

Department of Foreign Languages

Annual Activity Report 2001

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

Teachers and foreign lecturers from the seven sections 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-purpose Latin. The DFL also holds Czech courses for foreign students, and, in cooperation with the appropriate departments, organizes the teaching of specialized subjects in foreign languages.

An important part of the Department is the multimedia the Self-Access Centre in the building of the MU Rector's Office, in which students and the university staff have access to materials and learning programmes, textbooks, dictionaries, worksheets, video programmes, CD-ROM, DVD, and satellite serving to expand their knowledge of both everyday and special-purpose language. The Centre provides the possibility of "independent learning" in addition to compulsory lessons. The Department of Foreign Languages recently obtained a grant from Higher Education Development Fund, which, with the help of Masaryk University, made it possible to extend and significantly upgrade the existing facilities.

Many of the Department's teachers carry out research activities under their doctorate study programmes, take part in international conferences, others take part grant projects such as "The Internationalisation and Europeanisation of Law" or "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 professional practicing lawyers participate, is being implemented in cooperation with the Department of International Law. Another project is "Teaching English for Academic and Vocational Purposes at the Faculties of Education" where teachers from the department of foreign languages at the Faculty of Education cooperate with the Faculty of Education in Olomouc. Successful cooperation between the DFL and the University of Aberystwyth in Wales supported by a grant from the SOCRATES programme continues.

In 1997, the Department was admitted to CercleS, an international organization of language centres. This year, the Department was one of the founders of the Czech and Slovak Association of Teachers at University Language Departments (CASAJC), and it became a full member of CercleS. The mission of the association is to support teaching of, and research on, foreign languages at institutions of higher learning on the basis of the application of modern didactic methods.

In 2001, the Department continued in its close cooperation with the British Council. In recent years, the British Council has given the DFL significant support with its grants, which was used to equip the Self-Access Centre and faculty branch offices. In 2001, the generous support from the British Council facilitated the participation in international conferences and internships. Under the supervision from the British Council, a new professional association of teacher educators AMATE was founded in 2001, with a significant role played by the DFL teachers. In the future, the association is to take over the tasks carried out for over a decade by the British Council: to provide for further education of teachers of foreign languages at Czech institutes of higher education.