

PHARMACEUTICAL EDUCATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Since medieval times the Faculty of Medicine of the Charles University in Prague has provided an education for those interested in pharmacy. In 1952 an independent pharmaceutical faculty was founded at the Masaryk University in Brno, which existed up to 1960. In 1969 a pharmaceutical faculty opened at the branch of the Charles University in Hradec Králové. Then in 1991 the former faculty in Brno was restored. Now there are two pharmaceutical faculties, which educate in pharmacy practice, science and research, as well as towards work in industry and in the educational sector.

To become a pharmacist in the Czech Republic requires a Master of Science in Pharmacology, which consists of five years of study. In the first two years, students study theoretical scientific subjects such as chemistry, biochemistry, physiology and botany. The following two years consist of more specific subjects, including pharmaceutical chemistry and technology, pharmacology and pharmacognosy. In the last year students gain practical experience through a six-month practice in a pharmacy. The study is concluded by defence of a thesis and a state exam in pharmacological disciplines, at which time the title MSc is granted. It is then possible to continue in doctoral studies (title PhD) or to take the rigorous exam that awards the title PharmDr. In either case, one can join a pharmacy student union, which are all part of the European Pharmacy Student Association.

Postgraduate education of pharmacists begins with entering common practice. Recently, because of the Czech Republic joining the European Union, there were



⇒ The Czech Pharmaceutical Museum in Kuks includes historical collections of apothecary jars, instruments, ephemera and photographs, as well as a pharmaceutical library

legislative changes regarding further education of doctors, pharmacists and other medical personnel. Before, a graduate was placed into specialised preparation for a first degree, which took two-and-a-half years. The pharmacist worked in a pharmacy and, in addition, had to pass preparation courses and internships in specific kinds of workplaces. After passing the exam, which consisted of theoretical and practical sections, he or she became a fully credited pharmacist and could, for example, run his or her own pharmacy. If interested, the pharmacist could continue and gain a second degree, which was desirable for pharmacists seeking management positions.

Now pharmacists can gain basic specialisation in one of six branches: hospital pharmacy, public pharmacy, clinical pharmacy, pharmaceutical inspection, radiopharmacology, pharmaceutical technology. To accomplish this, it is necessary to complete a four- or five-year practice and to pass specified internships. Specialisation training takes place in accredited workplaces that satisfy the conditions for postgraduate education and utilises a point system –

points are earned according to number of hours put in and congresses, seminars and courses completed. Gaining an education in a particular specialisation is a condition for work as an independent pharmacist or as a nuclear medicine specialist.

Pharmacists in the Czech Republic are legally obligated to continue training for the entire time they practice. This ongoing education is fulfilled through programmes of the Czech Pharmaceutical Chamber and specialised sections of the Czech Pharmaceutical Society (for example, hospital pharmacy section). Continued training also includes study of scientific literature and participation in congresses and conferences set up also by other medical professional societies.

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