondary schools* and *higher vocational schools*.

Grammar schools provide general secondary education and the students are supposed to continue in their studies after graduation (about 90% of them do so). Some grammar schools are specialised in certain study programme (e.g. foreign languages, mathematics, informatics or physical education). The study at grammar schools is finished by a graduation exam, which is a necessary condition for further study at universities and other higher education institutions.

Technical secondary schools provide secondary education specialised in certain practical field (e.g. machinery, chemistry, business, engineering, etc.). The study is finished by a graduation exam. The graduates are supposed either to execute qualified practical activities in the field of their studies or to continue with their studies at universities or other higher education institutions (about 50-60% of graduates continue to study).

Higher vocational schools provide partly general secondary education and partly practical training in a given profession, according to the program they offer. There are higher vocational schools of three types, depending on the length of education they offer, namely 2 years, 3 years or 4 years. Graduates of a 2-year and a 3-year higher vocational school get an apprentice certificate and are supposed to enter the profession they were trained for. Graduates of a 4-year higher vocational school get the apprentice certificate and they also have to pass the graduation exam. Afterwards they can either start to work or continue with their studies at a higher education institution. About 30-40% of graduates of 4-year vocational schools enter some higher education institution (mostly technical university) but their chances to complete the higher education are rather low.

As far as admission to a secondary school is concerned, an entrance examination can or need not be required. The decision about the eventual entrance examination depends fully on the director of the particular school. On the other hand, the total number of students in every secondary school is given by a decision of the Ministry of Education.

Practically all primary schools are state schools. There are very few exceptions of church or private primary schools. Also secondary schools are mainly state schools. Anyway, the number of private or church secondary schools is higher than that of private primary schools.

The lower education at state or church schools is free of charge. The study at private primary or secondary school is paid. Study-related fees at private primary/secondary schools are set by means of internal regulations of the respective school.

1. 2. The system of higher education.

1. 2. 1. Higher education institutions.

Higher education in the Czech Republic has been regulated by the Higher Education Act (the Act No. 111/1998 on Higher Education Institutions). Higher education institutions represent the highest level of the educational system in the Czech Republic. They provide accredited study programmes as well as lifelong learning programmes.

The type of higher education activities is determined by the type of accredited study programmes being provided. Each study programme is one of the following types: *bachelor*, *master*, or *doctoral*.

Higher education institutions in the Czech Republic are either *university type* or *non-university type*.

University type higher education institutions provide master or doctoral study programmes as well as related scholarly, research, developmental, artistic or other creative activities. They can also provide bachelor study programmes.

Non-university type higher education institutions provide primarily bachelor study programmes as well as related research, developmental, artistic or other creative activities. Higher education institutions of this type are not divided into faculties.

Higher education institutions in the Czech republic are *public*, *state* or *private*.

All traditional universities in the Czech Republic are public higher education institutions. The only state higher education institutions are military and police academies/universities. The first private higher education institutions in the Czech Republic were founded in 2000. The newly established private higher education institutions are at present of non-university type and offer usually either fields of study not fully covered by the public universities or fields of study where the demand significantly exceeds the capacities of public universities.

1.2.2. Study Programmes.

Bachelor Study Programme.

The bachelor study programme is aimed at qualifying to enter a profession, making use of all new contemporary knowledge and methods; this programme also includes essential theoretical background. The standard length of study including practical training is at least three years and at most four years. The study programme must be completed in due form with a final state examination that usually includes a defence of a bachelor thesis. Graduates of bachelor study programmes are awarded the academic degree of "Bachelor", abbreviated as "Bc."

Master Study Programme.

Master study programmes are aimed at acquiring new theoretical findings based on current scientific knowledge, research and development. The standard length of study is at least four and at most six years. Master study programmes may represent a continuation of Bachelor study programmes; should this be the case, the standard length of study is at least two and at most three years. Master study programmes are completed by a final state examination and a defence of a diploma thesis. Graduates of master study programmes are awarded the following academic degrees: "Engineer", abbreviated as "Ing." in the field of economics, technical branches of study, agriculture, forestry and military science; "Engineer Architect", abbreviated as "Ing. arch." in the field of architecture; "Doctor of Medicine", abbreviated as "MUDr." in the field of medical studies; "Doctor of Veterinary Medicine", abbreviated as "MVDr." in the field of veterinary studies; "Master of Arts", abbreviated as "MgA." in the field of arts; "Master", abbreviated as "Mgr." in other fields of study.

Doctoral Study Programme.

Doctoral study programmes are aimed at scientific research and independent creative activity in the field of research/development, or independent theoretical and creative activity in the field of arts. The standard length of study is three years. Studies within the framework of doctoral study programmes are subject to individual curricula under the guidance of a tutor. The doctoral study is completed with a state doctoral examination and the defence of a dissertation. Graduates of doctoral study programmes

are awarded the academic degree of "Doctor", abbreviated as "Ph.D." or "Doctor of theology", abbreviated as "Th.D." in the field of theology.

