Choosing a university is an important decision in every student’s life, and the University of Akureyri offers its students a unique opportunity to be active participants in the creation of knowledge in a number of different areas.

The University of Akureyri was founded in 1987. It has been constantly developing and evolving for over a quarter of a century and its foundations are strong. It provides a progressive environment for students and staff with active participation in the daily operation of the University.

The University of Akureyri is a place where students feel comfortable, in a personal environment which fosters their creativity. Teaching usually takes place in relatively small groups, providing a good learning experience for students. We make sure that students have good access to their teachers, so that they can work together to facilitate the student’s education and solve potential problems. Graduates of the University of Akureyri speak of it positively and are happy with the education and experience they have acquired.

Akureyri is a university town where students have a big role to play. Distances are small and local services are always nearby. The University is located on an attractive campus in the heart of Akureyri. Buses are free of charge, interest and participation in sports is high and sports facilities are good. Winter sports facilities are first class with a skating rink and a skiing area just a few minutes’ drive away. Cultural life is thriving, in particular theatre, concerts, and other creative arts. Student accommodation is located in three areas in Akureyri and students also rent private flats in various parts of the town. Icelandic nature with all its variety from black deserts to glaciers and mountains can be enjoyed and experienced within a short travel distance from Akureyri. Lake Mývatn, Dettifoss, glaciers and various other nature reserves are only a few hours’ travel by car from Akureyri.

We welcome you to join us in the academic community at the University of Akureyri – it will be an experience of a lifetime.

Eyjólfur Guðmundsson, Rector
Iceland
Quite Unique

So, if we just start from the very beginning, the first permanent settlers in Iceland arrived from Scandinavia and the British Isles in the late 9th century. “This is nice” they thought and then continued living on the island. And we are still here!

You can’t blame us though; in environmental terms, Iceland is quite unique. The interior of the country contains stunning contrasts. It is largely an arctic desert, punctuated with mountains, glaciers, volcanoes and waterfalls. Then we have all the fluffy roadside sheep, horses and friendly cows that wave at you wherever you go. They are happy to be here too.

We don’t just climb glaciers and pet sheep all day though. Many Icelanders have dedicated their lives to arts and Icelandic music artists are known all around the world. We are very proud of them.

The country’s nature is perhaps what we are most proud of but the weather is what Icelanders talk about the most. “It’s been raining” is a common conversation starter that always works perfectly when greeting a new Icelander.

The official language is Icelandic. English is however well known by the natives so foreigners shouldn’t have a problem expressing themselves. However, a vocabulary consisting of no more than 2-3 Icelandic words will result in the classic reaction of “Wow, you know Icelandic?” We are always as surprised, just try us.

Come, experience—Welcome to Iceland.
Internationalisation and Programmes for Foreign Students

The University of Akureyri is a young and dynamic university that is looking towards the future in its development of education and research. The University has been instrumental in the area’s economic growth and is central to the area’s future planning as a knowledge-based society. Foreign students will experience a friendly and personalised university located in the heart of the town of Akureyri.

The International Office at the University of Akureyri is a central body in the promotion of international cooperation. It figures prominently in organising international conferences and assisting with student and faculty exchanges. A growing number of students use the University’s network of international partners for exchanges and further studies. Currently, the University has close to 200 international partners in Europe, Asia, and North and Central America.

How to Apply for Admission

Foreign students at the University of Akureyri include exchange students and degree-seeking students.

An exchange student is a student who comes to Akureyri through an exchange programme such as Nordplus, Erasmus, North2North, or through a bilateral agreement between the University of Akureyri and the student’s home institution. Exchange students must apply through the International Office at their home university. We request information about selected students at our partner institutions for our online nomination database. This information should be provided by the international coordinator at the home university. After the coordinator has filled in the nomination form we will e-mail the students with detailed application instructions. Application procedures are available on our International Office web page english.unak.is/students. Inquiries should be directed to the International Officer at the University of Akureyri, international@unak.is. The International Office tries to guarantee housing for all exchange students who are accepted into the University of Akureyri.

Foreign degree-seeking students apply on an equal basis with Icelandic students for the study programmes offered by the University of Akureyri. Students need to demonstrate knowledge of the language of instruction, which is either Icelandic or English depending on the programme. Foreign degree-seeking students submit the application form for degree-seeking students, available on the web at english.unak.is/students. The only programmes taught in English at the University of Akureyri are the Master’s programmes in Polar Law which run every other year. The International Office offers assistance but does not guarantee housing for foreign degree-seeking students. Students can apply for a room at the Student Housing (FÉSTA, festaha.is) of the University on an equal basis with Icelandic students.
Courses for Foreign Students

Icelandic is the language of instruction in most of the courses, but all the courses in the Polar Law programmes are taught in English. In the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, a certain number of courses are offered in English as well. In other programmes certain courses may be taught in English if international student participation is sufficient. We try our best to find courses for students in all programmes. Information concerning the degree programmes and course offering can be found at our web page.

