

## **Description of seniors' education in Slovakia**

### **Learning at the University of the Third Age at Comenius University in Bratislava**

**[www.cdvuk.sk/utv](http://www.cdvuk.sk/utv)**

The University of the Third Age under the auspices of Comenius University was established in 1990 as the first institution of this kind in the Slovak republic. UTA is located at the Centre of continuing education at Comenius University in Bratislava.

The UTA offers a three-year program. The study system of the UTA is adjusted both to the capabilities of the aged and to the possibilities of Comenius University. The study plan of each year provides for 14 three-hour lectures to be presented each fortnight. During their first year the students are offered basic lectures in each of the offered discipline. The second and third year is devoted to the study of optional disciplines and students enrol in the study of specialised branches.

The pedagogical process at UTA is complemented by other educational and social forms. Along with lectures and seminars, we organise excursions, panel discussions, visits to other universities, informal meetings, visits to theatres, thematically conceptualised trips, mutual vacations and other activities of UTA graduates in their own club.

UTA organises courses mainly for retired people, for medically retired (physically handicapped) and for people before retirement – generally for people over 50. It offers people 3-year interest groups study in 30 study branches. Topics, which are same or similar to those in undergraduate courses, are given by university lecturers either from our faculties or from partner ones. There are about 300 lecturers at our UTA together. The interest in this form of study permanently increases. In the academic year 2007/2008, almost 1800 participants were enrolled in 49 study groups. After completing their study, students are ceremonially given certificates.

Our UTA enjoys belonging to and being cared for by Comenius University in Bratislava. As a recent (18 years old) educational establishment of people around the retiring age - senior citizens - our UTA is sharing premises, university lecturers and educational tools with that University. Even though the new system we now run our economy on, allows private enterprise in the areas of culture and education our UTA is not and can not be commercially oriented. Our seniors, mostly retirees do not have the means to fully meet all expenses. They only pay a taken amount and the rest is financed by the university.

Our seniors are at the same level as any full time students. They are entitled to use student libraries, attend seminars, educational undertakings and conferences. They are even more active at consulting the lecturers and at taking part in discussions than many younger students. Our lecturers highly value mutual meetings, which are based on practical and life experiences of our students. Lecture room activities are supplemented by outside excursions, which are almost necessities in the case of architecture, history of arts or agriculture. We try to assist in health and general well being of our students by providing them with access to yoga exercises and to healing and rehabilitation programs.

We provide other facilities and events for elderly people in addition to the study program. Our club of graduates organises for seniors social meetings,

discussions and the "Global walk event", which takes place every year on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October such as the WHO-lead from GINA in Geneva around the world.

The University of the Third Age at Comenius University is a member of the International Association of the UTA (AIUTA), the European Federation of Older Students at the Universities (EFOS) and European Federation of the Elderly (EURAG).

We are a member of Slovak Association of the Universities of the Third Age (ASUTV). Association was established on December 1st 1994 in Košice. The Association resides on our UTA and joined 13 Universities of the Third Age of Slovakia. There are about 5500 senior students all together in whole Slovakia.  
**Homepage: [www.uniba.sk/asociaciautv](http://www.uniba.sk/asociaciautv)**

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