



**STUDENT ADAPTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM  
AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN RUŽOMBEROK**

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Discussed at the eighteenth session of the KU Rector's College

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Rector of KU

## **Contents**

1 Identification of the current state of adaptation of students at the Catholic University in Ružomberok	4
2 Objectives of the student support program at the Catholic University in Ružomberok	6
3 Participating parts of KU and cooperation	7
4 Activities of the Program to Support the Adaptation of KU Students to Individual Organizational Structures of KU	8
5 Evaluation of the implementation of the support program and its modification	16

## **1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF STUDENT ADAPTATION CONDITIONS AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN RUŽOMBEROK**

The term adaptation is used in pedagogy in connection with issues of human adaptation to the conditions of the school environment - in our case, university activities, studies and life. The concept of student adaptation in the conditions of Slovak universities in general is still not very frequent and it is not given as much attention as it deserves. The process of a student's admission to university is a seemingly simple stage of human life. However, this can only appear on the outside, this stage is often accompanied by big changes in the life of a young person, to which he has to adapt. Not infrequently, it is the first time when a student leaves the home environment for a longer period of time, gets used to a new collective, community or is dependent on himself in many new situations. Therefore, on the part of the community of our Catholic University in Ružomberok, it is necessary to create such conditions for newcomers, as well as studying and foreign students, to which they can easily adapt and which will help them to adapt more easily in the new environment of the university and thus also feel good here.

The need to develop a Program for supporting the adaptation of foreign students at the Catholic University in Ružomberok (hereinafter also "KU") is not new. The first program to support the adaptation of students to KU was already created in 2019, but it was specifically aimed at foreign students. The aim of the presented program is to extend activities aimed at student adaptation to all KU students, we will especially take into account newly arriving first-year students, as well as foreign students.

The starting point for the Student Adaptation Support Program at KU was also the Comparative Analysis of individual study programs conducted at the Catholic University in Ružomberok with a focus on the categories of acquired knowledge, experience and knowledge from the point of view of their potential transfer into practice.

The development of the number of KU students shows a long-term downward trend. For example, compared to the previous year 2021, in the last 2022, the number of students in the first degree of study decreased by 6.9%, and the number of students in the second degree of study and the combined first and second degree of study also continued to decrease by 4.3%. In the third stage of study, we record a decrease in the number of doctoral students by 19.8%. The slowing of the downward trend has been visible since 2017.

The average percentage decrease in the number of students in the second degree during the years 2014 to 2022 is approximately 10.45%. Looking at the year-on-year decrease in the number of students in the second degree for the period 2014 to 2022, it is clear that there was a decrease in

every year, except for 2020, when there was actually a slight increase (indicated by the negative percentage change). The most significant decrease took place between 2014 and 2015, when the number of students decreased by more than a quarter (25.19%). Other declines followed, but they were less sharp, with the mildest recorded decline being between 2015 and 2016 (8.48%). An interesting phenomenon is that there was a slight increase in the number of students in 2020 compared to 2019, although the decline continued in 2021 and 2022.

Thus, the overall trend is downward, with occasional fluctuations leading to a slight increase. This pattern may be due to a variety of factors, including demographic changes, changes in educational program offerings, student preferences, or external economic and social factors. For a deeper understanding of this dynamic, it is necessary to examine the broader context and possible causes influencing interest in second degree studies. However, as many researches show, in students' decisions about staying at the respective university even in the second degree, the support of students by the university and the creation of suitable conditions for adaptation and life at the university play an important role (Miškolciová, 2010; Bedrnová, Nový a et al., 2002; Mertin et al., 2013; Gajdošová et al., 2009, etc.).

Specific goals aimed at facilitating the adaptation process of students at universities and in the school environment in general are considered (Gajdošová, Herényiová, 2002, p. 9; Kemsak, Zelina, 2001):

- create optimal social, educational and educational conditions and ensure harmonious personal development and mental health of students;
- create conditions for developing: cognitization (ability to think, solve problems, use information for life, work and self-development); emotionalization (emotional maturity and emotional intelligence of students); motivations (correct value orientation, self-development and self-improvement); socialization (relationship with oneself and other people, effective communication and cooperation); self-regulation (ensuring mental and physical health and developing responsibility for oneself, one's behavior and actions); creativity (developing creative problem solving, flexibility, originality, imagination and creative lifestyle).
- form and develop universal values (love, tolerance, trust, openness, honesty, respect, friendship, partnership, mutual help, communication, creativity and cooperation).

