

Speak nine languages? We can. And we teach

Since 2008, the University of West Bohemia has had the Institute of Applied Language Studies. What does the Institute include and what does it offer to students, employees and the public?



US Point

Knowledge of languages opens the door to the world, which is the motto of the Institute of Applied Language Studies of the University of West Bohemia, whose 47 teachers teach students, employees and the public. They teach English, German, Latin, Spanish, Russian, French, Italian, Chinese and Czech for foreigners.

It is probably not surprising that by far the most students want to learn English. The second most common language taught, however, is Latin, which is mandatory for students of the Faculty of Health Care Studies; the third place is occupied by German. In the winter semester 2018/2019, almost a quarter of all UWB students attended language courses. Among students taught by the Institute of Applied Language Studies are those who had passed the Oxford tests of various levels of their knowledge before entering their first year of university

study. However, their knowledge was sometimes insufficient and so they were offered a one-week intensive course before the beginning of the semester. The course was free of charge, as it was covered by the ESF project.

Academics, researchers and other UWB staff also frequently decide to improve their English. However, teachers also teach them German, French, Italian, Russian or Chinese. A separate part of language education at UWB is the offer of teaching Czech for foreigners. This offer is quite varied and consists of the following courses: one-year preparatory Czech courses for foreign students who would like to study at the University of West Bohemia in Czech; courses for students on Erasmus+ exchange stays; and courses for foreign scientists working at the University of West Bohemia.

US Point and the Russian Centre

An integral part of the Institute of Applied Language Studies are two centres in which not only students, but also the public interested in the language, can have a nice conversation. US Point was established in 2013; the Russian Centre was established a year earlier. Both centres offer improvement in the relevant foreign language in an entertaining way. They organize lectures, seminars, workshops, conversation clubs, film clubs, etc. Since the opening of the Russian Centre, UWB students have been using the opportunity to take part in international language schools or internships in Russia or events such as the International Student Festival organized by the Russkij Mir fund. In addition to seminars and discussions about the USA, US Point can advise and aid students who want to go to the US to study or take up a summer job.

International Summer Language School and more

The International Summer Language School is one of the most important events organized by the Institute of Applied Language Studies. By no means can students practice a foreign language better than spending some time with people from all over the world. That is what happens every summer at the University of West Bohemia. In 2019, the 30th International Summer Language School was held, attracting 570 Czech and foreign participants, offering 38 courses led by 70 teachers, of whom 33 were foreigners. Children, youth, adults and seniors were practicing foreign languages and enjoying a rich accompanying programme.

Events that make the Institute of Applied Language Studies known to the general public include the Pilsen Interviews, organized by US Point on the occasion of the May Freedom Celebrations, and the November Conference of Student Professional Presentations in Foreign Languages for

University Students and Secondary School Students; last but not least, a competition in understanding English texts called the KONTEXT. UWB is preparing this competition together with the Pilsen Region for students of secondary and primary schools; in the spring of 2019, 1,200 students participated in it.

What is TOEIC?

Having obtained the TOEIC accreditation is a great success that the UWB Institute of Applied Language Studies has achieved recently. It is a test of English for International Communication that the Institute has been certified and able to perform as an accredited public testing centre since 2019. "TOEIC is the world's leading English language exam in the context of the working environment. It was created in 1979 in the USA and tests the knowledge of the English language used in the international work environment, i.e. language knowledge and skills focused on work practice. For example, language knowledge is tested in the areas of business, human resources, finance, research and development, travel, office work and others," explains Jana Čepičková, Director of the Institute.

The exams are intended for both students and the public; the first exam took place at the University of West Bohemia on 7 June 2019. TOEIC has two parts: Listening & Reading, and Speaking & Writing, which can be taken independently. The Institute is currently offering the exam in Listening & Reading. The effort and the outcome are definitely worth it. "The certificate obtained has an international validity and, as proof of mastering a foreign language on the communicative level, it is used by over 10,000 companies and government and academic institutions around the world, including multinational companies where English is a basic prerequisite," says Ms. Čepičková. ●



Russian Centre