Madurai Kamaraj University, established in 1965, was named after the historical city of Madurai. Originally named as Madurai University, it was changed to Madurai Kamaraj University to honor one of the most illustrious sons of our country Karmaveerar K. Kamaraj, the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu who brought radical reform in education in the state.

The foundation stone for the current campus was laid by Dr. Zakir Hussain, the then President of India. The campus has grown into a beautiful University township with an extensive area of about 750 acres and named as "Palkalainagar".

Madurai Kamaraj University is a statutory University owned and funded by the Government of Tamil Nadu with the recognition of University Grants Commission. Madurai Kamaraj University has 20 Schools, 75 Departments, 14 centres, 77 affiliated Colleges and 19 approved Institutions.

The Directorate of Distance Education of the University has student strength of about 1.30 lakhs.

The University was accorded the status of University with Potential for Excellence by University Grants Commission and many Centers for Excellence in specialized interdisciplinary areas.