MASARYK UNIVERSITY
Past » Present » Future
Introduction
Masaryk University is one of the most rapidly developing teaching and research institutions in Central Europe. In fact, being modern, dynamic and competitive is an inseparable part of its heritage. The university was founded in 1919 as one of the results of Czechs’ century-long struggle to achieve emancipation as a fully modern nation: the establishment of a “second Czech university” was regarded as a crucial step towards advancing learning and knowledge. The close link between Masaryk University and the democratic and civic tradition of the Czech lands is reflected not only in its name – that of the first Czechoslovak President – and its commitment to his legacy, but even more in practical efforts to achieve the goals set for the university when it was founded.

After the restoration of democracy in November 1989, Masaryk University took full advantage of the new opportunities for development that presented themselves, and soon reestablished its reputation as a prestigious higher education institution. It is a university that strives to be one step ahead of the others, that points the way to new paths promoting improved quality in teaching and research. Masaryk University was one of the first to launch structured studies based on the European credit system. We have created a unified system for studies at the university, open and transparent, allowing our students to devise their own strategy for carrying out their studies in line with their personal educational and professional interests. Our information system is one of the best in Europe, attested to by the many international awards it has won. The high quality of education provided by our university, the accent on self-reliance and responsibility, have as one of their results the remarkable success of Masaryk University graduates on the job market following graduation.

Masaryk University profiles itself as a research university. Our research teams have been very successful in international competition and our record in obtaining research project funding and grants is outstanding. Our research activities range from the natural sciences and medicine to the social sciences and the humanities; geographically, they even extend to Antarctica, where Masaryk University is one of the very few higher education institutions in the world to have its own research facility. The international character of the university is reflected in the growing mobility of its students and academic staff and sharply increased funding from abroad for its projects.

The current development of Masaryk University is marked by a unique building programme: not only are many of its historical buildings in the centre of Brno being reconstructed, but even more important a whole new university campus is being built. This is by far the most extensive project of this kind in any of the new member states of the European Union. With the completion of its new campus in 2008, Masaryk University will be ideally situated to accomplish its long-term goal of being a leading European educational institution and one of the major centres of European scientific research.

All this has led increasing numbers of young people to decide to study at Masaryk University: in recent years, it has become the most sought after university in the Czech Republic. At the same time, it remains highly selective in its admissions process. Applicants to Masaryk University know that studies here will provide them with the best qualifications for a successful professional life, whether here in the Czech Republic or abroad. This is why they are keen to link their future with Masaryk University – itself a university that looks to the future.
University tradition
**History and leading figures**

Masaryk University was founded soon after the end of the First World War, only three months after the creation of an independent Czechoslovakia. The campaign to establish a second Czech university had been launched by Czech intellectual and political circles in both Bohemia and Moravia in the nineteenth century. The Czech university in Prague, whose governing bodies and academic staff called repeatedly for the creation of a new university in Brno, played an important role in this struggle. However, the political situation in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was such that, despite the concerted efforts of leading figures in Czech scientific, scholarly, cultural and political life, their goal was not achieved. Act no. 50, by which the second Czech university with its four initial faculties (the Faculties of Law, Medicine, Science and Arts) was established, was only passed by the National Assembly of the newly independent Czechoslovakia on 28 January 1919. The university was named after the country’s first President, who himself, as a professor of the Czech university in Prague, had long championed its cause.

As the commemorative deed states, the purpose of the new university was to “live, grow and blossom in noble contest with her older sister in Prague”. From its very foundation, Masaryk University indeed carried out this task. Most of the teaching staff came from the younger generation of scientists and scholars, educated at Charles University in Prague and the Czech Technical University in Brno. For these individuals, the foundation of the new university represented a great challenge: it was thanks to them that Masaryk University became synonymous with new ideas and achieved excellence in virtually all the disciplines it focused on. The first generation of academics at Masaryk University could boast such notable names as František Weyr, one of the founders of normative legal theory, Bohuslav Harránek, Roman Jakobson and Arne Novák, who worked at the Faculty of Arts and brought fame to the Department of Slavonic Studies; and Matyáš Lerch, Edward Čech and Otakar Borůvka, important professors of mathematics at the Faculty of Science. The physiologist Edward Babák, the histologist and embryologist František Karel Studnička and Vilém Laufberger, head of the world-famous Institute of General and Experimental Pathology, are only some of the famous individuals who worked at the Faculty of Medicine.

Right from the beginning the university played an important and prominent role in the scientific, scholarly, cultural and social life of the country. Karel Engliš, one of the great pioneers of economic theory and practice in the First Republic, was elected the first Rector of Masaryk University. Besides being a professor of national economy at...
» University tradition
the Faculty of Law from 1919 to 1945, Engliš left his mark on Czechoslovak history as Finance Minister in several Czech governments, Governor of the Czechoslovak National Bank and last Rector of Charles University in Prague before the Communist putsch in 1948.

In 1925 the renowned composer Leoš Janáček received the first honorary doctorate awarded by Masaryk University. He had a warm relationship with the university, which he proved not only in a number of compositions dedicated to it but also by a generous bequest to the Faculty of Arts. After Janáček's death in 1928, Masaryk University assumed copyright of his musical and literary output, thus becoming the guardian of his artistic legacy. The development of the university was interrupted by the Second World War, when the Nazis shut down all Czech universities and executed many prominent professors. After the war all four founding faculties resumed their academic activities; in 1946 the Faculty of Education was founded. The Communist putsch in 1948 ushered in a dark age for the university. The Faculty of Law was closed down in 1950 and remained closed for almost twenty years. The university was exposed to ideological indoctrination and many teachers and students were forced to leave. The Communist regime even stripped the university of its name: from 1960 until the democratic revolution in 1989 it was called Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, after a notable nineteenth-century Czech physiologist.

After 1989 the university was able to move forward again. In 1990 it regained its original name, one that still today is synonymous with freedom and independence. In the same year, the Faculty of Economics and Administration was founded, followed by the Faculty of Informatics in 1994, the Faculty of Social Studies in 1997 and finally the Faculty of Sports Studies in 2001. Since 1990 the number of students has more than tripled. In recent years it has become the most sought-after university in the Czech Republic.

In addition to dramatically and systematically strengthened teaching and research activities, Masaryk University has greatly extended international cooperation, all of which have brought the institution increased prestige.

Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, first President of Czechoslovakia, after whom the university was named.

The Rector's chain of office and medallion, the work of Otakar Španel and Jaroslav Benda, is Masaryk University's most valuable piece of regalia.

