The History of the University

The history of the present University of Sopron goes back several centuries.

The years of establishment (1735-1808-1846)

Forestry higher education, the long established field of study, the core of education of the university started in the institute founded for mining and metallurgy education. The School for Training Mining Officers was founded by the decree of Charles III, signed on 22nd June, 1735 in Selmecbánya.

Maria Theresa laid down the basis for academic education by her decree signed on 22nd October, 1762.

A joint meeting of the Treasury and the Chamber of Royal Mint and Mining in June 1807, discussed the establishment of a Forestry School, beside the Mining Academy.

Hungarian Royal Mining and Forestry Academy, Hungarian Royal Mining and Forestry College in Selmecbánya (1867-1918)

After the 1867 Compromise, the Academy became a Hungarian state institution, thus decreasing its international importance. In 1904, the institution adopted the name “The Hungarian Royal Mining and Forestry College”.

With the outbreak of World War I, there was a big rupture in the life of the college. The last lectures of the autumn semester started on 6th October, 1918, but the academic year could not be finished. As a result of the peace treaty after the war, Selmecbánya was not a Hungarian town anymore; it belonged to the new Czechoslovakia. Moving from the ancestral residence started in autumn 1918 following a resolution of the council of the college, and a decree of the Ministry of Finance.
The college in Sopron. Organisational changes (1919-1950)

Thanks to the resoluteness of under-secretary of state Hugó Laehne and Mayor Mihály Thurner, the town of Sopron provided a new home for the college. The first group of students arrived in March 1919, led by the Rector, Géza Réz.

The college was renamed the Hungarian Royal College for Mining and Forestry in 1922, showing its expanded education programme. In 1934 the Hungarian Royal József Nádor University of Technology and Economics was established, and the college was integrated into this university, based in Budapest, as the Faculty of Mining, Metallurgy and Forestry.

In 1949 the independent Land-Surveying Engineering education started. It was later integrated into the Technical University of Budapest. As a new technical university was founded in Miskolc, the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy moved there. The moving of the latter two faculties lasted more than 10 years.

Forestry College, University of Forestry and Wood Sciences, University of Sopron (1952-2000)

From 1952 the Faculty of Forestry operated as an independent Forestry College with a university rank. In 1956 the storm of history dealt a severe blow to the college. After the defeat of the revolution, a large proportion of teachers and students left the country. Most of them went to Canada, where they formed the Sopron Division of
the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia, and finished their studies there. Others went to Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

In 1957 the training of wood industry engineers started. On 1st September, 1962, the University of Forestry and Wood Sciences was established with two faculties. In 1972 the university opened a new faculty, the Székesfehérvár Land-Surveying and Land Management College Faculty. A postgraduate course for paper industry engineering began in 1985.

University of Sopron (1992- )

In 1992, the Institute of Economics and Business Management Development was established to provide training for economics students.

After a period of preparatory work, in 1994, the Institute of Applied Arts was founded, and the training of artists began at the Faculty of Wood Sciences.

On 1st September 1996, the university changed its name to the University of Sopron.


The training of students of economics started in Sopron in 1995. The Faculty of Economics was founded in 2000 when, due to the rationalization policy of the Hungarian higher education, the university was expanded by
incorporating the Apáczay Csere János Faculty of Győr, the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences of Mosonmagyarovár and the Benedek Elek Faculty of Pedagogy of Sopron. The university was renamed the University of West Hungary and had its headquarters in Sopron. After incorporating the Berzsenyi Dániel College of Szombathely on 1st January 2008, the university operated ten faculties in five cities.

University of Sopron (2017–)

Based on a government decision in the years 2015-17, the university was reorganised and the faculties outside of Sopron were amalgamated with other universities.

Four faculties remained in Sopron: the Benedek Elek Faculty of Pedagogy, the Faculty of Forestry, the Alexandre Lamfalussy Faculty of Economics and Simonyi Károly Faculty of Engineering, Wood Sciences and Applied Arts, all part of the renamed University of Sopron.

The University of Sopron continues to concentrate on education and research, developing its strengths guided by its vision and the traditions characteristic of the University of West Hungary and its predecessor, the Academy of Selmecbánya.

The main goals of the University of Sopron are to further increase its research capabilities and promote internationalization. The University intends to offer more study programmes through English language instruction.