For these reasons, we have decided to create a comprehensive program at KU that will cover all the above-mentioned supporting goals for the adaptation of students at the Catholic University in Ružomberok.

## **2. GOALS OF THE STUDENT ADAPTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN RUŽOMBEROK**

The goals of the student adaptation support program at KU are based on the above-mentioned facts. From our point of view, it is important that conditions are created for any student coming and studying at KU that will make life easier for him throughout his studies at KU. Also, the goal of this program is to activate students so that they themselves participate in the implementation of some activities and actively participate in the actions that will be implemented within the framework of this program.

The adaptation support program for students at the Catholic University of Ružomberok and its faculties (hereinafter referred to as the "support program") has the following goals in relation to students at the University of Ružomberok:

- to help the adaptation of students (as freshmen, already studying students, but also foreign students) to the social, cultural, everyday life situations that the KU university environment brings with it,
- provide the possibility of education in the field of the Slovak language for foreign students studying at KU, but also for students coming to KU for mobility,
- providing information to foreign students from the Migration Information Center for foreign students and other information related to their stay in Slovakia, through peer counseling - students to students,
- support the integral functioning of individual grades, or study groups, as well as the coexistence of students within accommodation facilities, without manifestations of segregation of students based on race, religion, nationality or nationality,
- enable the satisfaction of spiritual needs,
- prevent problems resulting from insufficient adaptation of students and non-compliance with the provisions of the internal regulations of the KU and its faculties (Study Regulations of the KU and the relevant faculty, Disciplinary Regulations of the KU for students, Accommodation Regulations of the KU, etc.),
- to help effectively solve problems resulting from insufficient adaptation of students and non-compliance with the provisions of the internal regulations of the University of Warsaw and its faculties,
- create new support services for all students throughout the academic year,
- optimize communication with students with an emphasis on feedback at all levels and all parts of KU,

### **3. PARTICIPATING PART OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN RUŽOMBEROK**

All organizational structures of the Catholic University in Ružomberok will participate in the support program, at their discretion and as needed.

Thus, the following will be involved in the program activities:

Department for International Relations (Department for International Relations and Mobility, Euraxess Center) Counseling Center

KU accommodation and catering facilities

Faculty of Education

faculty of phylosophy

Faculty of Health Sciences

Faculty of Theology

Ján Vojtaššák University Pastoral Center

KU University Library

For the purpose of preparing and implementing the activities of the Student Adaptation Support Program at KU, KU started to develop cooperation with the student organization *Metoikos n.o.* *Metoikos n.o.* is a non-profit organization focused on creating conditions for the integration of foreign students into social and working life in Slovakia. The main goal of the organization is not only the social and work integration of young people from abroad, but also their cultural and academic adaptation and preparation for a successful career in the Slovak environment. At the same time, *Metoikos n.o.* seeks to increase public awareness of the importance and benefits of migration and integration, thereby contributing to strengthening an inclusive society. Based on the content of the activities of the non-profit organization *Metoikos*, KU decided to sign a memorandum of cooperation with this organization, which will make *Metoikos* another part of the adaptation support program and at the same time fulfill the set goal of implementing student activities for students.

#### 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE STUDENT ADAPTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN RUŽOMBEROK

Name of Activity	Place of implementation	Responsibility
<b>WINTER SEMESTER</b>		
WELCOME WEEK - Information seminar for first-year students (AIS, studies, ISIC cards, catering, support services) - cultural market of foreign students (activities will be carried out at the beginning of the semester, in the first or second week of the winter semester, or in the week of Veni Sancte)	PF KU	employees of study departments PF, FF, FZ, TF, employees of PC KU, employees of IT, staff of the KU UaSZ, staff of the Department for Foreign Relations and Mobility of the KU and the Euraxess Center
Counseling for students with specific needs	PC KU	university coordinator for students with specific needs
Support services for students with specific needs	PC KU	Staff of PC KU
Career counseling	PC KU	Staff of PC KU
Social and legal support	PC KU	Staff of PC KU
Psychological consulting services (in Slovak, Ukrainian and Russian)	PC KU	psychologist of PC KU
Counseling in effective learning	PC KU	Psychologist of PC KU
Possibility to use the peer support system as part of the Buddy system concept for university students	PC KU	buddies v PC KU
Experiential seminars, activities for the purpose of improving students' mental health and their motivation to study for all KU students	PC KU (UK KU)	Psychologist of PC KU