The head of the Rector's mace is formed by a Czech lion in high relief.
The present
Today Masaryk University is the second largest university in the Czech Republic and the largest in Moravia. It comprises nine faculties with two hundred departments, institutes and clinics, which carry out activities in a wide spectrum of disciplines and areas of research. It has become one of the leading teaching and research institutions in both the Czech Republic and Central Europe.

Masaryk University is also one of the fastest growing universities in the Czech Republic, with 32,718 students enrolled in degree programmes, of whom 30,017 are Czech citizens and 2,701 foreigners (as of 31 October 2005). Despite this rapid growth, the university remains the most selective in the Czech Republic in terms of the ratio of students applying for studies to the actual number of students accepted: in 2006, 54,393 applications for studies in Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes were submitted, with 17,962 being accepted in all fields of study.

Masaryk University was also the first higher education institution in the Czech Republic to provide prospective applicants with the opportunity to apply for studies via an electronic application form. In 2005, 68 percent of application forms were submitted in this way; as of the 2006/2007 academic year, all applications must be submitted electronically. The prestigious EUNIS Elite Award 2005 awarded to the university’s Information System (IS) is proof of its leading position when it comes to the introduction of information technologies in tertiary education. Not only is Masaryk University the first university in the Czech Republic to receive this award, it is also the first from among the new member states of the European Union.

The high rate of success of Masaryk University research teams in obtaining funding for research and development projects offers striking proof that it is also a prominent research university. Science and research activities in 2005 amounted to 560 million CZK (20 million EUR). The new university campus under construction in Brno-Bohunice, a project unique within the Central European region, will offer new research opportunities and the chance to link these with teaching. The refurbishing and renovation of historical buildings in the centre of Brno forms an integral part of Masaryk University’s development strategy. In the period running from 2002 to 2008, the total financial investment in the university’s development programme will amount to 6.4 billion CZK (225 million EUR).

In the wider social context, Masaryk University also plays an important role: it is the second largest employer in the South Moravia Region. At the end of 2005, Masaryk University had 3,881 employees, of whom 2,516 were academic staff and research workers.
Research
Excellence in research and development is one of the highest priorities of Masaryk University, a natural result of its profile as a research university. This is evident both in the close relationship between research and education in its doctoral and Master’s degree programmes and in the number of successful research projects carried out across the whole range of disciplines that the university is engaged in. In addition to the traditional fields of medicine and the natural and social sciences, the university in recent years has shown much greater research activity in several other areas, in particular the humanities, economics and jurisprudence.

For a considerable period now, Masaryk University has been successful in attracting both general and specific funding for its research projects. In addition to obtaining support for numerous projects funded through the Czech Science Foundation, other grant agencies and government ministries, the university saw vindication of its policy of promoting teamwork in research efforts in the high rate of success of proposals relating to projects of a new type – research centres and long-term research plans. In the Ministry of Education’s open competition for long-term research plans for the period 2005–2011, eighteen Masaryk University projects were approved, a very favourable rate of success in comparison with other Czech universities. This reflects the close cooperation of top research teams at Masaryk University with colleagues at similar institutions both in the Czech Republic and abroad as well as its success in integrating promising young scholars and scientists into research activities.

Among the most impressive research results at Masaryk University in recent years are the following:

**Enzymes with pharmaceutical implications**

A team of experts from the National Centre for Biomolecular Research at the Faculty of Science scored a major breakthrough in discovering new characteristics of enzymes that facilitate the commercial production of a number of substances, including pharmaceuticals. While studying dehalogenating enzymes, the scientists discovered their ability to create optically active substances of high purity. The enzymes can be utilized to produce substances of interest to the pharmaceutical, food and cosmetics industries. One of the substances produced by the enzymes examined by the MU team is optically active 2-pentanol, which is crucial for the creation of the active substance used in the treatment of patients suffering from Alzheimer's disease.
**Creation of the first Czech polar station in Antarctica**

In 2005, James Ross Island, situated close to the southern Arctic Circle, saw the construction of a polar station to be used for Antarctic research carried out by scientists from the Faculty of Science of Masaryk University and other academic institutions. The project for the polar station originated in 1999 in the Department of Geography at the Faculty of Science. In connection with this, the Czech Republic, represented by Masaryk University, was also admitted into membership in the European Polar Board and the Committee for Environmental Protection under the terms of the Antarctic Treaty.
The Department of Functional Genomics and Proteomics of the Faculty of Science's Institute of Experimental Biology, located at the university campus in Brno-Bohunice, is equipped with technology to carry out research into DNA and proteins.

Scientists from the Institute of Theoretical Physics and Astrophysics of the Faculty of Science together with their colleagues from the Astronomical Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences at Ondřejov proved that no stellar wind blew from the surface of hot stars at the birth of the universe.

**Stem cell research**
Research into blood-forming stem cells under physiological and pathological conditions is one of the key research programmes of the Internal Hematological Clinic of the Faculty of Medicine. These cells revive blood formation after the transplantation of bone marrow, and can also participate in the revival of non-blood-forming tissues, for example heart tissue after coronary thrombosis. In addition, the most recent research indicates that such serious illnesses as leukaemia and other carcinogenic diseases also originate from stem cells.

**Psychological and sociological research into child development**
In cooperation with the Faculty of Medicine of Masaryk University, the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague and the University of Bristol, the Faculty of Social Studies is carrying out longitudinal studies of the mental, social and health development of children. The aim of the research is to discover the standard pattern of development in childhood and adolescence, including developmental changes. Revealing as it does the interrelationship between living conditions and the individual aspects of psychosocial, physical and health development on the one hand and the quality of life and incidence of risk behaviour on the other, the research project offers great potential for education, upbringing, the prevention of risk behaviour and the creation of a civil society in the Czech Republic.

**Informatics and medical research**
The Laboratory of Optical Microscopy at the Faculty of Informatics is concerned with the development of computer-operated devices based on optical microscopes that are capable of independent scanning and analysis of images of cells and their parts. These unique devices enable scientists to carry out and analyse three-dimensional images of hundreds to thousands of cells and are used for studying the organization of genetic material within the cell nucleus in connection with serious illnesses such as leukaemia and other types of carcinogenic diseases.

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Masaryk University’s greatest success so far came in the first round of proposals submitted for funding within the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, which is financed by the European Social Fund. Projects that the university is carrying out from 2005–2007 were granted more than 40 million CZK (almost 1.5 million euros) from EU funds, more than any other Czech higher education institution taking part in the competition.
Studies
Accredited degree programmes
In terms of the number of applicants wishing to study in accredited degree programmes, Masaryk University is the most attractive Czech higher education institution. For the academic year 2005/2006, a total of 55,848 applications was submitted; of these, 16,762 applicants were accepted for studies at the university and 12,914 students enrolled. The university is committed to combining top-quality original research with the creation of conditions conducive to the broadest possible access to university education. Its goal is to provide its students with a top-quality education and the organizational and analytical skills needed for them to be able to adapt flexibly to the demands of the contemporary job market upon their graduation.

