

EDUCATION OF ECONOMISTS AT THE SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
IN BRATISLAVA:
THE PRESENT STATE AND PERSPECTIVES

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In Czechoslovakia two institutions of higher learning offer education in economics to their students: the School of Economics in Prague and the School of Economics in Bratislava. Both schools have nearly the same structure of their branches of study, faculties and departments.

The School of Economics in Bratislava was founded in 1940 and up to now more than 30 thousand graduates with the degree Master of Economics have been educated there. At present approximately 1300 full-time students and more than 500 extra-mural students are being admitted to study yearly. The school is divided into 5 faculties with 17 branches of study; at the Faculty of National Economy there are the following branches: Political Economy, The Planning of the National Economy, Finance, The Economics of Investment and Scientific and Technological Development, Teachers Training Course for Economic Subjects; at the Faculty of Economics and Management of Manufacturing Industries there are these branches: The Economics of Industry, The Economics of Agriculture, The Economics of Labour; at the Faculty of Trade there are: The Economics of Home Trade, The Economics of Foreign Trade; the Faculty of Management has these branches: Economic Information and Control, Mathematic Methods in Economy, Automated Systems of Management in Economy, Economic Statistics, The System Engineering; and, finally, the Faculty of the Economics of Services and Tourism offers the following branches: The Economics of Services and Tourism and The Economics of the Non-productive Sphere and Social Development.

Subjects common for all the above-mentioned branches of study

form the basis of each graduate's training and they account for approximately 45% of the tuition. They include such subjects as Marxian Philosophy, Scientific Communism, Political Economy, the History of Economic Theories, Mathematics, the Theory of Statistics, Economic Statistics, Basic Accounting, the Planning of the National Economy, Financial Science, Economic and Commercial Law, Automatic Data Processing, Economic Cybernetics, World Economy, the Theory of Management, Economic Psychology and Sociology and two foreign languages. The common core of study is followed by subjects of the chosen specialization, thus completing the graduates profile for his future profession.

In recent years the topics in the curriculum have been extended by including the application of mathematic methods and models in economy as well as the application of high technology in managing the national economy. Therefore lecture-rooms with computer terminals as well as laboratories equipped with personal computers are being established and the Institute of Computing attached to the School of Economics serves this purpose, too. The standard of teaching is higher also by making use of the audio-visual aids which our lecture-rooms are equipped with.

In the course of their study the undergraduates get a practical training in economic organizations which extends over a period of 6 to 8 weeks. Special attention is devoted to gifted and talented students who may pursue an individual course of study. These students can and as a rule they also join the Students, scientific research and then, according to the results of their independent scientific and research activity in this sphere, they take part in a competition organized first at the faculty level, then at the level of the whole school, of the whole country, proceeding finally to the international level.

A special place in the school activities is given to extramural courses for employed people who, beside full-time courses, represent the second main type of undergraduate courses in our country and which have been run by the School of Economics in Bratislava ever since 1953. The extent of study is the same as with full-time courses but the duration of extra-mural courses is longer by one year so that the employed undergraduates can master their studies with success. This form of study can be pursued in Bratislava as well as in several other centres of Slovakia. Courses are also organized in co-operation with large enterprises and associations and are run by highly qualified and experienced specialists from practice side by side with trained lecturers from the school. The requirements of the economic practice for this type of study largely exceed the capacity of the school thus documenting the necessity for a

constant development of this form of higher education.

All forms of undergraduate courses at the School of Economics in Bratislava are completed by the final State Examination and by the defence of a diploma thesis. The graduates are awarded the degree Master of Economics, the equivalent of which is our "inžinier ekonómie".

The rapid growth of scientific and technological development in the production, constant changes in the economic situation on domestic and world markets, the development of international integration processes, the ever growing frequency of innovation changes as well as a rapid growth of knowledge in all scientific disciplines brings out the need for further study of the graduates with the aim of attaining a qualification on a higher level than the institutions of higher learning can offer. This concerns especially economists engaged in the more and more complicated managerial sphere.

It was for the above-mentioned reasons that the postgraduate study has been developed at our schools. The courses organized for graduates extend over a period of 4 terms with the total number of lessons ranging from 300 to 400 hours; the study is completed by the defense of the final thesis.

At the School of Economics in Bratislava the postgraduate study was introduced in 1961 and up to now there have been 235 courses of postgraduate study at our school with the total number of more than 4000 postgraduates.

The postgraduate training at our school follows mainly these aims:

— to update the higher education with new scientific and practical knowledge,

— to deepen the qualification attained in basic undergraduate courses,

— to extend the attained qualification with the possibility of changing it in a new, related direction.

Regarding the above-mentioned main aims the system of postgraduate study involves the following types:

— *innovation* postgraduate courses innovating and updating the graduate's qualification with latest knowledge in the field of his specialization,

— *specialized* postgraduate courses deepening the knowledge afforded by previous undergraduate study or in related specialization,

— *requalifying* postgraduate courses offering the graduates new knowledge in the specialization related to that of their undergraduate study.

When arranging new postgraduate courses attention has always been paid to the needs of the economic practice and steps have been taken to make the focus of the contents of the postgraduate study a system which promptly responds to the dynamic development of science and technology and takes into account the requirements of the practice.

The most frequent kinds of postgraduate courses are: Automated Systems of Management, Economico-Mathematical Methods in Management, Information and Control Systems, Scientific Organization and Management of Enterprises, The Economics of Capital Construction and Technological development, Price Planning and Price Formation, Money Circulation and Credit, The Economics of Foreign Trade and so on.

The School of Economics devotes permanent attention to raising the standard of the pedagogical process which shows itself also in the fact that the postgraduate courses are run by lecturers who are the best specialists of our school side by side with significant research workers and experts working in the sphere of economic management.

The changes in the entire system of managing the national economy, especially the proposed changes in the economic mechanism, make it necessary to change the focus in the contents of the postgraduate studies at the School of Economics. We have completed a project of postgraduate study with the title "The Theory and the Methods of Management" which has been accepted by the economic practice with an exceptionally high interest. Another project of the postgraduate study and its curriculum with the title "The Management of Scientific and Technological Development" is in preparation. Further, there are the following courses: The Mechanism of the Economic Growth, The Mechanism of Khozraket (a method of self-financing of an enterprise) and The Mechanism of Material Incentives in Organizations.

To conclude the section on the training of economists we should add that, apart from the above-mentioned forms, there is another one, namely, the training of fresh researchers in economic disciplines. This is done, at our school, in the form of the CSc study (study to obtain the degree of the Candidate of Sciences, approx. equivalent to PhD) in which university graduates are enrolled and spend either 3 years of internal study at the department or 5 years of extra-mural (external) study, i.e., without interrupting their employment. The candidates take several examinations in the course of the CSc study and submit a thesis (the Candidate's dissertation) which is then defended in front of a specially appointed external board of examiners. At present there are about 300

candidates at our school and about 60 of them complete their theses yearly in the following disciplines:

1. Political Economy
2. The Theory' of Management
3. The Planning of the National Economy
4. Economic and Mathematical Methods
5. Economic Information and Control
6. Automated Systems of Management
7. Economic Statistics
8. The Economics of Industry
9. The Economics of Agriculture
10. The Economics of Home Trade
11. The Economics of Foreign Trade
12. The Economics of the Standard of Living and Tourism
13. Financial Science
14. The History of Economic Theories
15. World Economics