Name of Activity	Place of implementation	Responsibility
Supporting activities for integration into the collective and meaningful spending of free time	PC KU (UK KU)	psychologist PC KU, employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of KU, employees of UaSZ KU
Group activities for students of helping professions aimed at developing key competencies - career development, personal growth, development activities	PC KU (UK KU)	Psychologist of PC KU
Support group in Teams for students coming from abroad	PC KU	psychologist of PC KU, staff of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility KU
Fun and knowledge quiz - a fun afternoon as stress prevention	UK KU	Employees of PC KU and employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of KU
The event "What Erasmus+ tastes like" - personal testimonies of students who have already completed mobilities abroad	UK KU	Employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of the KU
The "#ErasmusDays" event - a fun-knowledge quiz for students as part of the global celebrations of the Erasmus+ program	UK KU	Employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of the KU
"Christmas session" - presentation of Christmas customs and traditions in Slovakia and abroad combined with a Santa Claus surprise	UK KU	Employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of the KU

Promotion of individual challenges among students of individual grades and study programs, immediately after publication of the challenge through promotional workshops and presentations	Individual workplaces of KU	Employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of the KU
Conversation evenings for foreign and Slovak students	UK KU	Metoikos, n.o.
A series of quizzes about European languages	UK KU	Employee of the EURAXESS center in cooperation with Metoikos, n.o.
Counseling in the field of study for foreign students	UK KU	Metoikos, n.o.

<b>Name of Activity</b>	<b>Place of implementation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
"Foreign talent" workshop series	UK KU	Metoikos, n.o.
Integration adaptation seminars for foreign students and researchers	UK KU	Employee of the EURAXESS center in cooperation with Metoikos, n.o.
Counseling in the field of study for foreign students	UK KU	Metoikos, n.o.
"Tour of the KU Faculty of Arts" (on the first day of the winter semester) For new students, a tour of the premises of the faculty building, the library and media studies and a meeting with the faculty management.	FF KU	Center for Interdisciplinary Studies FF

FF KU Day associated with informal matriculations of freshmen	FF KU or external premises (Čutkovo)	Center for Interdisciplinary Studies FF
"Psychomeeting" (at the beginning of the new academic year) traditional (in)formal meeting of members of the Department of Psychology with students 1. Bc. year	FF KU	Department of Psychology
"Psycho Party" (usually before Christmas) traditional "department" for all years of psychology	FF KU	Department of Psychology
Tutoring (during the entire academic year) individual academic support within the Department of Psychology - student assistance 2. Bc. year for students of the 1st B.Sc. year	FF KU	Department of Psychology
meeting with students of the 1st year of the Bachelor's degree of the AJaL Department (first week of the semester)	FF KU	Department of English Language and Literature – head of the department

Name of Activity	Place of Implementation	Responsibility
- interviews with students about the functioning of FF and KU, about their rights and obligations, about AIS, about the specifics of university studies, answering students' questions.		

<p>meeting with students of the 2nd year of the Bachelor's degree at the AJaL Department (October)</p> <p>- support activity - explanation to students of issues surrounding bachelor's theses: how to choose a topic, deadlines for registration, etc.</p>	FF KU	<p>Department of English Language and Literature</p> <p>– head of the department</p>
<p>meeting with students of the final years of the AJaL Department (at the end of WS)</p> <p>- support activity - interviews with graduating students about the end of their studies: about the submission of BP and DP, the timing and progress of the state exam and defense.</p>	FF KU	<p>Department of English Language and Literature</p> <p>– head of the department</p>
<p>meetings with students of the AJaL Department outside the premises of the faculty - at events of the Žilina Theater and lectures (repeated meetings during the academic year)</p>	<p>Žilina</p> <p>Žilinské divadlo, Artforum</p>	<p>Department of English Language and Literature/doc. Swan</p>
<p>party of the AJaL Department (e.g. on the occasion of Christmas, Valentine's Day or St. Patrick's Day) unofficial meeting and discussions of students with members of the department, outside of class</p>	FF KU	<p>Department of English Language and Literature</p>
<p>introductory meeting with freshmen at the SJaL Department (beginning of the academic year)</p> <p>- presentation of the department, introductory information about studying at FF and KU</p>	FF KU	<p>Department of English Language and Literature</p>
<p>"KSJL Cathedral"</p> <p>a traditional "classroom" for all years of students of the Department of Slovak Language and Literature with teachers</p>	FF KU	<p>Department of English Language and Literature</p>