In the Czech Republic as well as in the wider European context, Masaryk University was one of the first higher education institutions to introduce the three-level model of studies (Bachelor’s, Master’s and doctoral degree programmes) and to implement the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). In its standard degree programmes, Masaryk University awards its graduates the academic degrees of Bc., Mgr., Ing. and Ph.D.; in medical programmes completed by an advanced (“rigorózní”) state examination the graduates receive the degree of MUDr. or (in the case of dentistry studies) MDDr. On the basis of an advanced (“rigorózní”) state examination, the academic degrees of PhDr., JUDr. and RNDr. are awarded in the appropriate disciplines.

Completely integrated, university-wide conditions for study are one of Masaryk University’s strong points. This includes not only a university-wide set of regulations covering all areas of studies, and support for studies through the Information System, but also the teaching of languages (the responsibility of the Language Centre) and the provision of sports programmes by the Faculty of Sport Studies. Thanks to this, students have the unique opportunity to enrol in two majors at different faculties, or choose electives in other fields of study than their own.

Masaryk University was the first university in the Czech Republic to enable prospective students to apply for studies via an electronic application form. Information about admission procedures and requirements, degree programmes, recommended reading and so on can be found on the web pages of the university.

Lifelong learning
Lifelong learning programmes supplement and broaden the knowledge and qualifications of those who participate in them. They are provided both within and outside accredited degree programmes and are open to all, regardless of age, previous education or profession. The programmes are directed towards participants’ interests or shaped according to their professional needs. Classes are held in Czech and some other languages, in on-site or combined study modes. The University of the Third Age, which makes university education available to senior citizens, is an integral part of the lifelong learning programme. As the Czech population grows older and the job market changes, it is extremely likely that
lifelong learning will play an increasingly important role in the studies offered by Masaryk University.

Support Centre for Students with Special Needs
The Support Centre for Students with Special Needs has introduced a unique approach for students with sensory and motor disabilities. It guarantees these students access to accredited degree programmes and creates conditions that will allow them to obtain an education equal to that available to regular students. Masaryk University has the highest percentage of visually impaired students of any Czech higher education institution. As far as hearing-impaired students are concerned, the priority is to direct them towards fields that are not specially designed for students of this kind – for example informatics. Students with various kinds of disabilities are enrolled in programmes at all of Masaryk University’s faculties.

The centre also has other functions. It acts as a counselling service and gives advice in the area of methodology for secondary school students with special needs, and is also a research centre developing new technologies to serve its purposes. It is the only centre of its type in the Czech Republic that functions as a Braille publishing house, that runs an electronic and haptic library open to higher education institutions throughout the country, that serves as a regional centre for sign language interpreting and that runs an assistance service. It is also responsible for the university’s lifelong education programme for those with sensory disabilities.

Masaryk University graduates and the job market
The high quality of the education they receive at Masaryk University means that its graduates are much in demand among employers. According to regular surveys carried out by the university, at any one time 98% of its graduates are employed.

Some of the other findings are also very interesting: 91% of Masaryk University graduates find jobs within four months of completion of their studies, 70% of graduates are employed in the field they studied or a related field, 80% of graduates are satisfied with the education they received at the university, and 68% of graduates claim that if were to start their studies again, they would choose the same faculty at Masaryk University.*

* Survey on Employment of Masaryk University Graduates 2003–2004

In 2005/2006 the centre was responsible for 156 students with serious disabilities.

Studies end with a graduation ceremony.

Graph: Student numbers at MU 2000–2005
University development
Masaryk University is going through a period of dynamic development that necessarily includes the expansion of its infrastructure. The programme entitled “Development of the Material-Technical Base of Masaryk University” involves not only the renovation and modernization of the university’s historical buildings in the centre of Brno, but most importantly the construction of a modern university campus in Brno-Bohunice, a project unique among Czech higher education institutions. The high-tech facilities at the new campus, its modern infrastructure and the close interconnection of research and teaching will help ensure Masaryk University an appropriate place among leading European teaching and research institutions.

The total funding for the Masaryk University Development Programme between 2002–2008 is 6.425 billion CZK. A 25-year loan from the European Investment Bank amounting to 3.120 billion CZK, through which the Czech Republic is covering the financing of the project, represents a substantial part of the financing for this ambitious project. The Czech Ministry of Education and the city of Brno are also providing funding to ensure the completion of the whole project. Masaryk University is contributing 2.584 billion CZK to the project from its own resources, in the form of direct capital investment and repayment of the loan.

Reconstruction and renovation

The cost of renovating and modernizing the university buildings in the centre of Brno is planned at 1.3 billion CZK. Since 2001 approximately thirty individual reconstruction and renovation projects have been carried out on university buildings. In recent years, major construction work has been done at the Faculties of Law, Arts, Education, Informatics, Economics and Administration and Sports Studies.

In 2005 the university completed reconstruction of a historical building in Joštova street that is now the home of the rapidly expanding Faculty of Social Studies. In general, the reconstruction programme has resulted in more space for the social sciences and dramatic upgrading of the university’s central
University development
offices and other important buildings. The renewal of the technological infrastructure, the refurbishing of classrooms and laboratories and the modernization of laboratory equipment and of information and audiovisual technologies all form part of the development programme. For example, in 2004 a new laboratory of advanced network technologies (UVT + CESNET) was put into operation at the Faculty of Informatics. Its state-of-the-art equipment enables the use of audiovisual and information technologies in teaching. The laboratory also provides the technical facilities needed for video conferencing.

The new university campus at Bohunice
For Masaryk University, construction of a modern teaching and research complex on the grounds of the new university campus at Brno-Bohunice is the fulfilment of a commitment made in the Act establishing Masaryk University in 1919, one that would have to wait several decades to be put into practice.

The campus is being built in five stages; after its completion it will form a modern teaching and research focus for the university. The twenty hectares of the campus will be home to the Faculties of Medicine and Sports Studies and a good part of the Faculty of Science; it is designed to serve 5000 students and 500 teaching and research staff. The development of teaching activities and biomedical research will be enhanced by the close proximity of the Brno Faculty Hospital, one of the largest teaching hospitals in the Czech Republic.

The first building opened at the new university campus is the Morphological Centre, rebuilt in 2002 and providing modern classrooms for the Faculty of Science and reading rooms and dissecting rooms (used for teaching purposes) for the Faculty of Medicine.

