

Conception of tuition and research activities of the Department of Education of the Czech University of Agriculture Prague

The Department of Education of the Czech University of Agriculture Prague, follows up with the activities of the "Pedagogical Seminar for Agricultural Schools Teacher Candidates in Prague", which, founded in 1930, was the first organized form of preparation of secondary-school teachers of technical and vocational subjects.

The chief mission of the Department of Education is to prepare teachers of secondary agricultural, forestry and veterinary schools and agricultural vocational training centres. Further, the Department prepares lecturers and senior lecturers for the Czech University of Agriculture. Upon agreement with the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic, the Department is also to be responsible for advanced education of teachers (innovation courses).

Of the well tested and proved forms of study, the Department provides the following:

1. Complementary study for teachers of technical and vocational subjects
 - part time (three semesters)
 - combined (two semesters during full time study, two semesters part time)(Finished university study is required for enrolment.)
2. Complementary study for master craftsmen for vocational schools and training centres
 - three semesters(Complete secondary education and Certificate of Apprenticeship are required for enrolment.)
3. Complementary study for educators for apprentices' and pupils' hostels
 - three semesters(Complete secondary education is required for enrolment.)
4. Course of university-level pedagogy for lecturers and senior lecturers at the Czech University of Agriculture Prague
 - two semesters.

Still other forms of study were being prepared. These are:

- **Additional study for acquiring the pedagogical qualification in technical and vocational subjects (extended, combined)**

This form of study is to meet the need for greater flexibility of study: depending on the individual interest and especially on the individual **capabilities** of the full time students of the University of Agriculture, it will be possible to undergo a programme of consultations and pass examina-



tions in the majority of the compulsory subjects. The pedagogical studies are to be finished by passing a final examination with evaluation of the candidate's teaching capabilities; the candidate will also have to defend a thesis and to have passed practical training in teaching at a training school (all this is to take place after finished regular university study).

– **Advanced study for teachers of technical and vocational subjects**

The system meets the need to update and innovate the contents of preparation and the teaching methods and forms of work, and also the need to update the contents of the different subject groups. The Department is well placed from the systems point of view, as it has direct contacts with both the schools and the Ministry of Education; as for the contents of the study, the Department can co-operate with the most outstanding specialists of the Czech University of Agriculture Prague, research institutes as well as agrobusiness.

Course for teachers of economic subjects – in co-operation with the Qualification Improvement Institute of the Czech University of Agriculture Prague.

Course on alternative farming – in co-operation with the Crop Husbandry Department of the Czech University of Agriculture Prague.

Contents of pedagogical preparation

During the general pedagogico-psychological part of preparation the students familiarize with the fundamentals of pedagogical theory and with psychology. The conception of teaching is purpose-oriented; the future teachers will have to be able to make active use of what they will have learned and to apply their knowledge and skill in their pedagogical practice.

As to the didactics of the technical and vocational subjects, the students with their different study lines (crop growing, animal husbandry, mechanization, economics) acquire knowledge and skills to be able to transform the special technical issues into the process of education. In all forms of study, emphasis is laid on preparation for effective utilization of didactic techniques and aids (videos, computers).

The teaching process is activity-based and active methods are emphasized in all forms of teaching; the purpose is to provide the future teachers with various actual pedagogical skills and capabilities.

The Department has its internal university staff; only some specialized disciplines with a minor allotment of teaching hours are taught by external specialists in the given fields.

The Department co-operates with a network of selected secondary agricultural and forestry schools and vocational training centres (the Department's training schools), where the students undergo compact pedagogical training: teachers three weeks, master craftsmen and educators one week.

The complementary study forms (for acquiring the pedagogical qualification) is completed by passing a final examination of teacher capability, which also includes the results of the evaluation of the candidate's performance at the training schools and the defending of a thesis which the candidate has to write towards the end of the study. The subjects of the final examinations include pedagogy, psychology and didactics of a technical subject.

In scientific and research activities, a basis is being built for good-quality pedagogical work, and for co-operation with scientific and research institutions as well as with practice. The Department's staff have always been involved in research work on upstream research as well as applied science projects. At the present time, within the grant system of the Czech University of Agriculture Prague, the Department is involved in the research project "Structural and contents changes in the preparation of agricultural specialists", and the grant system of the Ministry of Education with the title of the project "Teaching training and post-graduate study of agricultural secondary staffs".

Research activities are also oriented on the international research programme. We cooperated with follows foreign institutions: The Wageningen

Agricultural University, The Netherlands (Department of Agricultural Education), The University of Reading, U. K. (Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Department), Agricultural University of Gödöllő, Hungary (Teacher's Training Institute, Institute of Special Training for Agriculture), Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany (Department of Agricultural Education), Iowa State University, USA (Department of Agricultural Education).

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