

Department of Foreign Languages

Annual Activity Report 2000

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The Department of Foreign Languages provides foreign language courses for students of non-philological disciplines at individual faculties of Masaryk University, namely at the Faculty of Economics and Administration, Arts, Medicine, Education, Science, Informatics and the School of Social Studies.

Teachers and foreign lecturers from seven divisions of the department focus on language skills for specific purposes and the teaching of academic skills in English, German, French, Spanish and Russian. At the Faculties of Arts, Medicine and Law, they teach special Latin terminology. The department also holds Czech courses for foreign students and in cooperation with appropriate departments, organises the teaching of specialised subjects in foreign languages.

The multi-media Self-Access Centre situated in the building of the Rector's Office is an important part of the department. It has materials and teaching programmes that can be used by students and staff from all faculties to broaden their knowledge of for everyday as well as special-purpose uses: textbooks, dictionaries, worksheets, videos, CD-ROMs, DVDs and satellite TV. The Self-Access Centre provides the possibility of "independent learning" in addition to the compulsory lessons.

In 2000, the department obtained a grant from the Higher Education Development Fund for its "Extension and Upgrade of the Technical Facilities of the Self-Access Centre" project and with the help of MU, the existing premises were extended and the facilities upgraded. Thus the centre can be now used by more people than before. Here they can systematically prepared for their B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. studies, as well as international language tests and exams. As part of their academic and research work, a number of the teachers write papers for international conferences; others take part in grant projects, such as "Internationalisation and Europeanisation of Law" and "Refugee Law in Combination with Foreign Language" at the Faculty of Law. This project, in which guest university teachers from the Netherlands and Belgium and a number of practising lawyers participate, is being implemented in co-operation with the Department of International Law. Another project is "Teaching English for Academic and Vocational Purposes at the Faculties of Education", where teachers from this department at the Faculty of Education cooperate with the Faculty of Education in Olomouc. Co-operation between the department and the University of Aberystwyth in Wales supported by a grant from the SOCRATES programme has developed successfully.

In 1997, the Department was admitted to CercleS, an international organisation of language centres. This enables the department to establish links within the European network. In 2000, the department was one of the founders of the Czech and Slovak Association of Teachers at University Language Departments (CASAJC). The association has become a full member of CercleS. Its mission is to support teaching of, and research on, foreign languages at universities on the basis of the application and development of modern didactic methods.

The department continues in its close co-operation with the British Council. Some teachers are involved in methodological work in English teaching at schools of higher education and act as lecturers at various seminars and courses held by the British Council. In recent years, the council has given the department significant support with its grants.