When Universitas Gadjah Mada was inaugurated, it had six faculties: the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy, the Faculty of Law, Social and Political Sciences, the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of Letters, Pedagogy, and Philosophy, the Faculty of Agriculture, and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

A number of changes and developments in UGM took place within the two decades from 1952 until 1972. Some of these changes include the split of the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry into two separate faculties, the establishment of the Surabaya branch of the Faculty of Law, Social and Political Sciences on July 19, 1952, which was later integrated into Airlangga University in November 1954, the integration of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training into the State Teacher Training Institute of Yogyakarta, and the establishment of the Faculty of Animal Husbandry in 1969.

During the initial years after its establishment, the University used the buildings and other facilities belonging to the Kraton of Yogyakarta with full support from Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX, who was then Honorary Chairman of the Board of Trustees. On December 19, 1959 the Central Administrative Office was inaugurated by President Soekarno, and the University gradually established a campus of its own in Bulaksumur. The University is now located in an area of 300 hectares on which stand 670 buildings with an area of 740,000 square meters.

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