The Integrated Laboratories for Biomedical Technologies (ILBIT) consists of four modern pavilions.

The first phase of construction, the Integrated Laboratories for Biomedical Technologies (ILBIT), was completed in October 2005. Construction began immediately on the Academic Teaching and Research Complex (AVVA), the main part of the campus. The whole campus will be completed in September 2008.

The university campus at Bohunice comprises two purpose-built parts:
ILBIT (the Integrated Laboratories for Biomedical Technologies)
AVVA (Academic Teaching and Research Complex)
International programmes and partnerships
International contacts and cooperation with foreign universities form a key aspect of Masaryk University’s activities. One of the highest strategic planning priorities at the university is internationalization. Since 1989 the number of students who have travelled abroad for a period of study or work has increased dramatically, as has the interest of foreign students in coming to Brno for studies at Masaryk University.

International cooperation is supported by International Relations Offices at each of the faculties as well as by the Office for International Studies (OIS), which bears overall responsibility for international contacts and is closely involved with the majority of short-term exchange students coming to Masaryk University. It organizes excursions for international students to various places in the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries and ensures the operation of the International Student Club, through which Czech students help their counterparts from abroad familiarize themselves with the university and city. Other important responsibilities of the OIS include administering EU and other European mobility projects for students, teachers and administrative staff and running summer schools.

Two of the most important teaching programmes for international students at Masaryk University are the Central European Studies Programme (CESP) and TESOL. CESP is a single-semester course dealing with economic, political, sociological and cultural aspects of the Central European region, and the Czech Republic in particular, taught in English. TESOL is targeted at students from abroad interested in obtaining the CELTA certificate for teachers of English as a second language. In addition, scores of individual courses are taught in foreign languages (mostly English), and the Faculties of Medicine, Social Studies, Science, Informatics and Economics and Administration have introduced foreign-language degree programmes.

Czech students are able to study abroad thanks to EU and other programmes as well as to bilateral agreements between Masaryk University and partner universities all over the world. The university is a member of two prominent international university networks, the Utrecht Network and the Compostela Group of Universities. These networks offer Masaryk University students, teachers and administrative staff opportunities to participate in summer schools, exchange programmes and special interest groups of many types.

The university also plays an active role in the activities of international organizations established to improve contacts among universities, in particular the European Association for International Education (EAIE), the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) and the European University Association (EUA).

Masaryk University’s main student mobility programme is SOCRATES/ERASMUS, within which more than 570 bilateral agreements have been signed with around 300 universities throughout Europe. The university is active in the CEEPUS and AKTION programmes. Other study visits are arranged with university partners in Europe, North and South America, Australia and the Far East. Both students and recent graduates can take advantage of the EU’s LEONARDO DA VINCI programme, which enables them to carry out work placements abroad.

Masaryk University and its faculties also offer their own scholarships to international students, particularly those at the Master’s and doctoral levels. Together with the South Moravia Region it has established the South Moravia Centre for International Mobility, which provides scholarships for international students at all Brno universities.
Faculty of Law
The Faculty of Law dates from 1919, the year when Masaryk University was founded. In the period between the wars, it was a leading centre of Czech legal thinking, with a reputation that extended beyond the country’s borders. The Faculty of Law became famous as the centre of normative legal theory, which was synonymous with the name of František Weyr, one of the leading members of the faculty. Karel Engliš, the first Rector of Masaryk University and subsequent Dean of the Faculty of Law, was another prominent figure. Subsequently, the natural development of the faculty was twice interrupted by forced closure – first in December 1939 by the Nazis and then in 1950 by the Czech Communist government. The faculty was reopened in 1969.

The city of Brno is particularly favourable for the study of law, since it resumed its status as the legal centre of the Czech Republic after 1989. It is the seat of the country’s highest legal bodies – the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Administrative Court, the Supreme Public Prosecutor’s Office and the Ombudsman’s Office. Close cooperation between these institutions and the Faculty of Law forms an integral part of its activities, to the great benefit of studies at the faculty.

Research at the faculty looks particularly at the interconnection of the national and European contexts of the issues being examined. This trend is reflected in grant projects focused on questions relating to the current phase of development of legal changes in the area of the EU’s external commercial relations, on competition policies and mergers in both the Czech Republic and the European context, and on international and European legal and ethical standards governing medical research.

The European context of the development of the Czech legal system will also be a major priority for the faculty’s research activities in the coming years, since it has been granted funding by the Ministry of Education for a long-term research plan in this area. However, this does not mean ignoring other issues: projects devoted to research into women offenders and the question of bankruptcy law in the Czech Republic have just been completed, while a project entitled “Legal Regulation of the Finances and Property of Municipalities and Regions” is proceeding smoothly.

Both teachers and doctoral students take an active part in scholarly conferences and seminars abroad and carry out study stays at prominent institutions in Europe and the USA. Faculty experts and advisors contribute to the activities of European Council authorities and cooperate on a long-term basis with many foreign higher education institutions, among them the John Marshall Law School in Chicago. Faculty representatives are members of various committees at Czech ministries, take part in the Government Council for Human Rights and are represented in several national and international non-governmental organizations.

The Faculty of Law, in cooperation with Nottingham Trent University (UK), was the first law faculty in the Czech Republic to offer an LLM (Master of Laws) in corporate law. It also offers a wide selection of lifelong learning programmes.

The faculty prepares its students for a broad range of legal professions. Its graduates are to be found in public administration, as judges and state prosecutors, in private practice and elsewhere.

The Faculty of Law attracts the largest number of applicants in the Czech Republic wishing to study law, and only the best are accepted. More than three thousand students are currently enrolled at the faculty.
Faculty of Medicine
The Faculty of Medicine was present at the birth of the second Czech university in 1919. Since the very beginning its priority has been the education of medical doctors and of specialists and researchers in the health sector. During the more than eighty years since it was founded, many famous personalities have chosen to work here. One name can stand for all – the prominent European cardiac surgeon Professor Jan Navrátil (1909–1992), who worked at the medical faculties of both Masaryk University and the University of Vienna.

Today the Faculty of Medicine is a dynamically developing teaching and research institution. Teaching is carried out at St Anne’s Faculty Hospital, the Brno Faculty Hospital and hospital complex in Bohunice, the Maternity Hospital on Obilní trh, the Children’s Hospital in Černá pole and the Trauma Hospital. Also part of the faculty is the Masaryk Memorial Cancer Institute at Žlutý kopec, founded with the support of President Masaryk in 1935, an institution with a very high reputation for the specialized treatment of and research into carcinogenic diseases. The clinics of the faculty hospitals play an important role in the medical care of the citizens of Brno and the whole South Moravia Region. Their technical equipment and facilities and the quality of care they provide bear comparison with the best that is available abroad.

