

MEFANET – A PROJECT OF COOPERATION AMONG CZECH AND SLOVAK MEDICAL FACULTIES, AIMING TO ENHANCE EDUCATION USING MODERN ICT

This document has been prepared and approved on 20th of June 2007 by the Coordinating Council. The following Czech medical faculties agreed to join the MEFANET project:

Faculty of Medicine at Masaryk University	Brno
1st Faculty of Medicine at Charles University in Prague	Prague
2nd Faculty of Medicine at Charles University in Prague	Prague
3rd Faculty of Medicine at Charles University in Prague	Prague
Faculty of Medicine at Palacky University in Olomouc	Olomouc
Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Kralove, Charles Univ. in Prague	Hradec Kralove
Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen, Charles University in Prague	Pilsen

WHAT IS MEFANET

The MEFANET project (Medical Faculties Educational NETwork) is aiming to develop and strengthen the cooperation among Czech and Slovak medical faculties, as regards the progress in education of medical and health care disciplines using modern ICT. The primary objective of the MEFANET project is to facilitate the cooperation among teams from different faculties, and to ensure a horizontal accessibility of electronic teaching tools for both teachers and students. The MEFANET project is certainly not meant to affect or control teaching activities at individual faculties: all targets of the MEFANET project fully respect the independence of individual faculties.

Activities of the MEFANET project bring the following benefits to the participating faculties:

- horizontal cooperation and sharing the results of work from authors of multimedia teaching tools and on-line educational resources,
- unification of methods to create and publish multimedia teaching tools and on-line educational resources, in order to assure availability of these materials to students of all involved medical faculties,
- putting together human resources and potential to develop complex technological solutions in an effective manner, and to solve possible problems with creation and/or publication of multimedia teaching tools and on-line educational resources,
- a more effective usage of acquired financial resources, possibility of inter-university cooperation on awarded grants.

RULES OF MEFANET ACTIVITIES

The basic principles of coordination and activities within the MEFANET project are stipulated as follows:

The MEFANET project is focused methodically; its main objectives involve strengthening the cooperation among medical faculties as regards the application of modern ICT in the

teaching process, standardization of related procedures, and securing the compatibility of resulting materials.

The primary objective of MEFANET activities is to promote the application of modern ICT in the education of medical disciplines. All outputs of the MEFANET project are intended to enhance the quality of teaching materials and to make them easily available for students of involved medical faculties. At the same time, a considerable attention is paid to copyright protection, and to motivation programmes for authors of extensive educational works.

The MEFANET project is a voluntary initiative which promotes an equivalent cooperation among medical faculties. The project is open for cooperation with other faculties and/or subjects.

All activities of the MEFANET project, including the way of solving common projects, respect the independence of individual faculties.

The project is overseen by the Coordination Council, which consists of 2-3 representatives from each participating medical faculty. These representatives are appointed by the Dean of the respective faculty.

If a common decision has to be made, each faculty has a single vote to be applied by its leading representative.

The Coordination Council is convened and presided by the Chairman, who is elected by representatives of the participating faculties for the period of one academic year.

The Coordination Council establishes the priorities of MEFANET activities, decides on generally acceptable standards for individual types of outputs, and helps to define and solve common projects.

The Coordination Council does not intervene into the system of education in individual faculties: the participation in specific initiatives and/or standards is subject to approval by the management of individual faculties.

The MEFANET project does not have central finance resources: if a common project is to be realized, budget division must comply with the rules of a specific project and/or grant agency. The cooperation within the MEFANET project is entirely academic, and financial resources need to be acquired in the form of educational and/or research grants. Activities of the MEFANET project will not generate any expenses which could affect internal budgets of participating faculties.

PRIORITIES OF THE MEFANET PROJECT IN 2007

The following objectives have been reached within the MEFANET project in 2007:

- the Coordination Council was established; the participating medical faculties are equally represented within this body;
- the technological solution of educational portals was standardized, in order to ensure accessibility of published materials across participating faculties;
- a smooth standardization was initiated for the technological solution of various types of multimedia teaching tools and systems for on-line education;
- the accepted solution were made available to Czech and Slovak medical faculties, and an active participation of inter-faculty teams in the project was promoted;
- a national conference was held on the issues mentioned above.

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES OF THE MEFANET PROJECT

1. To unify and to standardize methods for the creation of multimedia teaching tools and on-line educational resources.
2. To support the production of electronic teaching tools, to ensure their compatibility and availability for students of participating medical faculties.
3. To establish a common on-line platform for the publication of multimedia educational resources, which would be available nationwide and could be used in the education.
4. To ensure a professional leadership and to establish an inter-faculty group of experts which would ensure a common methodological development, as well as openness of this solution for other Czech and Slovak universities.
5. To develop a common database which would make it possible to use telemedicine in the education of medical disciplines.
6. To encourage teams of authors to cooperate more closely when creating multimedia teaching tools and systems for on-line education. To develop common procedures for the introduction of e-learning as a tool for lifelong learning of physicians and health care professionals.
7. To organize national conferences for teachers from medical faculties, focused on the use of modern ICT in the education of medical disciplines. To present results of the MEFANET projects in national and international conferences.
8. To publish methodical materials and project results.
9. To prepare the system of multimedia support for the education of foreign students, as well as educational materials in English.

RESPECTING THE INDEPENDENCE OF PARTICIPATING FACULTIES AND THEIR COPYRIGHT

The MEFANET project is certainly not meant to affect or control teaching activities at individual faculties: all targets of the MEFANET project fully respect the independence of individual faculties. The project is primarily focused on the creation of methodical materials and standards, which would facilitate the cooperation of participating teams of teachers. Each participating faculty is expected to follow its own priorities of development, while the cooperation will only consist in mutual awareness, methodology standardization and sharing the works of authorship. If one faculty uses educational materials and tools of another faculty, owner's rights and copyright of the latter faculty must be respected. These rules will also apply for other Czech and Slovak universities, which would later join the project and/or use the published outputs. For this reason, the system is being build as very open, in order to allow other faculties to join the project smoothly. Key activities of the project will be secured by mutual contracts among participating subjects (e.g. contracts between university hospitals and medical faculties on the usage of database of clinical images etc.).

MAKING THE MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO OTHER CZECH AND SLOVAK UNIVERSITIES

Freely available outputs belong to top priorities of the MEFANET project. In particular, this objective will be accomplished by:

- Publishing the outputs on web portals of individual faculties, which will be fully compatible and will allow to their users a simple access to methodical materials and all on-line published outputs of individual faculties. Professional consulting service and discussion clubs over the project will be provided.
- Publishing and making available all methodical materials, data and database solutions; this will be done via a printed publication to be distributed to all participating faculties.
- Continuous presentation of project outputs, open communication and establishing a variety of discussion clubs on web portals of individual faculties, as well as on their common gateway.
- Organizing a national conference over the results and methodical solution of the project.