

Guidelines

on selected language conventions in the communication of the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University

specifying the essential requirements defined by MU Faculty of Arts
Directive No. 2/2022 On the methods and principles of internal and
external communication

Basic starting points

The aim of the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University (hereinafter referred to as “FF MU” or “the Faculty”) is to act as a credible institution in communicating externally; an institution that

- has a tradition of more than a century, of which it is aware and proud to claim,
- however, it is also a modern institution that reflects current trends,
- responds to the needs of contemporary society,
- is committed to the principles of environmental sustainability,
- is open to everyone regardless of gender, religion, race, health, age, or sexual orientation,
- works with facts and appreciates the value of objective truth,
- is not tawdry and pandering,
- takes care of the language culture,
- appreciates aesthetic values.

Therefore, Article 4 (4) of the FF MU Directive No. 2/2022 On the methods and principles of internal and external communication recommends paying particular attention to gender-sensitive language in communication. These guidelines elaborate on this principle in more detail and add further linguistic and typographical recommendations to fulfill the above-described communication objectives.

Name and abbreviation of the Faculty

We consistently use this terminology and faculty abbreviations in our texts:

- FF MU / it doesn't get translated into English!
- Filozofická fakulta MU / MU Faculty of Arts
- Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity / Faculty of Arts, Masaryk university
- filozofická fakulta / faculty (if the title is not complete or if it is not an abbreviation provided for in the preamble to the document, always with a lowercase letter)

ATTENTION! Do not confuse the abbreviation FF MU with the faculty logo MUNI ARTS. It is not used in the written text and functions only as a graphical logo of the Faculty. Similarly, its variations and combinations, such as ARTS MUNI, FF MUNI, Faculty of Arts MUNI, etc., are not used.

ATTENTION! The official name of the Faculty is no longer “Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity v Brně (Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno)”, as it sometimes appears mistakenly.

Placeholder names of faculty units

As with the name of the faculty as a whole, we do not use placeholders for its components. We, therefore, only capitalize them if the name is complete:

- Ústřední knihovna Filozofické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity / Central Library, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University
- Ústřední knihovna FF MU / Central Library of FF MU
- ústřední knihovna / central library
- Ústav religionistiky FF MU / Department for the Study of Religions of FF MU
- ústav religionistiky / department for the study of religions

Tone of voice

Communication with the public is based on the following principles:

- communication is formal, clear, and understandable,
- the messages on the website are concise; the texts are shorter than in printed materials and suitably structured (using headings and subheadings),
- when creating text, we try to work with layers (e.g., a teaser on the homepage of the website, longer texts on separate subpages; in printed materials, a title, a perex, the text itself),
- in Czech, we consistently do not use the 2nd person of singular (even towards young applicants); we use the plural,
- the texts address the reader; we avoid passive constructions.

Examples of bad practice:

The Humanities Support Center - CARLA was built in...
Podej si přihlášku na FF MU (Apply to FF MU - 2nd person singular)...

Examples of good practice:

We built the Humanities Support Center...
Podejte si přihlášku na FF MU (Apply to FF MU - 2nd person plural)...
We offer the most comprehensive range of undergraduate...
We invite you to the Open Day...
We research, support, leverage...

Gender-sensitive language¹

When creating titles for new events, competitions, challenges, sections on websites, etc., we keep in mind a balanced address for all those affected by the text.

In Czech, we avoid generic masculine and legitimize stereotypes in the job world by labeling people according to their majority gender. The solution may be:

- **Duplication** - e.g., “studijní referenti a studijní referentky (male and female study officers)”, “studenti a studentky (male and female students)”, “uchazeči a uchazečky (male and female applicants)”, “absolventi a absolventky (male and female graduates)”
- **Use of gender-neutral language** (if possible) - e.g., “studující (learners)”, “vyučující (teachers)”, “lidé (people)”, “pracující (employees)”
- **Use of an abstract term or name of the institution** - e.g., “studijní oddělení” (Office for Studies), “osazenstvo (staff)”, “obecenstvo (audience)”
- **Complete omission of the problematic expression** by a passive sentence construction or complete change of wording - e.g., “O prodloužení lhůty lze požádat... (An extension of the deadline can be requested...)” instead of “Studenti mohou požádat... (Male students can request...)”, “Máte zájem o studium? Přinášíme vám informace... (Are you interested in studying? We bring you information...)” instead of “Přinášíme informace pro uchazeče o studium... (We bring information for male applicants...)”, “Mám podanou přihlášku... (I have applied...)” instead of “Podal jsem přihlášku... (I as a male have applied...)”
- In exceptional cases (if the feminine form in Czech can be formed without changing the root of the word), **use forms with slashes** - e.g., “studijní referent/ka (study officer)”, “žadatel/ka (applicant)” (or the asterisk symbol can be used instead of a slash to indicate the inclusion of non-binary persons, e.g., “student*ka”)

Especially in the case of formal texts of a legislative nature, it is also permissible to **explicitly define in the introduction that the generic masculine in the text means persons of a different gender.**

In English, the category of the gender of nouns does not cause problems in most cases, but care must be taken to use gender-neutral pronouns, even in cases where, in Czech, the gender-neutral relative pronoun is used. The solution may be:

¹ The recommendations for Czech are based on Jana Valdrová's methodological manual *Rady pro obce, instituce i jednotlivé osoby, jak lépe komunikovat a propagovat vlastní i týmovou práci (Advice for municipalities, institutions and individuals on how to better communicate and promote their own and team work)* (2020). The recommendations for English are based on the Northwestern University website: <https://nuwrite.northwestern.edu/communities/global-health/writing-a-global-health-proposal/gender-sensitive-language.html>.

- **Doubling** - “Every student must deliver his/her transcript of records”, possibly “his or her”; “If a student wants a consultation, he/she must register in advance”, possibly “he or she”
- **the use of the pronoun they** - “Every student must deliver their transcript of records”, “If a student wants a consultation, they must register in advance” (can be used when formulating a sentence in the singular or converted to the plural)

For some of the more common nouns that imply gender, we recommend the following substitutions:

Gendered expressions	Gender-neutral equivalents
man	person, individual
freshman	first-year student
mankind	people, human beings, humanity
chairman	chair, chairperson, coordinator
Dear Sir:	Dear Sir or Madam:, Dear Editor:, Dear Service Representative:, To Whom it May Concern:

Selected language and typographical recommendations for a Czech text

For the sake of consistency, we recommend the following graphic variations and typographic solutions:

- e-mail (with a hyphen)
- wifi
- online
- vás, vámi - in general texts and on the web with a small initial letter
- Czech double quotes „“ (99 66) - you can use the keyboard shortcuts Alt+0132 and Alt+0147
- Czech single quotes ‚‘ (9 6) - you can use the classic punctuation comma and the shortcut Alt+0145
- Do not mix the use of hyphen (-) and dash (–) - to type a dash that is not commonly found on the keyboard, you can use the Alt+0150 keyboard shortcut
- Fixed spaces before one-word conjunctions and prepositions at least at the ends of lines - you can use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+Shift+spaces (in MS Word) or Alt+0160