

Higher Education System in the Czech Republic

Higher education institutions

Higher education institutions form the highest level of Czech education. They offer accredited degree programmes at three levels – Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral – as well as lifelong learning. Higher education institutions are either of the university-type or the non university-type.

University-type higher education institutions may offer all types of degree programmes (Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral) and carry out associated scholarly, research, developmental, artistic or other creative activities. Non-university-type higher education institutions offer mainly Bachelor's degree programmes, but may also provide Master's degree programmes and carry out associated scholarly, research, developmental, artistic or other creative activities.

There are public, state and private higher education institutions. The public and private higher education institutions come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, while state institutions (the University of Defence and the Police Academy of the Czech Republic) are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior. The complete list of higher education institutions is available at: <http://www.msmt.cz/files/htm/Vswwwser1.htm> or <http://www.csvs.cz>.

Higher education is realised within the framework of accredited degree programmes in accordance with their curriculum and given mode of studies. The mode of study may be on-site, distance or a combination of both. Admission to a Bachelor's or long-cycle Master's degree programme is conditional on the completion of a secondary education with a "maturita" examination. Admission to a Master's degree programme is conditional on graduating from a Bachelor's degree programme, while admission to a doctoral degree programme is conditional on graduating from a Master's degree programme.

Higher education institutions and faculties are free to specify additional conditions for admission to studies that relate to specific knowledge, abilities, talent etc.

Higher education qualifications

The qualification structure recognizes Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral levels.

A Bachelor's degree programme ("*bakalářský studijní program*") aims at providing qualifications for entering a profession or a Master's degree programme. It takes from 3 to 4 years (180-240 ECTS credits). Graduates receive the academic degree of "*bakalář umění*" (BcA. – Bachelor of Fine Arts) in the field of fine arts and "*bakalář*" (Bc. – Bachelor) in other fields. The degree programme must be completed in due form with a final state examination, which usually includes the presentation and defence of a Bachelor's thesis.

A Master's degree programme ("*magisterský studijní program*") follows a Bachelor's degree programme. The length is 1 to 3 years (60 – 180 ECTS credits). In selected fields, where the nature of the degree programme so requires, a Master's degree programme need not follow on from a Bachelor's programme. In this case, the programme lasts 4 - 6 years (240 – 360 ECTS credits). Graduates in a Master's degree programme must take a final state examination and publicly present and defend a Master's thesis. Studies in the field of medicine, veterinary medicine and hygiene are completed by passing an advanced Master's ("*rigorózní*") state examination including the presentation and defence of an advanced Master's ("*rigorózní*") thesis.

The studies in a Master's programme lead to the following academic degrees:

- “*inženýr*” (Ing.) – Engineer, in the area of economics, technical sciences and technologies, agriculture and forestry and in military fields of study;
- “*inženýr architekt*” (Ing.arch.) – Engineer Architect, in the field of architecture;
- “*doktor medicíny*” (MUDr.) – Doctor of Medicine, in the field of medicine;
- “*doktor zubního lékařství*” (MDDr.) – Doctor of Dental Medicine, in the field of dental medicine;
- “*doktor veterinární medicíny*” (MVDr.) – Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, in the fields of veterinary medicine and hygiene.
- “*magistr umění*” (MgA.) – Master of Fine Arts, in the area of the fine arts;
- “*magistr*” (Mgr.) – Master, in other areas of study.

Courses in human medicine and veterinary medicine last 6 years. They are run by the university medical faculties and faculties of veterinary medicine.

Holders of the academic degree of “*magistr*” are entitled to take an advanced Master's (“*rigorózní*”) state examination in the same area of study and defend an advanced Master's (“*rigorózní*”) thesis. If completed successfully the following academic degrees are awarded:

- “*doktor práv*” (JUDr.) – Doctor of Laws, in the field of law;
- “*doktor filozofie*” (PhDr.) – Doctor of Philosophy, in the area of the humanities, teacher education and the social sciences;
- “*doktor přírodních věd*” (RNDr.) – Doctor of Natural Sciences, in the area of the natural sciences;
- “*doktor farmacie*” (PharmDr.) – Doctor of Pharmacy, in the field of pharmacy;
- “*licenciát teologie*” (ThLic.) – Licentiate of Theology or “*doktor teologie*” (ThDr.) – Doctor of Theology, in the field of Theology, “*licenciát teologie*” (ThLic.) – Licentiate of Theology – in the field of Catholic theology.

All the above-mentioned academic titles are at the Master's level and their abbreviations are written in front of the name.

The standard length of a **doctoral degree programme** (“*doktorský studijní program*“) is 3 to 4 years. Doctoral studies are completed by the state doctoral examination and the public presentation and defence of a doctoral thesis (dissertation), based on original results, which must be published. Graduates of a doctoral study programme are awarded the academic degree of:

- “*doktor*” (Ph.D.) – Doctor
- “*doktor teologie*” (Th.D.) – Doctor of Theology, in the field of theology.

The abbreviations of these academic titles are written after the name.

Academic year

Studies are divided chiefly into semesters, years or blocks. Each semester, year or block consists of a teaching period, an examination period and a vacation period. The length of the academic year is twelve calendar months; the Rector decides on the date when the academic year begins.

Credit system

The ECTS credit system is used at most higher education institutions.