The International Office offers three specially designed courses for international exchange students. Two are offered each semester. These courses are outlined below.

**Icelandic as a Foreign Language, (6 ECTS)**

The principal aim of this course is to give the student a comprehensive insight into the Icelandic language, its uniqueness and characteristics. Emphasis will be placed on understanding written and spoken language by means of conversations and simple texts. The course will, among other things, involve strolls around the school neighbourhood where names of streets and local traits will be discussed and their meaning analysed. Those “field trips” give the students a chance to become acquainted with the town, while practising and improving their Icelandic at the same time. In general, emphasis will be placed on day-to-day usage of the language, such as communication in shops, the reading of newspapers, adverts and so on. Some basic grammar will be covered. Last but not least, students will be encouraged to ask for guidance regarding language barriers they experience in the everyday use of the Icelandic language.

**Icelandic Nature and Geology, (6 ECTS)**

The aim of this course is to give students insight into the diverse nature of Iceland. This course is largely provided in cooperation with the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Natural Resource Sciences. The course involves lectures on subjects such as Icelandic geology, marine science, environmental science etc. These lectures serve to prepare the students for field trips which involve for instance lava lakes, craters and boat trips out to sea. On these field trips, students sample data from which they must hand in assignments and essays. The course grading is based on participation in field trips and results for assignments.

**Community, History and Culture, (6 ECTS)**

The aim of this course is to give students insight into Icelandic culture and history, from the days of settlement to our time. The course is divided into four main themes, all interconnected. These are Icelandic history, Icelandic community and economy, literature, and art and culture. Students will be given the opportunity to visit places of special historical or environmental significance in connection with their studies.
The University of Akureyri was a unique and a once in a lifetime experience: a very special atmosphere, in a modern university with experienced and friendly lecturers. I recommend it more than any other university.

Diane-Eléonore Desplanques

France

Buddy System

To ensure a smooth integration to the Icelandic way of student life, UNAK has a buddy system arrangement. This means that when you are accepted to the University, you will be assigned a buddy. All of our buddies are students at UNAK who have volunteered to help international students adapt during the first few weeks of their stay. Your buddy will, amongst other things:

- Meet you at the bus terminal or airport and take you to your accommodation
- Show you around the school premises
- Show you around the town centre
- Show you where it is most practical to do your shopping
- Teach you how to use the bus system

Furthermore, if you have any questions do not hesitate to send your buddy an e-mail, as our buddies are quite happy to assist you in any way they can. The extent of the relationship beyond this depends on how well the students get along. We try our best to provide all students with a buddy. As your buddy is a student at UNAK, he/she will be able to give you practical hints on student life in Akureyri, so we encourage all of our international students to use this opportunity to the fullest.

Student Life in Akureyri

The student life in Akureyri is an active one. Cafés, restaurants, nightclubs, a ski resort, and a skating rink are just a few popular student hangouts. The student union FSHA (fsha@fsha.is) represents students’ interests in social and academic affairs. Exchange students can apply for membership in the student union and only need to pay a small fee that will enable them to attend all events hosted by the student union. The primary objective of the union is to protect the interests of the students both within and outside it. The union simultaneously operates various committees and councils to strengthen union activities and cooperation with student unions in other universities.

Every semester the International Committee of the student union and the international coordinator of the University host a trip especially for exchange students and their buddies. We have done river rafting, a trip to Mývatn, skiing and mountain climbing to name a few. There are also activities during orientation day for new students, farewell dinners, Þorrablót, international day, pub quiz etc.
Polar Law describes the legal regimes applicable to the Arctic and Antarctica. Emphasis is placed upon relevant areas of public international law, such as environmental law; the law of the sea; questions of sovereignty and boundary disputes on land and sea; natural resources law; the rights of indigenous peoples in the North; self-government and good governance; and land and resource claims in polar regions.

