

# Czech Republic

## Demographics for Czech Republic

Population:	10,235,455 (July 2006 est.)
GDP (by PPP method):	US\$221.4 billion
Currency (inc code):	Czech koruna (CZK)
Language(s):	Czech
Internet country code:	.cz

## Elementary and secondary education

Elementary education is compulsory for nine years from the age of six to 15, and it may be preceded by one to three years in nursery school where the basic age group is from three to six. Although attendance is not compulsory, it includes 86 percent of the age group.

The national teaching standards authority sets the objectives and the basic curriculum. To achieve them, various educational programmes can be employed. There are three national programmes. Each establishment is free to use teaching methods and textbooks, from a list approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Pupils are assessed by teachers on the basis of written and oral performance (and homework) and classified on a scale of 1 to 5. Continuous assessment is summarised in a report at the end of each semester. Verbal assessment is authorised at the first stage of basic school. This kind of assessment is used by 8 percent of teachers. Meetings with parents are organised to discuss the progress made by their children. Pupils demonstrating learning difficulties have to repeat the year.

Elementary education is followed by a secondary school programme. There are three main types of secondary schools in the Czech Republic:

- general secondary school (gymnázium);
- secondary technical school (střední odborná škola – SOŠ); and
- secondary vocational school (střední odborná učiliště – SOU).

A prerequisite for acceptance is the completion of compulsory education and a successful meeting of the entrance requirements.

Gymnázium provides a general, academic education. Its main aim is to prepare students for university studies. The duration is four years, after nine years of basic school, although there are also other types of gymnasium.

Secondary Technical School usually provides a complete secondary vocational education which takes four years and concludes with a final exam (maturita) and sometimes also lower-level secondary vocational education (two- or three-year courses). The school prepares students for technical work in one of approximately 260 branches. About 40 percent of teaching time is devoted to general education and 60 percent to vocational technical education.

Secondary vocational schools offer apprenticeship training mostly in three-year (and sometimes two-year) courses ending in a final exam and apprenticeship certificate.

Practical training represents about one-half of teaching time and it aims at the acquisition of manual skills. Approximately 45 percent of young people enter this type of secondary school; however, this proportion is decreasing. There are also four-year courses organised by secondary vocational schools. They end in a maturita exam. The courses lead to highly skilled worker qualifications.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is the central body in the field of education. It develops strategic documents and drafts the proposals of laws and other regulations concerning education in the country. The curricula of all secondary schools must meet the requirements of the appropriate educational standards approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

The central controlling body is the Czech School Inspectorate. It is responsible for monitoring education results, the quality of management, the efficient use of funds and ensuring compliance with binding regulations at all levels except for universities.

The nursery, primary, secondary and higher vocational schools are administered by the department of education within self-governing regional bodies in 14 regions of the Czech Republic.

### **Higher education**

The vast majority of higher education institutions in the Czech Republic have just finished restructuring their study programmes. They have implemented two-cycle studies which replace the long traditional Master's study programmes. Current Master's programmes will continue until the accreditation expires; however, new students are no longer accepted. The long Master's study programmes can be provided, according to legislation, only if

the nature of the programmes requires it, so in reality there is medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, and pharmacy. This means that in 2004/2005 most new students were admitted into Bachelor's study programmes.

The term "higher education" as used in the Bologna process corresponds in the Czech context to the whole tertiary sector. The Czech tertiary sector evolves alongside that of the higher education institutions, and also that of the tertiary professional schools.

Tertiary professional studies are a more practically oriented type of education, lasting mostly three years. These studies lead to a Diploma in different subjects, e.g. in economics, in social sciences, etc. This Diploma is not academically equivalent to the Bachelor degree. There are also examples that both a Diploma from a tertiary professional school and a Bachelor academic title at a higher education institution are recognised as the same professional qualifications (e.g. nurses and midwives). There is an intention that the future tertiary professional schools will not only provide three-year programmes, but also shorter professional courses lasting only one or two years.