Adjacent to the Bohunice hospital complex a new Anatomy Institute was built in 2001, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities of a European standard, and along with it a Morphology Centre; in the immediate vicinity work began in 2004 on the new university campus. As construction work continues, more units of the Faculty of Medicine are moving there, along with Faculty of Science units focused on research in the areas of biology and chemistry.

Research activities at the Faculty of Medicine are carried out through long-term research plans, the activities of research centres and projects funded by grants from various agencies. The faculty’s research profile highlights research into the molecular pathogenesis of the principle “diseases of civilization”, cardiovascular diseases, malign tumours and various problems in the area of neuroscience. Other activities having as their goal the concentration of the most advanced and promising biomedical research programmes are designed to create an innovative environment and encourage the transfer of research findings in biomedicine to the commercial sphere. The implementation of modern teaching methods and approaches in bioinformatics is effected through the Czech Ministry of Education’s development programmes.

In its teaching activities, the faculty supports increasing integration with other institutions within the European higher education system, in particular with medical faculties. At the same time, stress is laid upon maintaining teaching standards and, in clinical fields, on the development of clinical skills and mastery of practical procedures. The faculty offers its General Medicine degree programme in both Czech and English, the latter for international students who pay for their studies. The rising number of foreign students is an indication of the faculty’s high reputation.

Interest in studies at the Faculty of Medicine continues to grow: in 2006 more than 4,000 applications were received. The faculty also offers a doctoral programme in General Medicine as well as several lifelong learning programmes. Altogether more than 3,000 students are currently enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine. Faculty of Medicine graduates find employment in many medical and non-medical professions in the health sector and significant numbers go on to work for prestigious research institutions.
Faculty of Science
The Faculty of Science was founded in 1919, with the first students beginning studies in autumn 1920. It took up traditions started in Brno by Johann Gregor Mendel (1822–1884), the world-famous genetics genius. Over the course of years, the faculty has trained a number of prominent figures in botany, zoology, chemistry, geography and geology, physics and mathematics. In line with this, the Faculty sees itself as a research faculty that offers a university education closely linked to basic and applied research in the sciences of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and the Earth sciences.

The Faculty of Science has to its credit several scientific achievements of international significance. The faculty’s priority is support for specific areas of research that optimize the harmonic development of the individual natural sciences. A certain proportion of research activities is also devoted to other areas, primarily linked with doctoral studies in terms of teaching. The faculty’s principal research and development activities issue from the long-term trends in each of the major branches it pursues – biology, physics, the Earth sciences, chemistry and biochemistry, and mathematics. Biology research focuses primarily on monitoring changes in space and over time in the diversity of populations and communities of higher plants and animals, on the growth and stress physiology of plants in relation to the environment and on comprehensive molecular biological analysis of the genomes of representatives of the major groups of organisms. Research in physics is concentrated on material and plasma applications, astrophysics and theoretical physics. The Earth sciences focus on geological processes and the development of biotas in the geological past, current environmental issues, the creation of three-dimensional geo-informational structures, the development of methods of cartographic geovisualization and the geographic and ecological study of Antarctic vegetation oases. Research areas in chemistry include the chemical and physical properties of chemical compounds, structural analysis, organic and inorganic synthesis, environmental chemistry, computer modelling of chemical processes, and in biochemistry the structures and functions of biomolecules and their roles in metabolism and enzymology. Areas of concentration in mathematics include functional differential equations and mathematical statistical structures of algebra and geometry, including applications in informatics and physics.

The faculty is also engaged in training future specialists and teachers. Graduates in the field of upper secondary school teaching in various subjects, accredited as Master’s degree programmes, are fully qualified for teaching positions. Double-major studies are also possible under interfaculty agreements with the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Informatics and the Faculty of Sports Studies. Altogether almost 2,500 students are enrolled in the Faculty of Science.

Graduates of specialized Master’s programmes find positions in the school system as well as in basic and applied research at universities, government research institutes, institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences, industry and private companies. The best graduates of Master’s programmes may go on to do doctoral programmes, in either the onsite or the combined mode of studies.

Parts of the faculty are now housed in the ILBIT section of the new university campus.

The Faculty of Science Botanical Garden in Kotlářská street.

Modern laboratory facilities make it possible to carry out research into plant genetics.
Faculty of Arts
The Faculty of Arts is one of the four founding faculties of Masaryk University. The very first classes took place in the 1921/1922 academic year, for 128 students. From its very beginnings the faculty developed both traditional, humanities-oriented disciplines (primarily History, Philosophy, Classical Philology and Slavonic, Germanic and Romance Philologies) as well as fields that at the time represented new directions for university teaching and research – Sociology, Psychology, Art History, Musicology. At present, the Faculty of Arts continues to promote its traditional fields of study while also supporting the development of new ones.

All of the departments at the faculty are involved in research, some of them in joint research projects financed by the European Union (for example Culture 2000). Fields of research include important issues in general psychology; general and social pedagogy; medieval and modern Czech and Central Europe history (including the auxiliary historical sciences); art history, with an emphasis on architecture, sculpture and painting; musicology and the fine arts; ethnology, ethnography and religion.

In recent years the Faculty of Arts has become much more strongly research oriented: funding for research between 1999 and 2005 increased more than fivefold. Scholars at the faculty are involved in more than eighty grant projects annually, in all fields of research. Governmental funding for long-term research plans led to the establishment of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Research on Social Structures from Prehistory to the High Middle Ages, which brings together researchers in the areas of archaeology and the natural sciences, and the Research Centre for Central European History, which attracts scholars in the fields of history, art history, archive studies and Latin philology.

Every year since 1968, the faculty has hosted the Summer of School of Slavonic Studies. The great success of this venture led to the creation of the Division of Czech for Foreigners, which teaches Czech to foreigners throughout the year. The faculty is also home to the UNESCO Chair in Museology and the World Heritage, established in 1994 as the first UNESCO chair in the Czech Republic.

The faculty prepares specialists and future teachers in a wide range of disciplines. Doctoral studies are also offered in many fields, giving young researchers the opportunity to begin their scholarly careers. Students’ continuing interest in the humanities is reflected in the large numbers enrolled at the Faculty of Arts – more than 7,000 in 2005, making it the largest faculty at Masaryk University.