introductory meeting with freshmen at the Department of Philosophy (beginning of the current year)	FF KU	Department of Philosophy
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Name of Activity	Place of Implementation	Responsibility
- support activity - introductory meeting for new students, presentation of the department, its members and studies		
Advice, support activities and assistance for foreign students/resp. applicants when arranging temporary residence for the purpose of study and arranging recognition of studies from abroad for the purpose of continuing their studies	FF KU	Odd. pre zahraničné vzťahy a rozvoj FF KU, Študijné oddelenie FF KU
Priebežná činnosť – poradenstvo, poskytovanie informácií a asistencia pre študentov v študijných záležitostiach (AIS, štúdium, iné služby KU)	FF KU	Študijné oddelenie FF KU
Ball games in the gym - free time activity for students	Gymnasium of St. Andrej	Priests of UPaC
Student evening on the occasion of the opening of the new AR	Foyer PF KU	Priests of UPaC
Tourism - nature trips with students		Priests of UPaC
Wednesday - regular meetings of KU students on Wednesdays during AR	UPaC	Priests of UPaC
Stay with the Benedictines in the Transfiguration Monastery in Sampora	Sampor	Priests of UPaC
Woman know yourself, man know woman: Accompanying with natural methods of family planning with MUDr. František Orlovský	UPaC	Priests of UPaC

Beánia – Ball of KU students associated with the matriculation of freshmen	House of Culture A. Hlinka, RK	Priests of UPaC
Advent Krakow - Advent markets	Krakow	Priests of UPaC
Advent drop of blood	UPaC	Priests of UPaC
Christmas cabbage garden in UPaC	UPaC	Priests of UPaC
Meeting with foreign students of the 1st year of FZ KU at the beginning of the academic year	FZ KU	Vice-dean for education FZ in cooperation with the year pedels
Acquaintance and accompanying foreign students of the 1st year of FZ KU to individual workplaces, where they will carry out professional practice	ÚVN SNP - FN	Vice-dean for education FZ in cooperation with the year pedels

<b>Name of Activity</b>	<b>Place of Implementation</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Discussion "on the duties and rights of the student" for students of the first years	TF KU	TF study department
Adaptation "package" for first-year students	TF KU	TF study department
Advent creative workshops	PF KU	Department of Biology and Ecology
Day of St. Františka (patron of the department) - an informal meeting of the department's employees and students associated with St. by mass	PF KU	Department of Biology and Ecology
Chamber singing concert of students	PF KU	Department of Music
A night of music – a concert by teachers and students	PF KU	Department of preschool and elementary pedagogy

I will tell you a poem	PF KU	Department of preschool and elementary pedagogy
Art presentation PICTURES FROM THE CITY	PF KU	Department of preschool and elementary pedagogy
Excursion in the Slovak library for the blind Matej Hrebendu and the Museum of Special Education in Levoča	PF KU	Department of Special Education
Spiš diocese volleyball tournament	PF KU	Department of Physical Education and Sports
Badminton tournament	PF KU	Department of Physical Education and Sports
<b>SUMMER SEMESTER</b>		
Counseling for students with specific needs	PC KU	university coordinator for students with specific needs
Support services for students with specific needs	PC KU	Staff of PC KU
Career counseling	PC KU	Staff of PC KU
Social and legal advice	PC KU	Staff of PC KU
Psychological consulting services (in Slovak, Ukrainian and Russian)	PC KU	Psychologist of PC KU

Name of Activity	Place of Implementation	Responsibility
Counseling in effective learning	PC KU	Psychologist of PC KU

Possibility to use the peer support system as part of the Buddy system concept for university students	PC KU	buddies v PC KU
Experiential seminars, activities for the purpose of improving students' mental health and their motivation to study for all KU students	PC KU (UK KU)	Psychologist of PC KU
Supporting activities for integration into the collective and meaningful spending of free time	PC KU (UK KU)	psychologist PC KU, employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of KU, employees of UaSZ KU
Group activities for students of helping professions aimed at developing key competencies - career development, personal growth, development activities	PC KU (UK KU)	Psychologist of PC KU
Support group in Teams for students coming from abroad	PC KU	psychologist PC KU, employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of KU, employees of UaSZ KU
Motivational seminar for students traveling abroad	UK KU	psychologist PC KU, employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of KU, employees of UaSZ KU
"Easter with Erasmus Buddies" - presentation of Easter customs and traditions in Slovakia and abroad combined with an Easter surprise	UK KU	Employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of the KU
Event "Information seminar on Erasmus+ mobility" - promotion of the Erasmus+ program in the company of domestic and foreign students	UK KU	Employees of the Office for Foreign Relations and Mobility of the KU



Tourist events with the aim of familiarizing students with important natural locations in Slovakia	Liptov Region	Employee of the EURAXESS center in cooperation with Metroikos, n.o.
Visits to important cultural monuments in Slovakia	Liptov Region	Metoikos, n.o.