Lifelong learning programme.

Higher education institutions may provide – either free of charge, or subject to payment – lifelong learning programmes within the framework of their educational activity and beyond the scope of their study programmes. Lifelong learning can be either vocation-oriented or interest-oriented. Detailed conditions pertaining to lifelong learning are stipulated in internal regulations. Higher education institutions shall issue certificates of graduation to all graduates in lifelong learning programmes. Participants in lifelong learning are not regarded as students as per the Higher Education Act.

1.2.3. Admission to Studies.

Admission to studies in bachelor and master study programmes is conditioned by completing comprehensive secondary education or comprehensive vocational secondary education, both finished by a graduation exam. According to the Higher Education Act, higher education institutions are free to specify other conditions of admission to studies pertaining to particular knowledge required, abilities, talent, or results achieved at secondary schools. It is also possible to specify the maximum number of admitted students that have met the requirements; should there be more applicants that have met these requirements, their admission is based on the order of the best applicants.

At all universities in the Czech Republic there are entrance examinations. They can be written, oral or both, depending on the decision of the particular university. Besides, the university can admit applicants without an entrance examination, e.g. because of outstanding secondary school notes. The number of admitted students is restricted by the capacity reasons as well as by financial funds provided by the Ministry of Education. A secondary school graduate can apply for the study at one or more higher education institutions. Most of them apply usually for more programmes at one or more universities or faculties. If admitted, the student can also enrol in more study programmes, eventually at more faculties or universities.

Admission to a doctoral study programme is conditioned by proper completion of studies in a master study programme; doctoral students in the field of arts must hold an academic degree. The applicant usually has to pass a doctoral study entrance examination.

1.2.4. Duration of Studies.

The Higher Education Act determines the standard duration of all types of university studies (see above). Undergraduate students at public universities who exceed the standard duration of study are financially penalised as described in the paragraph on study-related fees. This may be one of the reasons why undergraduate students try hard to finish their university studies in time. Roughly speaking, there are many students of bachelor and master programmes who drop out during the first two years of their study but nearly all of the remaining students finish then their bachelor or master studies within the standard length of time.

As far as graduate students are concerned, the situation is different. The percentage of students of doctoral programmes, who do not finish their doctoral studies within the period of standard duration given by the law is higher. In case of exceeding the standard duration of doctoral study, the student usually doesn't receive the doctoral scholarship any longer. Many of doctoral students change in this case from full time to distant form of doctoral study.

1.2.5. Study-Related Fees.

The study at public and state higher education institutions is free at the moment. The problem of introducing study-related fees for all students at public and state universities has been a matter of lively political discussions in the recent few years. Should general study-related fees be introduced in the future, this step must be done through an Act, approved by the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

On the other hand, for the students who exceed the standard length of study, given by the Higher Education Act, there are study-related fees to be paid. Should student's enrolment in a bachelor or a master study programme exceed the standard length of study by more than one year, the public

higher education institution sets a fee corresponding to at least 1/4 of the base for each commenced month of study. The base for setting study-related fees is 5% of the average amount corresponding to one student from total non-capital expenditures provided by the Ministry of Education from the State budget to public higher education institutions in the particular calendar year. The base is announced by the Ministry of Education at the beginning of each calendar year.

Study-related fees at a private higher education institution are set by the private higher education institution by means of its internal regulations.

1.2.6. Statistical Data about Higher Education in the Czech Republic.

There are (April 2002) 28 university type higher education institutions in the Czech Republic (24 public universities and 4 state military/police university type institutions). Besides, there are 18 private higher education institutions of non-university type. The total number of students studying at all higher education institutions is 209 000 (the population of the Czech Republic is about 10,5 million).

In the academic year 2001/2002, about 61 000 students enrolled to the first year of study at public and state universities and about 2 800 at private higher education institutions. These numbers represent about 60% of graduates of the secondary schools with graduation exam.

The following graph shows the total number of all students studying in all programmes at public universities in the last five academic years.

Academic year	Number of students
1997 / 1998	166 100
1998 / 1999	177 700
1999 / 2000	187 100
2000 / 2001	199 000
2001 / 2002	209 300

It follows the complete list of university type higher education institutions in the Czech Republic. More information about them can be found on their web-pages (all of them are also in English).

