

*Long-term Plan of
Faculty Development
for the Years 2021 -2027
and its Concretization*



RÍMSKOKATOLÍCKA CYRILOMETODSKÁ
BOHOSLOVECKÁ FAKULTA
Univerzita Komenského
v Bratislave

Introduction

The Long-term Plan of the Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius (hereinafter referred to as FRCTH or just the Faculty) is a strategic document for the years 2021 - 2027. It is based on the long-term plan of the Comenius University Bratislava (hereinafter referred to as CU or just the University), adopts it as its own and refers to it in what is general and commonly applicable for all faculties. The FRCTH Long-term Plan is its own specification and concretization of the CU Long-term Plan.

The FRCTH is part of the public university of Comenius University Bratislava and at the same time is an ecclesiastical faculty. In terms of canon law, it is governed by the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Francis *Veritatis Gaudium*, issued on 8 December 2017, the Application Norms for the Observance of this Apostolic Constitution of 27 December 2017 issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education, as well as the norms of the *Code of Canon Law* (in particular, canons 815-820).

The origins of the Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius of the CU date back to 1919, when the National Assembly of the newly established Czechoslovak Republic passed Act No. 44/1919 Coll. on the establishment of an independent Catholic Faculty of Theology in Bratislava as the only academic theological institution in Slovakia at that time. As a result of various political problems, strained relations between Czechoslovakia and the Holy See, as well as insufficient structural prerequisites in Slovakia, the canonical establishment of the faculty did not take place until a decree of the Holy See of 15 August 1935, a decade and a half later, and the faculty actually opened its doors to students in the autumn of 1936.

The following years were a period of flourishing for the faculty, characterized by rich scientific and publishing activity, through which a strong generation of professors laid the foundations of modern Slovak theological science. The faculty gradually became a scientific and cultural focal point, capable of intellectually and morally radiating to the whole Slovak society, transcending even its confessional and ideological borders. In 1939, the faculty was incorporated into the Slovak University. After the first touches with the emerging communist reality in 1945, when the faculty was expelled from the Slovak University and the rector of the seminary, Bishop Michal Buzalka, was arrested for the first time, the faculty was hit the hardest in 1950. Government Decree No. 112 of the summer of 1950 abolished all theological schools and seminaries in Slovakia, leaving only the Bratislava faculty and the central seminary attached to it. The faculty was subordinated to the State Office for Ecclesiastical Affairs, the intellectually and morally best professors at the height of their creative powers were removed from its ranks, the curriculum was reformed, and the admission of students was subjected to a strict *numerus clausus*. Despite the greatest pressure, however, the regime never succeeded in completely enslaving the faculty. Theology, in its deepest essence, remained diametrically opposed to Marxism, and the theological faculty a space of potential or real resistance that was sensitive to the subtlest atmospheric changes in the state and society.

A new chapter in the history of the faculty began to be written after the fall of the communist regime, when it was freed from political and ideological pressures and, from 1990, as part of Comenius University, began to freely educate new generations of Slovak priests and later also lay people and to collaborate in the development of theological science and related disciplines, thus making a fundamental contribution to the spiritual, intellectual and cultural development of Slovakia.

Mission

The Faculty seeks to understand Catholic doctrine thoroughly by its own scientific method, which it draws with the greatest care from divine revelation, and to explain it systematically. It ardently seeks solutions to human problems in the light of that same Revelation. A special task of the faculty is to provide for the scientific and theological formation of those who are aspiring to the priesthood or preparing for special ecclesial ministries. The faculty conducts scientific research and provides undergraduate doctoral and master's education in theology. In accordance with can. 817 of the Code of Canon Law, the faculty confers academic degrees that have canonical effects in the Church.

Strategic objectives

A socially responsible faculty with quality graduates and an international reputation.

- FRCTH is responsible for the quality of the education provided, the research carried out and the formation process. Quality and the development of a culture of quality at all levels of faculty management is its priority.
- FRCTH is constantly updating the contents and forms of education, responding to current and new problems and challenges in society.
- FRCTH seeks cooperation with partners at home and abroad.
- FRCTH actively communicates with society - with the aim of transferring knowledge, increasing the potential for cooperation, presenting research results, providing expert opinions and moral standpoints.
- Through its activities, FRCTH consciously contributes to the sustainable development of the whole society.

