

Department of Foreign Languages

Annual Activity Report 2002

head: PhDr. Hana Reichová, Ph.D.

The Department of Foreign Languages (DFL) is a university Department providing foreign language courses in non-specialised disciplines at individual MU faculties: the Faculties of Economics and Administration, Arts, Medicine, Education, Law, Science, and Informatics, and the School of Social Studies.

Teachers and foreign lecturers from the seven sections of DFL focus on language skills for specific purposes and the teaching of academic skills in English, German, French, Spanish, and Russian to students of bachelor's, master's, post-graduate and doctoral programmes of full-time and combined study. Moreover, at the Faculties of Arts, Medicine, and Law there is also special terminology taught in Latin. The Department also provides Czech courses for foreign students, and organises the teaching of integrated language courses and specialised subjects in co-operation with the appropriate faculty departments. Twice a year, the DFL organises an international TOEFL exam in English and since 2002 holds intensive preparatory courses for this exam. In 2002/2003, the Department introduced a year-long intensive study programme of English especially aimed at students who graduated from secondary school. The Department has acquired accreditation for this from the Czech Ministry of Education.

An important part of the Department is the multimedia Self-Access Centre in the building of the MU Rector's Office, in which students and university staff have access to materials, learning programmes, textbooks, dictionaries, worksheets, video programmes, CD-ROM, DVD and satellite that serve to expand their knowledge of both everyday and special-purpose language.

The teachers from the Department carry out research activities and take part in local and international conferences and in grant projects. In 2002, the main grant project was "The Development of Optional Interdisciplinary Courses Held at MU Brno" within the Transformation and Development Projects of the Czech Ministry of Education. International co-operation between the Department and the University of Aberystwyth in Wales is supported by a grant from the Socrates programme and is continuing successfully.

In 1997, the Department was accepted in to CercleS, an international organisation of European language departments. The Department was active during the foundation of the Czech and Slovak Association of Language Centres at Universities (CASAJC). This association became a full member of CercleS in January 2001. The mission of the association is to support the education and research of foreign languages at universities on the basis of modern didactic methods.

Also in 2002, the Department continued in its close co-operation with the British Council. In recent years the British Council has given DFL significant support with its grants, and made it possible for selected teachers of English to become national instructors of ESP (English for Specific Purposes). The British Council also initiated the establishment of the new professional organisation AMATE (Association of Methodologists – Association of Teacher Educators), in which the teachers of English from DFL take part.

The Department of Foreign Languages currently has 60 employees, of which 8 are foreigners teaching English at the various faculties of Masaryk University.