Charles University in Prague (17 faculties, <http://www.cuni.cz>)

Masaryk University in Brno (9 faculties, <http://www.muni.cz>)

University of West Bohemia in Pilsen (7 faculties, <http://www.zcu.cz>)

University of South Bohemia in Ceske Budejovice (5 faculties, <http://www.jcu.cz>)

Palacky University in Olomouc (7 faculties, <http://www.upol.cz>)

Ostrava University in Ostrava (4 faculties, <http://www.osu.cz>)

Silesian University in Opava (2 faculties, <http://www.slu.cz>)

University of Pardubice (4 faculties, <http://www.upce.cz>)

University of Education in Hradec Kralove (2 faculties, <http://www.vsp.cz>)

Jan Evangelista Purkyne University in Usti nad Labem (4 faculties, <http://www.ujep.cz>)

Czech Technical University in Prague (6 faculties, <http://www.cvut.cz>)

Technical University in Brno (7 faculties, <http://www.vutbr.cz>)

VSB - Technical University in Ostrava (6 faculties, <http://www.vsb.cz>)

Technical University in Liberec (6 faculties, <http://www.vslib.cz>)

Tomas Bata University in Zlin (2 faculties, <http://www.utb.cz>)

Czech University of Agriculture in Prague (4 faculties, <http://www.czu.cz>)

Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno (4 faculties, <http://www.mendelu.cz>)

University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences in Brno (3 faculties, <http://www.vfu.cz>)

University of Economics in Prague (6 faculties, <http://www.vse.cz>)

Institute of Chemical Technology in Prague (4 faculties, <http://www.vscht.cz>)

Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (3 faculties, <http://www.amu.cz>)

Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (<http://www.avu.cz>)

Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague (<http://www.vsup.cz>)

Janacek Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in Brno (2 faculties, <http://www.jamu.cz>)

Military Academy in Brno (3 faculties, <http://www.vabo.cz>)

Military University of Ground Forces in Vyskov (2 faculties, <http://www.vvs-pv.cz>)

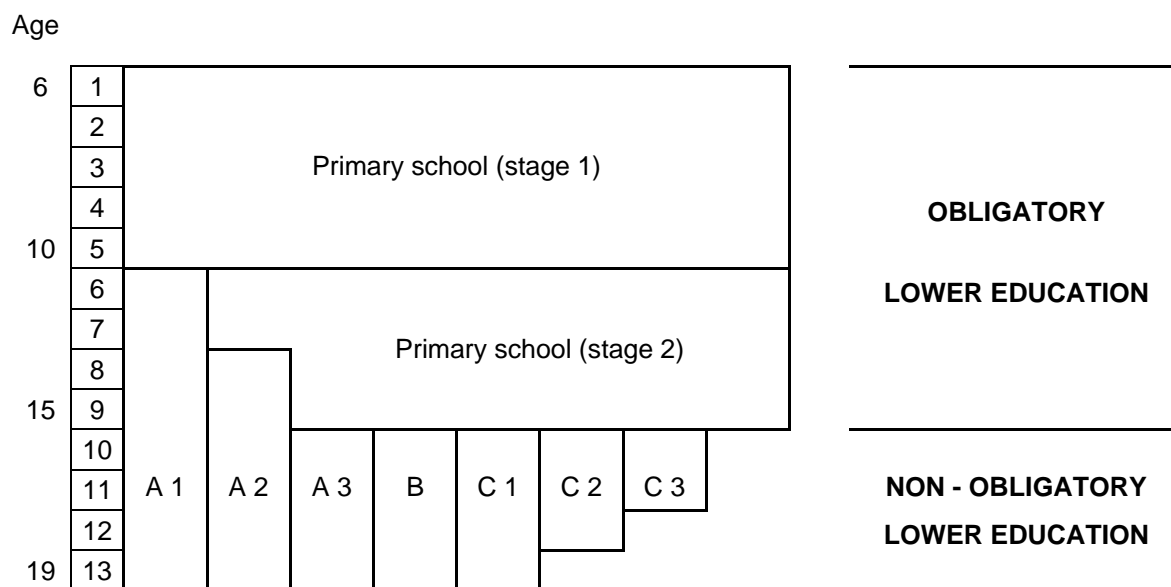
Jan Evangelista Purkyně Military Medicine Academy in Hradec Kralove (<http://www.pmfhk.cz>)

Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague (<http://www.mvcr.cz/akademie/>).

1.3. Universities and credit systems in the Czech Republic.

All universities in the Czech Republic use a credit system for evaluation of performance of their students. The decision to introduce the credit system and the structure of this credit system is made by the particular university. The credit systems used by Czech universities are not identical but they always are compatible with the ECTS standards. There are no problems with recognition of credits obtained by Czech students during a period of their study abroad.

System of lower education in the Czech Republic



- A 1 : 8 – year grammar school
- A 2 : 6 – year grammar school
- A 3 : 4 – year grammar school
- B : technical secondary school
- C 1 : 4 – year higher vocational school
- C 2 : 3 – year higher vocational school
- C 3 : 2 – year higher vocational school

System of higher education in the Czech republic

Standard length of study	University type institutions	Non-university type institutions	
3 – 4 years	[Empty Box]		BACHELOR PROGRAMME
2 – 3 years	[Empty Box]		MASTER PROGRAMME
3 years	[Empty Box]		DOCTORAL PROGRAMME