All higher education institutions are subject to the same regulations – the Higher Education Act – and the same accreditation procedures which mean that all study programmes leading to an academic degree have to be accredited. The higher education institutions can be of university or non-university type. The only difference is that higher education institutions of non-university type cannot provide Doctoral study programmes, although all higher education institutions can provide Bachelor and Master's study programmes.

The quality assurance system in the Czech Republic includes self-evaluation, external evaluation and accreditation (based on previous evaluation). The Higher Education Act determines that any higher education institutions (public, private, state) have to regularly provide an internal quality evaluation and to specify details of the process in their internal regulations. Any higher education study programme (provided by a public, state or private institution) has to be accredited. The accreditation is awarded by the Ministry only if the expert opinion of the Accreditation Commission is positive.

The Accreditation Commission is an independent expert body, composed of 21 members, appointed by the Czech Government. The duties of the Accreditation Commission are given by the Higher Education Act; the procedures are regulated by the Statute of the Accreditation Commission (new Statute is valid from 28 July 2004).

#### *University level first stage: Bachelor studies (Bc = "Bakalář")*

The Bachelor study programmes usually take three to four years, covering all main disciplines, except in medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, architecture and law. It is conceived either as an independent course whose graduates are fully qualified for particular professions or as the first stage of longer studies whose graduates can continue towards the Magistr degree. This cycle leads to the academic degree of "Bakalář" (Bc) or "Bakalář umění" (BcA) in

the field of arts which was introduced in January 1999. Students must sit for a final state examination, part of which is also the defence of the Bachelor thesis.

*University level second stage: Master's studies (Mgr = "Magistr")*

The Master's study programmes in the humanities, education and social sciences, natural sciences, pharmacy, theology, law and art last for five years and lead to the title of Magistr (Mgr). Study programmes in economics, agriculture and chemistry, last for five years and lead to the academic degree of "Inženýr" (Ing). In engineering, studies last between five and five-and-a-half years and also lead to the degree of "Inženýr" (Ing). In architecture, veterinary medicine and medicine and law, studies last for four to six years.

Graduates in medicine obtain the degree of "Doktor medicíny" (MUDr) and of "Doktor veterinární medicíny" (MVDr) in veterinary medicine. According to the 1998 Act, graduates of Master's programmes in architecture are awarded the title of "Inženýr architekt" (Ing Arch) and graduates in the arts the academic degree of "Magistr umění" (MgA). The new Act enables holders of the title of Magistr to sit for a State Rigorosum examination in the same field and defend a dissertation to acquire the academic degree of Doktor followed by the name of the field "Doktor práv" (JUDr), "Doktor filosofie" (PhDr), "Doktor přírodních věd" (RNDr), "Doktor farmacie" (PharDr) and "Doktor teologie" (ThDr).

*University level third stage: Doctoral studies (Dr = "Doktor")*

The third and highest level of higher education consists of studies for the Doctorate which take place under the guidance of a tutor. The programme is aimed at scientific research and independent study. Holders of the Master's Degree may apply. Studies last for three years (four to five years distance learning) and lead to the academic degree of Doktor (PhD) or "Doktor teologie" (ThD) in the field of theology. Studies end with the State Doctorate examination and the defence of a doctoral thesis. At some higher education institutions and institutes of the Academy of Sciences, studies leading to the award of the "Kandidát věd" (Candidate of Science, abbreviated as "CSc") still exist. The degree "Doktor věd" (Doctor of Science) is the highest scientific degree. It is awarded on the basis of original research work and the public defence of the Doctoral thesis.

## **Business and management education**

Business and management education in the Czech Republic is provided mostly at the higher education level. It is divided into two main groups:

1. The first group includes all forms of education according to the Higher Education Act and leads to academic degrees in harmony with the Act.
2. The second group is created mostly by the educational forms which belong to life-long forms of study as well as professional post graduate education.