Master’s Programmes in Polar Law
The Master’s programmes at the University of Akureyri are the first of their kind in the world and will provide a unique focus on Polar Law. They are designed for both lawyers (leading to the LL.M. degree, 120 ECTS or graduate diploma, 60 ECTS) and non-lawyers (leading to the M.A. degree, 120 ECTS), primarily as Master’s level programmes which prepare students for work in both the public and private sectors. All the Polar Law subjects are taught in English and applicants should have good written and spoken English skills. Exchange students from other universities (for instance, students enrolled at the University of the Arctic) and individuals working in related agencies or institutes may take individual courses in the Polar Law programmes. Such students will be individually assessed to determine whether they have sufficient preparation for the courses that they intend to take. The Polar Law programmes are the only full-time programmes taught in English at the University of Akureyri and run every other year. The deadline for non-EU/EEA students is the 1st of April and for EU/EEA students the deadline is the 5th of June.

On Completion of Studies
Studies in Polar Law prepare students for work in the public and private sectors, with different levels of government, with international organisations, the NGO sector, with indigenous peoples in the Arctic, and with universities and research institutions. The Master’s programmes (LL.M. and M.A.) also constitute good preparation for doctoral studies or further research on Polar issues.

More information about the Polar Law programmes can be found at english.unak.is.
Akureyri

a University Town

Akureyri. There are a lot of things to say about this steadily growing community of eighteen-thousand people living by the fjord of Eyjafjörður. A beautiful town, often referred to as the capital of the north. Ask an Akureyri local how the weather is and they will tell you it’s good. Always. Maybe weather is just a state of mind. In this case, a good state of mind. The University of Akureyri is a big part of the community, and Akureyri is probably Iceland’s only university town.

The Akureyri community is diverse and lively, with a range of cafés and culture-institutes, attracting talented people from all over the country. The town is vibrant with concerts, theatre, visual art and literature. It is also the hometown of the rock star of national poetry David Stefánsson and legendary hymn composer Matthias Jochumsson.

With everything being just around the corner it’s quite easy being green in Akureyri. It’s always just a ten-minute walk, if you run. Also, riding the bus is free, if you don’t feel like running.

Akureyri is a sporty town. Whether it’s swimming, football, team handball, gymnastics, volleyball, golf, marksmanship, hockey or curling, you can really go for it; the facilities are splendid. Also there are some regular gyms and fitness centres for those who want to mix it up.

Above all, Akureyri is surrounded with beautiful nature. Mountains to climb, or slide down, and the skies are filled with northern lights, most of the time, sometimes. See the waterfalls gushing down, Godafoss and Dettifoss, they are mind blowing. And revitalise in Mývatn’s nearby nature baths.

Explore, enjoy—Akureyri welcomes you.
The University of Akureyri

The University is divided into three schools; School of Business and Science, School of Health Sciences and School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The number of students is around 1,700 and members of staff are around 180. The academic year is divided into two semesters. The fall semester runs from mid-August to mid-December, and the spring semester is from January to June.

Undergraduate Degree and Diploma Programmes

Our Bachelor’s degrees are 180 ECTS and take a minimum of three years of full-time study to complete, except for the programmes in nursing and occupational therapy which are 240 ECTS and take 4 years to complete. All undergraduate programmes are taught in Icelandic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>ECTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biotechnology Studies</td>
<td>B.Sc.</td>
<td>180 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>B.Sc.</td>
<td>180 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Studies</td>
<td>B.Ed.</td>
<td>180 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries Science</td>
<td>B.Sc.</td>
<td>180 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism and Media Studies</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>180 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>180 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Studies</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>180 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resource Science</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>120 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>B.Sc.</td>
<td>240 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Therapy</td>
<td>B.Sc.</td>
<td>240 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>180 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>180 ECTS</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Graduate Degree Programmes and Postgraduate Diplomas

Our graduate degrees are 120 ECTS and take two years of full-time study to complete. The Polar Law programmes are the only programmes taught in English at the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>ECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>M.Sc.</td>
<td>120 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Science</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>120 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Studies</td>
<td>Postgrad. Dipl.</td>
<td>60 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Studies</td>
<td>M.Ed.</td>
<td>120 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational studies</td>
<td>Postgrad. Dipl.</td>
<td>60 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>M.Sc.</td>
<td>120 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>Postgrad. Dipl.</td>
<td>40 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resource Sciences</td>
<td>M.Sc.</td>
<td>120 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>M.L.</td>
<td>120 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polar Law</td>
<td>LL.M. / M.A.</td>
<td>90/120 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polar Law</td>
<td>Postgrad. Dipl.</td>
<td>60 ECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>180 ECTS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The University of Akureyri is a scientific and academic institute that conducts teaching and research in the academic disciplines of its schools. It is the largest university outside the capital, with strong ties to industries and various institutions in society with a varied offering of courses of study and distance learning programmes.