1. Strategic objectives in the field of education

Vision for education

The FRCTH wants to tirelessly seek how to better update and contextualize the wealth of theological knowledge accumulated over the centuries in the dynamic and rapidly changing conditions of the present and to present it to students in a comprehensible way. It will foster the internationalization and networking of faculty in the educational process and mutual creative dialogue with domestic theological faculties, foreign institutions and universities, and with centres of study inspired by diverse cultural and religious traditions.

The faculty wishes to focus on greater support for the computerization of education, online means of educational research and assessment, etc.

The focus of educational activity will continue to be the delivery of the Catholic Theology programme, which prepares graduates for ministry as pastoral priests. Our aim will be to improve continuously the quality of education and to prepare graduates as well as possible for practice. Faculty educators are keenly aware that they are forming and educating their future colleagues, associates, and successors through their quality teaching. Therefore, the responsibility in the work done by each of them is a matter not only of justice, but also of conscience and their own personal interest.

1.1. FRCTH as a high quality theological faculty

1.1.1. is responsible for the high quality of the education provided

- ensures the systematic application of a demonstrable and transparent system for ensuring and controlling the quality of education and its continuous development;
- harmonise its internal system for quality assurance of education with the approved standards of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as SAAVŠ);
- ensure the active participation of students, employers and other practitioners in the quality assurance of education;
- motivates its students and staff to carry out activities that are subject to quality assessment according to the relevant standards;
- regularly collects and evaluates student feedback on their satisfaction with the quality of the education provided.

Indicators

- Implementation of an internal system for quality assurance of education
- Criteria for evaluating the quality of study programmes in accordance with the SAAVŠ Methodology for Evaluating Standards
- Periodic evaluation and assessment of the quality of study programmes - internal study programme evaluation reports
- Participation of student representatives in quality assurance structures

- Participation of employers or other practitioners in the quality assurance structures
- Report on the quality evaluation in educational activities, approved by the Faculty's Scientific Council
- Collection and evaluation of student feedback on satisfaction with the quality of education

1.1.2. provides education linked to the scientific research activities of teachers and to the requirements of practice

- update lecture syllabi, contents and forms of education in response to current challenges and problems in society;
- update the curriculum of the Catholic Theology programme, focusing on the development of creativity, the acquisition of communication skills and the promotion of innovative ways of pastoral work;
- develops seminars that offer space for concrete applications of the results of scientific research;
- improves the link between education and practice, in particular through feedback in the ongoing formation of graduates;
- places emphasis on improving the quality of students' practical training and professional practice: pastoral practice, diaconal practice, pastoral year, study abroad during vacations, short-term study visits (especially to the Holy Land);
- involves eminent practitioners – bishops, episcopal vicars, ecclesiastical judges, teachers working in pastoral practice – in the development of study programmes;
- promotes pedagogical mobility.

Indicators

- Number of students with qualifications identified as a long-term shortage on the labour market
- Practice as part of the study programme, amount of credit subsidy for practice
- Number of teaching practitioners
- Number of simulation activities used in practical teaching – practical seminars
- Students' satisfaction rate with practical teaching and professional practice

1.1.3. systematically increases the quality of doctoral studies

- it mediates a quality methodology for the publication and scientific work of doctoral students;
- recruits doctoral candidates from students who have completed the first part of their doctoral studies (licenciante) abroad;
- strengthens cooperation and exchange of doctoral students with partner universities;
- intensifies the participation of doctoral students in projects;
- improves the admission criteria for doctoral students;

- improves the overall quality of doctoral student care – doctoral student meetings, doctoral conferences, doctoral student publications from conferences;
- sets publication criteria for PhD students, number of publications with significant impact on the development of the field.

Indicators

- Number of doctoral students - graduates of the first part of the doctoral studies (licenciate) abroad, in relation to the total number of doctoral students
- Number of doctoral students among project researchers
- Number of academic mobilities of doctoral students
- Doctoral quality assessment reports
- Number of doctoral students per 1 supervisor (average and maximum number)
- Number of meetings of doctoral students, doctoral conferences, doctoral students' participation in conferences
- Number of relevant publication outputs of doctoral students

1.1.4. produces high quality and desirable graduates

- prepares faculty graduates who are in demand on the labour market, number of graduates/societal requirement;
- prepares graduates who are in demand for foreign missions.

Indicators

- Graduate employability rate
- Employers' satisfaction rate with the educational outcomes achieved
- Number of unemployed faculty graduates
- Number of faculty graduates on foreign missions
- Graduate profile including professional knowledge and social, communication, management and ethical skills
- Percentage of full-time students exceeding the standard length of study

1.1.5. ensures a sufficient number of professionally qualified teachers

- strengthens and supports pedagogical mobility – teacher study stays abroad, regular teaching assignments of the faculty's lecturers abroad;
- creates conditions and encourages career and qualification growth of teachers, complementing studies at foreign universities, supporting habilitations of domestic teachers (ratio of all habilitants/domestic teachers).