Faculty of Arts graduates find employment in cultural and educational institutions of all types, government administration, the mass media and the private sector; after subsequent specialized training, or by doing a Master’s degree in teaching, they are qualified to teach at secondary schools. The best graduates take up research positions at universities, research institutes and major museums.
Faculty of Education
The requirement that teachers at all levels of primary and secondary education must have a university education was introduced by a presidential decree in 1945; this was followed in 1946 by a law on the establishment of faculties of education. The Faculty of Education at Masaryk began operations in the autumn of 1946 as the university’s fifth faculty.

The faculty’s main purpose remains the training of primary and lower secondary school teachers and, in certain fields, of upper secondary school teachers as well. Besides its programmes for future teachers, the faculty also offers studies in special and social education. Finally, there are the faculty’s activities in the area of lifelong learning, where various programmes and short-term courses are designed to respond to teacher’s needs for in-service training. Around 6,000 students are enrolled at the faculty.

Research and development at the Faculty of Education is focused on teaching and educational disciplines, in particular general education, didactics, special education, health education and education for a healthy lifestyle, pathological social phenomena and multicultural education. At the department level, research is carried on within individual disciplines – history, biology, geography, mathematics, didactic technology and the German and English languages – either through faculty research teams or in collaboration with other universities and research institutes. The annual summer archaeological dig at the Great Moravian fortified settlement at St. Hypolite in Znojmo is something unique. The Department of Geography undertakes regular student expeditions to Latin America.

At the Department of Social Education there is a Division of Multicultural Education that cooperates with other teachers at the faculty and university in running a number of educational programmes intended for ethnic minorities and socially disadvantaged students. The EQUAL project – an international European Union initiative aimed at removing job discrimination and inequality that ran from 2002 to 2005 – has made a significant contribution towards increased support for the integration of the disadvantaged on the labour market, improvements in the employment opportunities of young people who have attended special schools and efforts to help young people with special needs to find personal satisfaction and their proper place in society. The project was carried out in cooperation with partners from Austria, Germany and the Netherlands.

The faculty has bilateral agreements in a wide range of disciplines with many foreign universities, among them those in Dresden, Utrecht, Barcelona and Bratislava.

Most Faculty of Education graduates go into the teaching professions. Graduates of doctoral programmes are employed in the fields of education, special education and educational research, particularly as teachers at universities. They also go into government service and find management positions in the private sector.

Physical education forms part of the training of future teachers.

The newly refurbished gymnasium behind the main Faculty of Education building in Poříčí street.

In the spring of 2006 the Faculty of Education put into operation the largest solar power plant in the Czech Republic, with an output of 40 kWh; it is designed to serve teaching and research purposes.
Faculty of Economics and Administration
Following the collapse of Communism in November 1989, the great changes that were overtaking the country made it possible to begin intensive planning aimed at establishing a new faculty devoted to economics. In 1990 the Faculty of Economics and Administration was founded – the first new “post-November” faculty at Masaryk University. Teaching began in September of the following year. Since then, the faculty has grown greatly – it now has almost 4,000 students at the Bachelor’s, Master’s and doctoral levels – and developed a clear identity. The faculty’s mission is to carry out teaching and research in the field of economics.

The main research orientation of the faculty is determined by its profile and the fields of study offered there, and this also influences the long-term research orientations of the individual departments. At present, research within the faculty concentrates mainly on the competitiveness of the Czech economy (a special research centre on this question has been established), the efficiency of the public sector, evolutionary trends in the organizational structures and management of businesses, the use of human resources by firms and regional development and its economic aspects.

The faculty cooperates in research projects with the National Training Fund, the Grant Fund of the University of Economics and Management and the Economics Institute and Institute of Information Theory and Automation within the Czech Academy of Sciences. Moreover, it has established long-term partnerships with research institutes and other national, regional and municipal bodies, in particular the Institute for Territorial Development, the Brno Chamber of Commerce and the South Moravia Regional Development Agency.

The faculty offers Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes, in both on-site and combined modes of study, specializing in economics, economic information systems, the financial sector, economic policy and management, national economy and business management, regional development and administration, as well as public economy. The faculty also offers l’Administration publique – public administration, a field of study taught in French and Czech and organized in cooperation with the University of Rennes in France. It focuses on preparing highly qualified graduates for careers in public administration. Students have work placements and take special courses in both Czech and French public institutions. In cooperation with the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Economics and Administration has launched a Bachelor’s programme in the field of European Economic, Administrative and Cultural Studies. The faculty also offers lifelong learning programmes, both in accredited fields of study and in the form of courses for refreshing skills and extending knowledge and qualifications.

Graduates of the faculty are well-equipped for their future professions. They have had considerable practical experience, for example in the area of bank management, as specialists in current economic theory, as leaders in non-profit state and private organizations. They can also work as experts on financial processes during the development and operation of information technologies and are able to take on various positions in the financial and insurance sectors. They are suited for dealing conceptually with issues concerning the national economy, fill positions calling for analytical skills at financial institutions and banks, find positions with public administration authorities, and become financial journalists and consultants. Many of them go on to become part of the management teams at businesses or manage their own businesses, especially in tourism, are employed in institutions of regional development and administration, or serve as financial officers in the non-profit public and private sectors.
Faculty of Informatics
The Faculty of Informatics was established in 1994, the first faculty of its kind in the Czech Republic. As such, it served in many ways as a prototype for similar faculties established later at other Czech universities. The faculty offers a system of studies that is as open as possible in order to allow students to choose specializations corresponding to their personal interests. It promotes a complex concept of informatics as a field combining a number of information disciplines and areas and having a strong interdisciplinary character. It works with state-of-the-art technical equipment linked to high-speed networks and the whole building housing the faculty has wireless access. The faculty has developed and operates the university Information System (IS), which supports all aspects of studies, the related administrative agenda and e-learning. In 2005 the Masaryk University IS received the prestigious EUNIS Elite Award for European university information systems. The faculty’s ambition is to ensure its graduates a top-quality education suited for the information society of the third millennium.

The Faculty of Informatics offers a wide range of fields of study in Bachelor’s, Master’s and doctoral programmes. Gifted students in Master’s and doctoral programmes are given the opportunity to work in one of eight special research laboratories at the faculty and thus to take a direct part in the faculty’s research activities.

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The Faculty of Informatics is one of the leading research and development institutions in the Czech Republic and has established itself as an important player in the international context. This is reflected in the faculty’s very high rate of success in obtaining national and international research grants and projects. The central research activities at the faculty are grouped around a long-term research plan devoted to highly parallel and distributed computer systems. Other research and development work is related to a range of topics in the field of computer science, among them theoretical informatics, quantum informatics, database systems, image analysis and computer graphics, computer networks, computer learning, data searching and natural language processing.