The education in the first group is provided mostly by universities with narrow specialization, focused solely on business administration offering the same subjects management and national economics. The other providers are the business administration and management faculties. They are a part of the university with a broader profile consisting of the other faculties oriented on other subjects. Students can study at different levels, undergraduate leading to Bachelor degree (Bc) graduate leading to Master's degree (Ms in economics, business administration and management) and postgraduate studies leading to Doctoral degree (PhD). The study at public schools so far is free of charge but the tendency is to introduce tuition.

Education in the first group is also offered by private schools or colleges. These institutions offer mostly undergraduate studies leading to a Bachelor's degree. Students pay for their own tuition.

Undergraduate studies last three years (six semesters) and the study programme involves general as well as specialised subjects. The tendency is to concentrate these studies on practically oriented subjects to prepare students better for a career in the business world because they can decide not to continue their graduate studies and leave the school with a Bachelor's degree.

The graduate studies leading to a Master's degree are run mainly by public universities and specialised faculties of the public universities. The programme lasts generally for two years and is concentrated mostly on the subjects of the major the students choose. The study methods are based mostly on seminars, team assignment and essays elaboration. The closing act of the studies is elaboration and defence of diploma work and state exams.

Postgraduate PhD studies are mostly targeted at the students with best study scores in undergraduate as well as graduate programmes. Students choose the research topic the professors suggest. The topics are closely connected with the research grants and subjects the professors are working on. The individual professors and associate professors are acting as research advisors or tutors for their students to assist them in their research. The duration of doctoral studies is three to five years. The first year is devoted to doctoral courses; their subject is mostly concentrated on the methodology of research work and specialised subjects from the chosen research field. For the following years students do research on selected research topics under the supervision of their tutor. Doctoral theses must demonstrate students' mastery of a chosen subject, research findings and show their ability to use research methods in their work. The students defend the thesis before the state committee where he/she must persuade the committee members about his/her competency to conduct his/her own research. Following a successful defence the student is awarded the PhD degree.

The PhD students usually continue their career as assistant professors at the university departments and research institutes.

The students at all programmes (undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate) have the possibility, at selected universities, to study the programmes in the form of present studies or distance-learning studies. The school programmes and requirements are the same in both study forms.

All programmes and degrees corresponding to Higher Education Act must be accredited by governmental accreditation body organised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The Ministry is the only body which can give the state approval for providing all programmes which are indicated at the Higher Education Act.

The second group of educational institutions concentrates on the other forms of managerial education; they do not lead to academic degrees according to the Higher Education Act. They are included mostly in so-called life-long and professional studies. MBAs and DBAs viewed as qualifications for graduates from any discipline who have at least three year's managerial experience and who must have aspirations to reach senior management positions.

The providers of this group of managerial studies are different educational institutions, either connected with the universities as subsidiaries, affiliated to the universities or connected with foreign universities and offered through their programmes. The programmes are provided in Czech or foreign languages (mostly English, German, Spanish, and French) or in a combination of native and foreign languages. They offer short-term management courses, specialised seminars, training programmes and other forms of so called non-degree management education.

The other part of their activities is concentrated to long-term managerial education as MBA and DBA studies. These internationally recognised degrees are not a part of the Czech Higher Education Act and as such they are not accredited by the governmental accreditation body.

The Ministry agreed to delegate this accreditation process to the Czech Association of MBA Schools (CAMBAS). The accreditation of the programmes is not obligatory but only those institutions with programmes accredited by CAMBAS have the privilege to be the members of CAMBAS. CAMBAS is the member of EFMD and its chairman is a member of the EQUAL, the body of the EFMD associating representatives of the national associations of MBA schools mostly from Europe.

According to the CAMBAS statutes, the primary aim of the Association is to ensure, maintain and further develop the highest level of MBA and DBA provision in the Czech Republic.

The long-term aim of CAMBAS is to ensure that all programmes bearing the titles MBA and DBA meet certain minimum standards and their view is that there is no better way to do this than to establish a process of regular accreditation for all providers.

**Professor Milan Maly**  
*Chairman, Czech Association of MBA Schools – CAMBAS*