Indicators

- Number and qualification structure of teachers

- Proportion of contact teaching (including formative meetings) in the total working capacity of teachers (in hours per week)
- Age of teachers providing profile subjects (average age and range)
- Number and quality of teachers' publications overall and in the last 6 years
- Number of responses to teachers' publications overall and in the last 6 years
- Number of students per teacher
- Number of theses supervised by one thesis supervisor (average and maximum number)
- Level of student satisfaction with the quality of teachers

1.1.6. participates in the provision of quality lifelong learning

- provides quality additional or extended teacher training for teachers of religious education for graduates of teacher education programmes;
- participates in the provision of lifelong learning in all its departments, in particular within the framework of the CU University of the Third Age;
- staffs the permanent formation of pastoral priests.

Indicators

- Number of lecturers participating in the implementation of the offered educational programmes of lifelong learning in the framework of the CU
- Number of faculty teachers participating in the continuing education of pastoral priests

1.2. FRCTH as a student-oriented faculty

- supports and provides organizational and financial support for the updating of university textbooks, teaching texts and textbooks;
- purposefully develops and provides personalised student placements, according to the individual needs of each student, with the aim of more specific and targeted support and development of character traits and key skills;
- staffs to ensure the individual and quality formation of students through regular face-to-face meetings and leisure activities;
- through the teaching assistants of the seminary, provides a personal approach, counselling and support for each student;
- purposefully and systematically creates space for the development of students' creativity and individual abilities.

Indicators

- Collecting and evaluating student feedback on satisfaction with the quality of education
- Percentage of students who participated in the evaluation of the quality of teaching and teachers out of the total number of students
- Rate of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching and teachers

- Number of student complaints
- Rate of computerisation of the admission procedure
- Number of staff focused on student support (formators and counsellors)
- Rate of support for student organisations

1.2.1. develops contacts with alumni in a targeted and systematic way

- maintains and develops contacts with alumni through regular meetings, especially in the first five years after graduation;
- systematically develops and staffs the permanent formation of alumni;
- cooperates intensively with alumni in recruiting new students.

Indicators

- Collection of feedback from alumni
- Number of different activities, especially lectures, for alumni
- Number of faculty members involved in alumni outreach

1.2.2. systematically improves the material and technical provision of education

- provides a suitable environment for quality work and study;
- provides the necessary equipment for the academic library, in particular regular acquisitions to the library collection;
- ensures and regularly upgrades the equipment of classrooms, study rooms and other teaching spaces;
- ensures teaching through modern digital technologies and teaching aids, in particular by providing and regularly renewing modern hardware and software equipment in classrooms.

Indicators

- Collection and evaluation of feedback on student satisfaction with the material and technical provision of education
- Electronic and other services offered to students and teachers
- Equipment in classrooms, study rooms and teaching spaces

1.2.3. improves the quality conditions of student housing in dormitories and cultural and sporting activities for students

- initiates the gradual reconstruction and renovation of the buildings of the student residences – seminaries in order to improve the standard of accommodation;
- helps to provide accommodation for lay students in Bratislava, in the Svoradov student house;
- organises the appropriate range and quality of facilities for sport, rest and relaxation.

Indicators

- Increasing standard of student accommodation
- Collecting and evaluating feedback on student satisfaction with the quality of seminary and dormitory accommodation, catering and sports facilities

1.3. Promotion of the Faculty

- improves active presence in virtual space through social networks;
- supports the participation of faculty representatives at academic fairs;
- promotes and organises MINFA (annual summer camps for young people for several weeks, organised by students of the Faculty) and actively supports its integration into the support structures of the faculty;
- organises Faculty open days, supports and assists in the organisation of Seminary open days;
- develops and supports regular promotional visits by students to parishes;
- promotes and supports the publication of student magazines at each faculty site;
- supports summer Bible schools organised by the faculty;
- cooperates intensively with the civil association Cyrilometodiána (founded in 2011, it serves to promote research, education, domestic and foreign professional cooperation, but especially to provide material and financial support for the educational process, building a book fund for students of the faculty and editorial activities).

