

## Moscow State University

### Short History Of M.V.Lomonosov Moscow State University

M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University is the largest university in Russia. Founded in 1755, it also claims to be the oldest university in Russia. In 1940, the University was renamed in honour of its founder, Mikhail Lomonosov.

The establishment of the University was instigated by Ivan Shuvalov and Mikhail Lomonosov, and the decree ordering its creation was issued by Russian Empress Elizabeth on January 25th of 1755.

In 1779, Mikhail Kheraskov founded a boarding school for noblemen, which was transformed into a gymnasium for the Russian nobility in 1830. The University press, run by Nikolay Novikov in the 1780s, published the most popular newspaper in Imperial Russia — *Moskovskie Vedomosti*

In the 18th century, the University had three faculties: philosophy, medicine, and law. In 1804, medical education was split into Clinical (therapy), Surgical and Obstetrics faculties. A college for future students was affiliated with the University before being abolished in 1812.

The building was first located near the Kremlin and later was transferred to Mokhovaya street. In 1884–1897, the Department of Medicine, supported by private donations, the City Hall, and the national government, built an extensive, 1.6 kilometer long, state-of-the-art medical campus.

It was designed by Konstantin Bykovsky, with university doctors like Nikolay Sklifosovskiy and Fyodor Erismann acting as consultants. In 1905, a social-democratic organization was created at the University calling for the tsar to be overthrown and for Russia to be turned into a republic. The Tsarist government repeatedly began closing the University. In 1911, in a protest over the introduction of troops onto the campus and mistreatment of certain professors, 130 scientists and professors resigned, including prominent figures such as Nikolay Zelinskiy, Pyotr Lebedev, and Sergei Chaplygin. Thousands of students were also expelled.

After the October Revolution in 1917, the school began allowing the admission of children of the proletariat and peasants. In 1919, tuition fees were abolished, and a preparatory facility was created for children of the working class so that they would be able to pass the admission examinations.

Stalin's political repressions of the 1930s and 1950s severely limited the development of scientific ideas, as Soviet scientists had virtually no contacts with their colleagues abroad.

Certain branches of science (e.g., genetics) were condemned for being based on anti-Communist ideologies, and a number of scientists and scholars were sentenced to life imprisonment or even murdered.

World War II was one of the most difficult periods in the history of Russia. University students and staff began to enlist in the army on the third day of fighting. One of the divisions formed out of university volunteers fought defending Moscow.

Many Moscow State University professors, students, and staff were evacuated during the war first to Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, then to Sverdlovsk, returning to Moscow in 1943, after the German troops were defeated near the capital. During the war, over 3,000 specialists were trained at the University. University scientists continued their research, and their contributions to applied science allowed improvements in aircraft development, the accuracy of artillery fire, etc. Also, new explosives were invented, a study of uranium was carried out, a blood coagulant was introduced into medical practice, university geologists discovered tungsten and new oil deposits in Central Asia, and university geographers supplied the Red Army with maps and charts. University lawyers made their contribution during the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials.

During the post-war period, the leading role of Moscow State University in the restoration and further development of the country was fully recognized. Since 1953, most of the faculties have been situated on the Sparrow Hills, in the southwest of Moscow. The Main building was designed by architect Lev Rudnev. In the post-war era, seven huge neoclassic towers were built around the city. The MSU main building is the largest of these. It was the tallest building in the world outside of New York City at the time of its construction, and remained the tallest building in Europe until 1990. The central tower is 240m tall, 36 stories high, and flanked by four huge wings of student and faculty accommodations.

## Questions

1. Who inspired the foundation of Moscow University?
2. How old is Moscow State University?
3. What faculties were the first to be founded?
4. What prominent doctors were among the professors of Moscow University?
5. Do you know any names of the outstanding graduates or professors of MSU?
6. Where was the original location of Moscow University?
7. What is the height of the main building situated on the Sparrow Hills?

## Staff and Students

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Since its foundation in 1755, Moscow State University has been enjoying the status of a major instruction and research centre, with its 40 faculties, 12 research institutes.