<b>Name of Activity</b>	<b>Place of Implementation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Integration adaptation seminars for foreign students and researchers	UK KU	Employee of the EURAXESS center in cooperation with Metroikos, n.o.
Conversation evenings for foreign and Slovak students	UK KU	Metoikos, n.o.
Counseling in the field of study for foreign students	UK KU	Metoikos, n.o.
"Foreign talent" workshop series	UK KU	Metoikos, n.o.
Adding to the application for accommodation the question whether the student is willing or wants to be accommodated with a foreign student (in the case of a positive answer, such students could, for example, receive accommodation preferentially)	UaSZ KU	Director of UaSZ KU
"Psycho Baker" (June – at the end of the academic year) traditional joint barbecue of the Department of Psychology with students	FF KU – Čutkovská dolina	Department of Psychology

Tutoring (during the entire academic year) individual academic support within the Department of Psychology - student assistance 2. Bc. year for students of the 1st B.Sc. year	FF KU	Department of Psychology
Tradičné neformálne stretnutie Katedry filozofie - opekačka (jún – na záver akademického roka)	FF KU, Čutkovská dolina	Department of Philosophy
Advice, support activities and assistance for foreign students/resp. applicants when arranging a temporary stay for the purpose of study and arranging recognition of studies from abroad for the purpose of continuing their studies.	FF KU	Dept. for foreign relations and development FF KU, Study Department FF KU
Ongoing activity – consultancy, provision of information and assistance for students in study matters (AIS, studies, other KU services)	FF KU	Study department FF KU
<b>Name of Activity</b>	<b>Place of Implementation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Ball games in the gym - free time activity for students	Gymnasium of St. Andrej	Priests of UPaC
Tourism - nature trips with students		Priests of UPaC
Woman know yourself, man know woman: Accompanying with natural methods of family planning with MUDr. František Orlovský	UPaC	Priests of UPaC
Fasting drop of blood on KU	UPaC	Priests of UPaC
Peasant festival – folk entertainment and presentation of Slovak folklore	Foyer PF KU	Priests of UPaC
Excursion to the Wieliczka Salt Mine	Wieliczka	Priests of UPaC

Field exercises from the subject Ecology of high mountains (field students, hiking)	PF KU	Department of Biology and Ecology
Teachers' Day - commemoration of the birth of the "teacher of the nations" John Amos Comenius	PF KU	Department of Pedagogy and Psychology
Pilgrimage to Marianska hora in Levoča	PF KU	Department of Catechetics and Practical Theology
Children's Day at the Department of Preschool and Elementary Education	PF KU	Department of preschool and elementary pedagogy
International SP Day - a meeting of SP personalities together with SP students	PF KU	Department of Social Work
Bike tour from Hrabovská to Čutkovská dolina	PF KU	Department of Physical Education and Sports
Regional and local art competitions: Creativity of young graphic artists, Nižná (Orava)	PF KU	Department of Art Education

Explanations of abbreviations:

FF – Faculty of Arts and Letters, KU

FZ – Faculty of Health Sciences KU

PC KU – Counseling Center KU

PF – Faculty of Education, KU

TF – Faculty of Theology, KU

UaSZ KU – Accommodation and catering facilities of KU

UK KU – KU University Library

UPaC – J. Vojtaššák University Pastoral Center

The fact that a psychologist of Ukrainian origin has been hired at the counseling center also points to the successful implementation of the program to support the adaptation of students at KU, thereby breaking down the language and cultural barriers.

## **5. ASSESSMENT OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE STUDENT ADAPTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM TO KU AND ITS MODIFICATION**

The student adaptation support program at the Catholic University and its faculties will be evaluated once a year after the end of the relevant academic year (by the end of August of the relevant year). The vice-rector for international relations is responsible for the evaluation of the program, jointly based on the documents of the individual organizational structures of the KU and organizations participating in the support program, and submits the evaluation to the rector of the KU by the end of October of the following academic year. The indicators for checking the achievement of the goals set in the program will be data on the number of participants in the activity, or about the number of students who used the relevant service and the number of activities carried out. Based on the results achieved and the evaluation of individual program activities, the program will be modified every year. Based on the above-mentioned activities, an exact schedule of individual activities for individual semesters will be created, which will be published before the start of the winter and summer semesters.