Intensive international collaboration in research and development is implemented through participation in a number of projects. At present, the faculty is a co-principal investigator in two networks of excellence within the European Union’s 6th framework programme. The faculty hosts increasing numbers of important international conferences and other forms of scientific meetings, and world-renowned experts come to the faculty to lecture on the latest research findings, particularly during the traditional Informatics Colloquia. At the national level, the faculty cooperates with the leading institutions in informatics and related fields, particularly those affiliated to the Czech Academy of Sciences.

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Faculty of Social Studies
The Faculty of Social Studies dates its existence as a separate faculty of Masaryk University from 1998. The establishment of a separate faculty oriented towards the social sciences came as the culmination of a very long period of development: back in 1921 a Department of Sociology was set up at the Faculty of Arts, making it one of the oldest such departments in the whole of Europe. In 2005 the faculty moved to a newly reconstructed and refurbished building in Joštova street that offers superb conditions for studies – a library based on modern principles with an excellent selection of publications from abroad, large numbers of personal computers in the computer rooms, specialized DTP studios and multimedia laboratories. Several rooms are occupied by the student club at the faculty. The glass-covered atrium, with its user-friendly layout and striking architecture, serves as a meeting point and discussion space for the whole faculty.

The Faculty of Social Studies is engaged in a broad spectrum of research and development activities in a number of areas corresponding to the fields of study accredited and taught there. These include both basic and applied research related to issues such as the family and young people, the shaping of the personality in the process of socialization and individualization, reproduction processes and social reproduction, marginalized groups, poverty, unemployment, ethnicity, political systems in the context of the Czech Republic and the broader European milieu, the media, and the environment. Research activities are funded by a number of Czech and foreign grant agencies and other institutions and are carried out in association with Czech and foreign partners. The faculty is going through a dynamic stage of development; teaching currently focuses on the fields of sociology, political science, psychology, social policy and social work, media studies and journalism, environmental studies, international relations, European studies and – recent additions – gender studies, social anthropology and security and strategic studies. The aim is to link these teaching activities with research carried out by the departments at the faculty as well as by a number of institutes that also form part of it. Thus, the courses offered by the faculty are continually being enriched by the inclusion of the latest findings in both basic and applied research in the social sciences.

Ever since the Faculty of Social Studies was established, young people have shown an enormous interest in studying there, for the social sciences offer a unique opportunity to examine still unmapped social and political changes as well as individual responses and adaptations to the complex world of today. At the present time more than 3,000 students are studying at the faculty.

Besides extensive international collaboration in the area of research the faculty has internationalized its teaching as well. It currently offers two Master’s programmes taught in English (European Politics and Sociology), while all doctoral programmes can also be taken in English. In addition, regular studies include individual courses held in English, most of them offered by foreign lecturers. The faculty has also been involved in lifelong learning since the 2001/2002 academic year.

Graduates of the faculty go on to work in a wide variety of jobs – in government administration, for service and advisory bodies and institutions engaged in research and analysis, at universities (doing both research and teaching), for political parties, in journalism, for international organizations.
The Faculty of Sports Studies is the youngest faculty at Masaryk University, having been established in early 2002 as a result of the development of sports education in the region. The character of the faculty issues from the traditions of education in sports and physical training in Brno, which have always centred on Masaryk University.

The faculty’s mission is to promote a healthy lifestyle as a necessary part of modern life. The faculty applies and develops the findings of research in physical education medicine for the purposes of sports and sports education, augments and passes on the latest insights into regeneration and nutrition in sports as well as in everyday life, and prepares highly qualified experts able to provide instruction in the area of social and leisure-time activities. It also focuses on the special educational techniques needed in the professional training of security forces.

In addition to its teaching activities, the faculty devotes much time to research, which concentrates on three basic topics: structural and developmental kinanthropology, social, cultural and pedagogical kinanthropology and medical kinanthropology. In this research, the faculty collaborates with a number of foreign institutions.

The Faculty of Sports Studies prepares physical education teachers for schools at all levels, offers doctoral studies in kinanthropology and trains sports experts (including the issuing of licences in selected sports). These studies have two stages, Bachelor’s and Master’s, and stress is placed on compatibility among different universities of the same type. There are about 1,200 students at the faculty.

The doctoral degree programme in kinanthropology is intended for Master’s degree graduates. The aim of the doctoral studies programme is to deepen the theoretical knowledge acquired by the students at the Master’s level and to teach the students how to carry out independent research.

The employment opportunities for graduates are extensive. Graduates from Bachelor’s programmes may be employed in school clubs and after-school centres, management positions in civic associations, fitness centres, private sports clubs and security agencies. Graduates from Master’s programmes for future teachers with a double major usually find employment as teachers at primary and secondary schools. Graduates from single-major Master’s or doctoral programmes are qualified to teach physical education at schools of all types, but most become university teachers and researchers in the field of kinanthropology.
Telč University Centre
Masaryk University is currently expanding its activities beyond the South Moravia Region, reaching out in the direction of the hilly country to the west and the charming town of Telč, whose historical core is on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List. The Masaryk University teaching centre there is located in the former Jesuit seminary, which is situated at one end of the square facing the local chateau. The teaching centre enables Masaryk University and its faculties to answer the demand for more educational opportunities in Telč and the region, and provides an attractive setting for seminars, conferences and various kinds of summer courses.

The university launched its teaching activities in Telč in 2002 with classes in the combined study mode in Art History, with a specialization in the care of historical monuments and the safeguarding of the cultural heritage. In the 2004/2005 academic year the Faculty of Economics and Administration joined in, opening combined studies at the Bachelor's level in economics, public administration, regional development, the tourist industry, banking and management. In addition to these fields of study in accredited degree programmes, the Telč University Centre also offers lifelong learning programmes.

The current plan is for the Telč University Centre to gradually expand its activities. New first-year students will enrol in the programmes already offered by the Faculties of Arts and of Economics and Administration; the number of students is expected to reach at least three hundred. In addition, the Faculty of Arts is planning to offer art history courses for the local population in the University of the Third Age, while the Faculty of Economics and Administration and the Faculty of Informatics are well advanced in plans for a new Bachelor's degree programme with the working title of Business Computing.

In future years the university intends to renovate all the historical buildings at the Telč Centre as well as build accommodation facilities, which would in turn enable further development of the centre.

The reconstructed premises of the university centre in Telč, like the historical core of the town, have a special, distinctive character.
Services for students
Masaryk University devotes systematic attention to its students and to ensuring the kinds of services and facilities that will serve to enhance studies at the university. For that reason, setting up and running centralized library and information systems, improvements in the services provided by the faculty libraries and the introduction of new information technologies all form a key aspect of university development. The libraries offer students and teachers efficient access to an ever-growing number of information sources in both printed and electronic form. Special services are provided for blind and visually impaired students by the Support Centre for Students with Special Needs. The Centre’s library includes both academic works as well as fiction in the form of electronic texts tailored for reading via voice synthesizer or haptic display.