Indicators

- Number of activities in virtual space
- Participation in academic fairs
- Number of students and teachers participating in MINFA, open days
- Number of student visits to parishes

1.4. Internationalization of the faculty

- capitalizes on the strength that most of the faculty members have completed their doctoral studies in foreign universities;
- fosters contacts with foreign researchers and teachers;
- strengthens international participation in conferences organised by the faculty through already existing links (e.g. European Society for Catholic Theology, Slovak Society for Catholic Theology) and by creating new networks with foreign universities, institutions and researchers and teachers;

- regularly undergoes international evaluation in the system organised by AVEPRO (Agenzia della Santa Sede per la Valutazione e la Promozione della Qualità delle Università e Facoltà Ecclesiastiche - The Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties. At the beginning of the process, on October 27-28, 2014, the faculty received a several-day visit from an international five-member expert group - the Evaluation Commission);
- promotes and creates opportunities for student mobility and activates mobility opportunities for full-time student – candidates for the priesthood.

Indicators

- Number of strategic partnerships with foreign universities
- Number of projects implemented in cooperation with foreign partners
- Percentage of teachers with work experience at a foreign university
- Number of lecturers from abroad

2. Strategic objectives in science and research

Vision for science and research

The Faculty wishes to develop theological science, respecting its specificities and its own methodology, with particular emphasis on these four criteria, in the spirit of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Veritatis Gaudium* (No. 4):

(a) contemplation and spiritual, rational and existential introduction to the heart of the *kerygma*, that is, the proclamation of the ever new and fascinating biblical message;

b) dialogue in all areas, with Christians belonging to other churches and ecclesial communities, as well as with those of other religious or humanistic convictions, relations with experts in other sciences, whose claims it seeks to discern, interpret and know in the light of revealed truth;

(c) inter- and transdisciplinarity, wisely and creatively pursued in the light of biblical Revelation, while preserving differences at the level of both content and method, conscious of the vital and intellectual principle of the unity of knowledge, in spite of its fragmentation, and respectful of its manifold, interrelated and convergent manifestations;

d) the need to create a network of various institutions that care for and support religious studies, to create appropriate conditions for cooperation with academic institutions, study centres inspired by different cultural and religious traditions.

In the field of science and research, the faculty aims to respond to current theological and societal themes, to make use of the creative potential of the faculty members, consisting in the fact that most of them have completed their theological studies at renowned foreign, especially Pontifical, universities.

2.1. FRCTH freely chooses its research areas

- The faculty focuses mainly, but not exclusively, on the following areas of research:
 - Cultural heritage and historical memory

- New translation, interpretation and reception of biblical texts
- Ecology of nature, human ecology
- Human dignity and human rights
- Religious pedagogy and school teaching of religion
- Bioethical challenges in the field of societal challenges
- Spiritual challenges of European society at the interface of epochs

Indicators

- Evaluation of the level of creative activity of the faculty
- Number/proportion of creative workers in the given research areas in the total number of creative workers
- Amount of financial support for research in these areas

2.2. Promotes scientific cooperation with other departments

- supports cooperation with other theological faculties in the development of the study field of theology;
- strengthens interdisciplinary cooperation with Slovak and international educational and scientific institutions (in particular Slovak Academy of Sciences, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem, Pontificia Universitas Antonianum, Università Pontificia Salesiana, Università Roma Tre, Università Europea di Roma, State Pedagogical Institute, Historical Institute, Slovak Biblical Society and others);
- supports cooperation on international projects;
- supports the participation and cooperation of faculty members who are members of important scientific and professional committees and commissions (in particular Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences, International Committee for Historical Sciences, Pontifical Biblical Commission, European Society for Catholic Theology, Slovak Society for Catholic Theology, Society for Christian-Oriented Philosophy in the Czech and Slovak Republics)

Indicators

- Number of joint activities with other theological faculties in Slovakia and abroad
- Number of joint and interdisciplinary research outputs
- Number of partnerships with external departments

2.3. Ensures and improves the quality of publication outputs

- strengthens efforts to register the faculty scientific journals *Studia Biblica Slovaca* and *ACTA facultatis theologicae Universitatis Comenianae Bratislaviensis* in foreign databases;
- strives to include publication outputs in foreign databases (especially WoS, SCOPUS, ATLA, ERIH, Index Copernicus);
- regularly updates university textbooks in profile subjects according to the latest research results;

- systematically and purposefully forms third-level students in the methodology of scientific and publishing activity.