The International Office at the University of Akureyri is a central body in the promotion of international cooperation. It figures prominently in organising international conferences, assisting with student and faculty exchanges as well as establishing new exchange agreements.

The University of Akureyri Library places an emphasis on providing good service to students and ready access to various electronic databases and publications relating to the academic disciplines of the University. Library personnel offer advice and assistance in the search for information as well as teaching and training in information literacy, i.e. the students’ ability to find, use and assess information in a professional and responsible manner.

The Student Counselling Services assist current and prospective students at the University in choosing courses of study. The counsellor provides individuals and groups with counselling and guidance during their studies especially concerning improvements in study skills and techniques.

The IT Centre at the University provides students and staff with access to specialised technical equipment, software and guidance that enables them to utilise information technology in learning, teaching and research. The focus of the IT Centre’s personnel is on providing professional and personalised service to students and staff.

The Student Registry provides general services and information on UNAK, telephone answering service, issuing of certificates, procurement and the provision of office supplies to university staff. The tasks also include enrolment of new students, course and examination registration and cancellation.

UNAK Facilities offer very favourable conditions for its students in the form of new housing for teaching, a fitness and exercise room, good facilities in reading rooms, a cafeteria etc.

FÉSTA (festaha.is) operates well appointed student housing under its auspices and all students are entitled to apply for accommodation there.

“Exchange experience in Iceland was unique. First, being close to the most beautiful landscapes and views on Earth. Second, meeting fantastic people from all around the world. And last, a great modern university with such a helpful staff!”

Lukasz Kulczyk
Poland
Research at the University of Akureyri

Research is one of the fundamental aspects of the University of Akureyri. School and students are engaged in both basic and applied research. The focus is on research in UNAK’s selected fields of study and interdisciplinary studies of the Arctic. The objective is to consolidate the position of the University of Akureyri in relation to the business community and other collaborative partners in Iceland and abroad.

The University of Akureyri defines its purpose as creating “an environment and facilities for research and innovation that promote growth and progress in the Icelandic community.” The University of Akureyri is a growing research university, as evidenced by the considerable increase in the number of publications and citations in recent years. The University focuses on research that meets international criteria, particularly research related to Icelandic society and industry, as well as the unique standing the University has pertaining to the Arctic regions.

The research work is mostly in the hands of a qualified and experienced academic staff but the administration is in the hands of RHA - UNAK’s Research and Development Centre (rha.is). RHA operates to promote research activities and to strengthen practical cooperation with public and private enterprises. In addition there are research institutions that operate within and cooperate with UNAK (http://english.unak.is/research):

- Research Centre on Children's Literature
- Research Centre on Health Science at UNAK
- Centre of School Development at UNAK
- University of Akureyri Research Centre (RHA)
- Icelandic Tourism Research Centre
- Research Centre Against Violence
- Fisheries Science Centre

Arctic research institutions on UNAK’s campus affiliated with the University are the following:

- The Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network
- Stefansson Arctic Institute
- Polar Law Institute
- Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)
- Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)
- Northern Research Forum (NRF)
- The Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNÍS)
The University of Akureyri makes you feel welcome and participating straight away. The town is an extremely friendly and cozy place. The location, next to a fjord with huge mountains on each side, is breathtakingly beautiful. I liked the town and the university so much that I decided to come back for an extra term, even though it wasn’t planned in my curriculum.

Susanne Petersson
Sweden

Accreditation

All academic programmes at the University of Akureyri are accredited by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The accreditation is based on thorough reviews by three teams of international experts who all recommended to the Ministry that the academic programmes of the University should unconditionally be accredited. Among other things, the accreditation report stated that the university leadership, staff and students share a high degree of motivation to advance UNAK as a strong university.

ECTS Credits and Academic Structure

Icelandic university degrees correspond to Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral/PhD degrees. All the schools at the University of Akureyri offer Bachelor’s degrees, as well as Master’s degrees. The University of Akureyri uses the ECTS credit system. ECTS credits indicate the values allocated to the course units to describe the student workload required to complete them. They express a relative value, where 60 credits represent the workload of a year of study, usually 30 credits for each of two semesters. Course descriptions and their ECTS credit values are provided on our web page (english.unak.is).

The grading scale at the University of Akureyri ranges from 0-10. All schools and faculties require a minimum of 5.0 in each subject to pass.
Project Manager of
International Relations

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Useful Web Pages

english.unak.is
studyiniceland.is
visitakureyri.is
inspiredbyiceland.is