Library services are provided by eight central faculty libraries and 118 departmental and other libraries at the individual faculties. Total library holdings amount to 1.44 million volumes in all branches of learning.

Masaryk University students benefit greatly from a service that is far from standard at other universities in the Czech Republic – the University Computer Centre, which has more than a hundred computers and is open non-stop, 24 hours a day seven days a week.

The University Computer Centre is designed to allow students to carry out independent work; no classes are held there. They have free access to information sources available on the Internet, including those on Masaryk University’s own internal network. The computers are equipped with basic office applications as well as specialized software; facilities are also available for reading and storing data, printing out material and binding. Currently the University is building a network of such computer rooms, to which all faculties will be connected in future. Wireless access to the Internet is also becoming common in university premises.

The Accommodation and Catering Services run several canteens and cafeterias for students, teachers and administrative staff, serving more than six thousand meals a day. They also offer additional services such as arranging social events and catering for conferences.

Altogether the Accommodation and Catering Services are responsible for eight student residences providing accommodation for more than four thousand students and lecturers every year. Other facilities include a sports field, gymnasium, sauna, reading room and student club; Internet access is also available. In the summer accommodation in the residences is available to the non-university public.

Sports and physical activities for the university are the responsibility of the Department of Sports Activities at the Faculty of Sports Studies. Students choose activities that match their interests and fit in with their timetables. Summer and winter training courses are also available. The department organizes many events and competitions throughout the academic year, ranging from those at the faculty level to national and even international events.
Public relations
Universities are more than just institutions devoted to teaching and research. Beyond that, they fulfil significant cultural and social functions. Masaryk University is an important player and partner in the society at the regional, national and international levels. The city of Brno, where it is situated, is a major centre of education, culture and business. Hence the university, as an important social and cultural force in this milieu, is engaged in a multitude of interactions with it. It cooperates with important institutions in the city, and particularly with the city of Brno itself and the South Moravia Region, with cultural institutions and with the other Brno universities. It promotes good relations with key players in industry and commerce as well as with the general public. It has various informal ties with particular individuals and forms official partnerships with important investors and others in the business sector.

The transfer of knowledge and the results of research results into the practical sphere as well as cooperation with the business community are of increasing importance for Masaryk University. This concern lay behind its decision to establish a Technology Transfer Office and to become an active partner in the South Moravian Innovation Centre.

Another of the university’s important tasks is to promote relations with secondary schools with an aim to encouraging discussion of common issues and forwarding the realization of shared goals, enhancing care for gifted students, improving pre-university counselling and ensuring that students make a smooth transition to the tertiary education sphere. In the spring of 2006 Masaryk University launched a programme of cooperation with secondary schools called “Partnership in Education”. The objective of the programme is to promote closer institutionalized cooperation between Masaryk University and secondary schools in the Czech Republic and abroad. Within this partnership network, the cooperating educational institutions will help to develop the interest of outstanding students in university studies and improve secondary education through close mutual contacts.

Masaryk University is also active on the municipal and regional cultural scenes. It holds traditional concerts, balls and events open to both the academic community and the broad public, publishes its own monthly newspaper and supports the students running the student radio station. Through a range of promotional items and information materials the university also strives to strengthen an awareness of a shared community among its students, staff and friends.

Alumni are a crucial element in any university’s public relations efforts. In 2006 the Society of Alumni and Friends of Masaryk University was established to serve as an institutional forum for the promotion of contacts between alumni and the university.

The university is a regular exhibitor at education fairs, the largest being the annual GAUDEAMUS in Brno, where it attracts up to 30,000 visitors to its stand and information sessions.

The university monthly muni.cz was officially launched at the annual university ball in 2005. Since autumn 2005 it has also been available on-line.

A concert in the Reduta Theatre organized by Masaryk University to mark the launching of the “Partnership in Education” project.
Brno – City of Universities
Brno, the historical centre of Moravia and capital of the South Moravia Region, is the second largest city in the Czech Republic, with a population of almost 400,000. Thanks to its favourable location at the intersection of several important trade routes, Brno early became a melting pot of European cultures as well as the driving force for the development of the entire region. Over the centuries, open and multi-ethnic Brno flourished, in the nineteenth century emerging as a major industrial and commercial centre in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Following World War I and the birth of independent Czechoslovakia in 1918, Brno soon made a name for itself as the most dynamic and forward-looking city in the new country. Its promising prospects, however, were cut short first with the onset of the Second World War, and soon after with the imposition of the Communist regime. But since the collapse of the totalitarian system in 1989, the city has once again taken its place as a great modern Central European city, welcoming innovation and promoting culture.

The life and atmosphere of Brno is deeply influenced by its higher education institutions. Six universities and more than 60,000 students (the highest concentration of students in any city in the Czech Republic) contribute greatly to the vibrancy of the city and help make it one of the country’s most attractive places to study. Quite rightly Brno has come to be called the City of Universities. And once the new Masaryk University campus in Brno-Bohunice is completed in 2008, the university character of Brno will be become even more marked.

The strong intellectual potential represented by Brno’s tertiary education institutions has been recognized not only by increasing numbers of international students who come to study here, but also by numerous foreign companies that have chosen to invest in the South Moravia Region and particularly in Brno. Projects being carried out and planned by the Brno universities, with full support from the city of Brno and the South Moravia Region, are rapidly helping to transform a city formerly known for its traditional industries into one that is open, modern and innovative. Brno is also known as a cultural, sports and recreational centre. Its thirteen theatre companies, in particular the National Theatre, Municipal Theatre (including its splendid new stage for musical theatre) and the experimental Goose on a String Theatre, offer a wide range of theatrical experiences, while the city’s museums and galleries – headed by the Moravian Gallery, Museum of the City of Brno and Moravian Museum – boast rich collections and mount exciting exhibitions. The Brno State Philharmonic has performed round the world. As an important centre for sport, Brno has produced a great many outstanding individuals in both team and individual sports who have succeeded at the international level. The city has many sports facilities, including the swimming pool, ice-rink and football stadium at the complex near the Lužánky park and the Rondo indoor hall. Brno also offers many opportunities for cycling, swimming and hiking in the surrounding countryside.

The importance of Brno in the European context is also fostered by Veletrhy Brno, whose exhibition grounds are notable for their outstanding Functionalist and contemporary architecture. Finally, the attractiveness of Brno has recently been augmented by the opening of an international airport with direct air links to Prague and the important European centres of London and Munich.