Indicators

- Number of publications of international quality
- Number/proportion of publication outputs registered in databases in the total number of outputs
- Number/proportion of responses to publication outputs in faculty scientific journals
- Number/proportion of outputs of doctoral students' publishing activities in the total number of outputs

2.4. Responsible for the high quality of scientific research activities

- is responsible for the quality of the scientific research activity carried out and for its continuous development;
- applies policies to ensure the quality of scientific research activities and systematically evaluates quality in accordance with the faculty's internal quality assurance system;
- implements, develops and regularly evaluates its internal quality assurance system for science and research;
- evaluates the outputs of creative activities according to established criteria - originality, rigor, impact of the output as well as the level of quality.

Indicators

- Implementation of the internal quality system for scientific research and creative activity linked to education and its continuous development
- Regular internal evaluation report on scientific research activities approved by the Faculty Scientific Council

2.4.1. Develops and maximises the use of creative human potential

- supports young teaching staff in their career development and in their long-term stabilisation at the faculty;
- encourages the use of the CU Youth Grant Scheme;
- supports the habilitation and inauguration process of academic staff meeting the requirements for promotion.

Indicators

- Number of 3rd cycle students
- Number of supervisors in study programmes
- Number of approved proposals for associate professor and professor in the Faculty's Scientific Council

2.4.2. Communicates the knowledge acquired to its students

- within the framework of the teaching activities of creative staff;

- organising regular lectures on topical issues (in particular "Faculty Thursdays");
- as part of the teaching activities of doctoral students;
- through the production of textbooks and teaching materials;
- recommending relevant outputs of creative activity for advanced study.

Indicators

- Number of textbooks and teaching texts
- Number of regular lectures (especially "Faculty Thursdays") per year

2.4.3. Presents the results of its creative activities to the wider public

- participates in events with a wider societal impact, especially in the form of appearances in the national media, popularisation lectures, etc.;
- through publications for the wider public, teaching resources, popularisation articles, blogs;
- organises and mostly staffs popularisation lectures on current theological, religious and societal topics;
- supports the popularisation activities of the faculty's teachers – through lectures, spiritual exercises, social networks, monographs, contributions in printed periodicals, television and radio, regular columns on television, etc.;
- cooperates with the media, informs about the latest scientific findings.

Indicators

- Number of publications and events for the wider public authored by teaching and research staff of the faculty
- Number of textbooks/teaching materials produced for different levels of education
- Number of formative, professional and popularizing media appearances (radio, television)

3. Strategic objectives in the areas of governance, human resources and infrastructure

3.1. RKCMBF UK as a well-managed faculty

- strengthens the management role of heads of department across the different departments of the faculty;
- establishes multi-source funding, including regular evaluation and reporting on the use of resources;
- ensures sufficient financial resources available for the necessary operation and development, over and above the state budget subsidy;
- optimises the number and workload of teaching and administrative staff according to the actual need and volume of activities carried out

- optimises the remuneration system according to the results of pedagogical and creative activities and the volume of administrative work;
- supports the computerisation of administrative processes at faculty level in relation to applicants, students and staff and implements modern information and communication technologies in faculty management and support activities;
- participates in surveys within the framework of the international self-evaluation system organised by the Congregation for Catholic Education;
- puts into practice the recommendations of the expert commission of AVEPRO (Agenzia della Santa Sede per la Valutazione e la Promozione della Qualità delle Università e Facoltà Ecclesiastiche - The Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties).

Indicators

- Multi-source funding
- Regular evaluation of budget execution and cost-effectiveness of resource use
- Final reports and questionnaires of the international self-evaluation system

3.2. FRCTH as a caring employer

- ensures adequate equipment of the building, offices, working areas and employees with office furniture, information and communication technologies, modern computer technology including software, office supplies, access to data sources, etc.;
- implements a transparent remuneration system;
- supports the career and skills development of staff, including the use of mobility stays abroad.

Indicators

- Collection and evaluation of feedback on employee satisfaction with working conditions
- Employee satisfaction rate

4. Strategic objectives in the field of social responsibility

4.1. FRCTH as a space for knowledge sharing and dissemination

- focuses on reflection and design of solutions to important societal issues (demography, ecology, sustainable development, anthropological and moral crisis, etc.);
- uses its potential to communicate key issues and public attitudes, providing relevant opinion-forming, professionally informed information and statements to the public;
- supports the popularisation activities of the faculty's teachers in the media, through social networks, lectures, spiritual exercises;
- participates in a fundamental way in the creation of textbooks for primary and secondary schools nationwide;

- creates space for sharing and dissemination of knowledge, sensitizes society to rationally justifiable truth.

Indicators

- Science popularisation activities
- Number of media outputs by staff
- Number of staff participations in public expert discussions