Currently 40,000 undergraduates, 7,000 postgraduates are enrolled in the university. A unique team of professors, teachers and research fellows works here — the university employs more than 4,000 academic staff and 15,000 other staff members. There are about 5,000 researchers engaged in various research activities in its various institutes and departments. There are around 2,000 overseas students in the University.

The University has well-established contacts with the most distinguished universities in the world, exchanging students and lecturers with the leading universities overseas. It houses the UNESCO Hydrology Courses, the International Biotechnology Center, the International LASER Center, courses or seminars on Russian as a foreign language.

The University has awarded honorary degrees to more than 60 scientists, statesmen as well as politicians from abroad. Many prominent university scholars and scientists in return hold honorary degrees from foreign academies and universities.

The University is commonly regarded as one of Russia's most prestigious universities and has high entry requirements for its prospective students. However, Moscow State University performs inconsistently in international and national rankings of higher education studies. While it was placed 77th overall by the [Academic Ranking of World Universities](#) and 112th by [QS World University Rankings](#), it was not included among top 200 universities by recent [Times Higher World University Rankings](#) and came in at 296th. With its large number of faculties, Moscow State University seems to be strong in natural sciences (38th place in the world by [QS World University Rankings](#)), but relatively weak in humanitarian disciplines (190th in Life Sciences).

Still, it is the best Russian university according to all three international rankings mentioned above (with nearest Russian competitor being [Saint Petersburg State University](#) that scored 300-400th).

### Questions

1. How many students are currently enrolled in the University?
2. Do you know any famous graduates of MSU?
3. What disciplines are stronger in MSU?
4. What is the reason for the currently low ranking of MSU?

5. Do you trust the ranking performed by Times Higher World University?
6. Is it a challenge for you to be the student of MSU? Why?

### **Campus and facilities**

The historical building on Mokhovaya Street now houses mainly the Faculty of Journalism, the Faculty of Psychology, and The Institute of Asian and African Studies.

The central tower of the Main building of Moscow University on the Sparrow Hills is 240 m tall, 36 stories high, and flanked by four huge wings of student and faculty accommodations. It is said to contain a total of 33 kilometers of corridors and 5,000 rooms.

The star on the top of the tower is large enough to include a small room and a viewing platform; it weighs 12 tons. The building's facades are ornamented with giant clocks, barometers, thermometers, statues, carved wheat sheaves, and Soviet crests. It stands before a terrace featuring statues of male and female students gazing optimistically and confidently into the future.

Facilities available inside the building include a concert hall, a theater, a museum, various administrative services, a library, a swimming pool, a police station, a post office, a laundry, a hairdresser's salon, several canteens, bank offices and ATMs, shops, cafeterias, a bomb shelter, etc. Along with the University administration, the Museum of Earth Sciences and four of the main faculties – the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics, the Faculty of Geology, the Faculty of Geography, and the Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts – now reside in the Main building.

Several other buildings - the Faculty of Physics, Chemistry and Biology surround the main building.

Sports facilities were later added to the campus, including the only baseball stadium in Russia. There are bike tracks along the campus site. In recent years, a new building for the social sciences faculties, and a vast new facility for the library have been built. The library is the second largest in Russia by volume (number of books). The University also has several dormitory buildings in and outside the campus.

The main library building of the University is one of the largest in Russia with its 9,000,000 books and the average number of readers 55,000, using 5,500,000 books per year.

The University offers classes in its main campus not only in the city of Moscow and its suburbs, but also in campuses in the countries of Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan.

## Questions

1. How is the main building of MSU decorated? Do you find it impressive (outdated, vulgar)? Why (why not)?
2. What facilities are there in the campus? Which of them are popular with you most of all?
3. What can you say about the library? Is it really helpful? Do you often go there?

## Pride of Moscow State University

(Outstanding scientists, writers, public figures)

During its history, **Moscow State University** has served the Nation. Over the period, the Russian science has become part of the national and world heritage. Education based on fundamental research has secured a leadership position for the University in the world educational space. All those who have been privileged to study and work at Moscow State University cherish the unique creative atmosphere, the university aura, which unites, invisibly yet firmly, us all — the spirit of our Alma Mater.

