

AARHUS UNIVERSITY DOES NOT ONLY BENEFIT ITS STUDENTS; IT HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ENTIRE CITY AS A NATURAL GATHERING POINT

In 1928, business members, organisations and institutions in the city of Aarhus formed the University Association Aarhus in a bid to establish Denmark's second university. In 1933 the institution became formally known as Aarhus University (AU).

A campus for the whole community 'The university's roots stem from the city's desire to have it here,' says university Vice-Chancellor Dr Lauritz B. Holm-Nielsen. 'We strive to remain the heart of the city.' Students are taught in a beautiful, yellow-brick campus in the centre of Aarhus, which includes an attractive park that hosts student social activities and events, concerts and is available for all city residents to enjoy. Nowadays, the university has an enrolment of over 37,000 students of all ages.

AU has established itself as a leading international institution. In 2008 it was ranked among the top 100 universities in the world in the THE-QS World University Rankings as well as in the Academic Ranking of World Universities published by Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Research-based education The university is a leading European research institution managing 13 centres of excellence supported by the Danish National Research Foundation and several Advanced Grants from the European Research Council.

GRADUATE
EDUCATION
AT ITS HEART

Its nine main academic areas cover the entire spectrum from basic research, applied research and strategic research to research-based advice given to the authorities. In all degree programmes, research and education are closely associated to ensure the depth of the programmes. 'Research is the foundation of a strong university and the foundation to everything we do,' adds Dr Holm-Nielsen. As evidence of the successful research carried out at the university, Professor Jens Christian Skou was awarded the 1997 Nobel Prize in chemistry for his mapping of the 'sodium-potassium pump'. One of the traits of the university is the significant effort that has gone into developing interdisciplinary research programmes. For example, the university is the base for an important project on brain research with support from the Centre of Functionality Integrative Neuroscience, which combines knowledge from various sources including physics, philosophy, mathematics and psychology to understand the biochemical and structural effects of neurological disease and substance abuse.

Its position as a research university means that AU places priority on Master's and Ph.D. students. 'We are predominantly a graduate university,' explains Dr Holm-Nielsen. 'We have more graduate students than undergraduates and it will continue in this way.' These graduate programmes have an international focus; in the Faculty of Science, one in three Ph.D. students is from outside Denmark. International exchanges are encouraged,

and over 1000 courses and 65 full degree programmes are offered in English as a means to diversify and globalise the learning environment. The university has also been a highly active participant in the Bologna Process, which aims to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010 where students can choose from a varied range of high-quality courses and benefit from efficient recognition procedures. Due to its compliance with European standards, Aarhus University was awarded the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) label by the European Commission in June 2009.

'We plan to build on our position as one of Europe's leading universities,' explains Dr Holm-Nielsen, 'that sets high standards for how universities operate, how they respond to the demand from students and society in terms of shaping knowledge, developing knowledge and transferring knowledge. We hope to introduce more flexible study programmes and many more cross-field programmes because in the future we will need the ability to combine knowledge of different subjects.'

Images: Poul Ib Henriksen

Fact file 2008/2009 Founded: 1928 Employees: 10,000 Number of students: 37,000 Turnover/profit: 712 million EUR Summary: Aarhus University is a leading European research university offering world-class research-based education Website: www.au.dk/en



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