Moscow Imperial University took a most active part in developing higher education in Russia. When new educational institutions were founded in Russia, **Moscow State University** graduates largely formed the academic staff there. Our University gave birth to about 60 higher educational institutions, including the largest in Russia: Sechenov Moscow Medical Academy, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Moscow Geological Academy, Moscow Physical-Technical Institute, Ulyanovsk University and many others.

In the 19th century, scientific societies were formed and they began to gain international recognition. There are not only scientists but also outstanding public figures participating in their activity, among them Leo Tolstoy who presented his paper «On the Notion of Life». The University honorary members included I. Goethe, A. Humboldt, Ch. Darwin, N. Zhukovski, T. Faraday, D. Mendelejev, J. Lamarck, D. Maxwell and others.

Concurrently, academic schools arose, which would soon be the glory of not only Russian, but also of the world science. A. Stoletov, P. Lebedev, I. Sechenov, K. Timiryazev, N. Zelinski, V. Vernadski, S. Solovyov and A. Klyuchevski and many others worked in Moscow university at that time.

Any of these names makes a page in the chronicle of our science or humanities. Their scientific achievements are part of the Russian history and the nation's pride.

The University initiated and supported the foundation of well-known Moscow museums: Moscow Polytechnic, Historical, Zoological and Anthropological museums as well as Botanical and Zoological Gardens. University professor Ivan Tsvetayev founded the Museum of Fine Arts.

The Maly Theater's first cast was made up of the members of the University Amateur Theater Company.

In the 19th century, **Moscow State University** became a unique cultural phenomenon, which gave an impetus for social development not only to Moscow but to Russia as well. It was here that A. Pushkin debated the authenticity of «Slovo o Polku Igoreve» with the University professors. Among the University students were D.Fonvizin, V. Zhukovski, A.Griboedov, M. Lermontov, A. Ostrovski, I.Turgenev, A. Chekhov, B.Pasternak.

In the 1950s, when a new University campus was constructed on the Lenin (originally Sparrow) Hills, scientific research intensified, the scientific thought was stepping up to challenges in the new knowledge areas- in both fundamental and applied science. The University researchers make a considerable contribution to space exploration, to the study of atomic nucleus structure, to the development of computers and many other branches of science.

Among the outstanding scientists of the 20th' century are A. Kolmogorov, N. Bogolyubov, P. Kapitsa, M. Keldysh, L. Landau, I. Tamm, A.Nesmeyanov, N. Semyonov, A. Tikhonov, A. Losev, S. Averintzev and many others. Out of 18 Russian Nobel Prize winners, 11 are **Moscow University** graduates or professors.

In the later 20th century, with drastic changes in the political and economic life of the country, **Moscow State University** faced a new challenge — to keep up the high level of traditional university education and at the same time meet the requirements of the day. Recently, 12 new faculties have been established, to address the most promising areas of research. They include Faculties of Materials Science, Bioengineering and Bioinformatics, Moscow School of Economics, the Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts and others.

Collaboration with the Russian Academy of Sciences, joint research projects are of key significance.

Fundamental research in sciences and humanities provides a strong foundation for students' instruction at **Moscow State University**. The indissoluble connection of fundamental education and fundamental research ensures the training of highly qualified specialists who are prepared to meet the challenge of knowledge-based society. Moscow University Degree guarantees the high level of graduates' expertise.

**Moscow State University** continues the search for new vistas in education and research, supports interdisciplinary research projects, develops innovative activities. Moscow State University was the first in Russia to establish the Science Park and powerful information system.

### Questions

1. What outstanding people contributed into the development of MSU in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
2. Can you name Nobel Prize winners, MSU professors or graduates?
3. What challenges does the modern life give to the young people in the sphere of fundamental science (humanities)?
4. Do you know any prominent scientists who worked (doing research, taught) at your faculty?