

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

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# INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY

2009–2013

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

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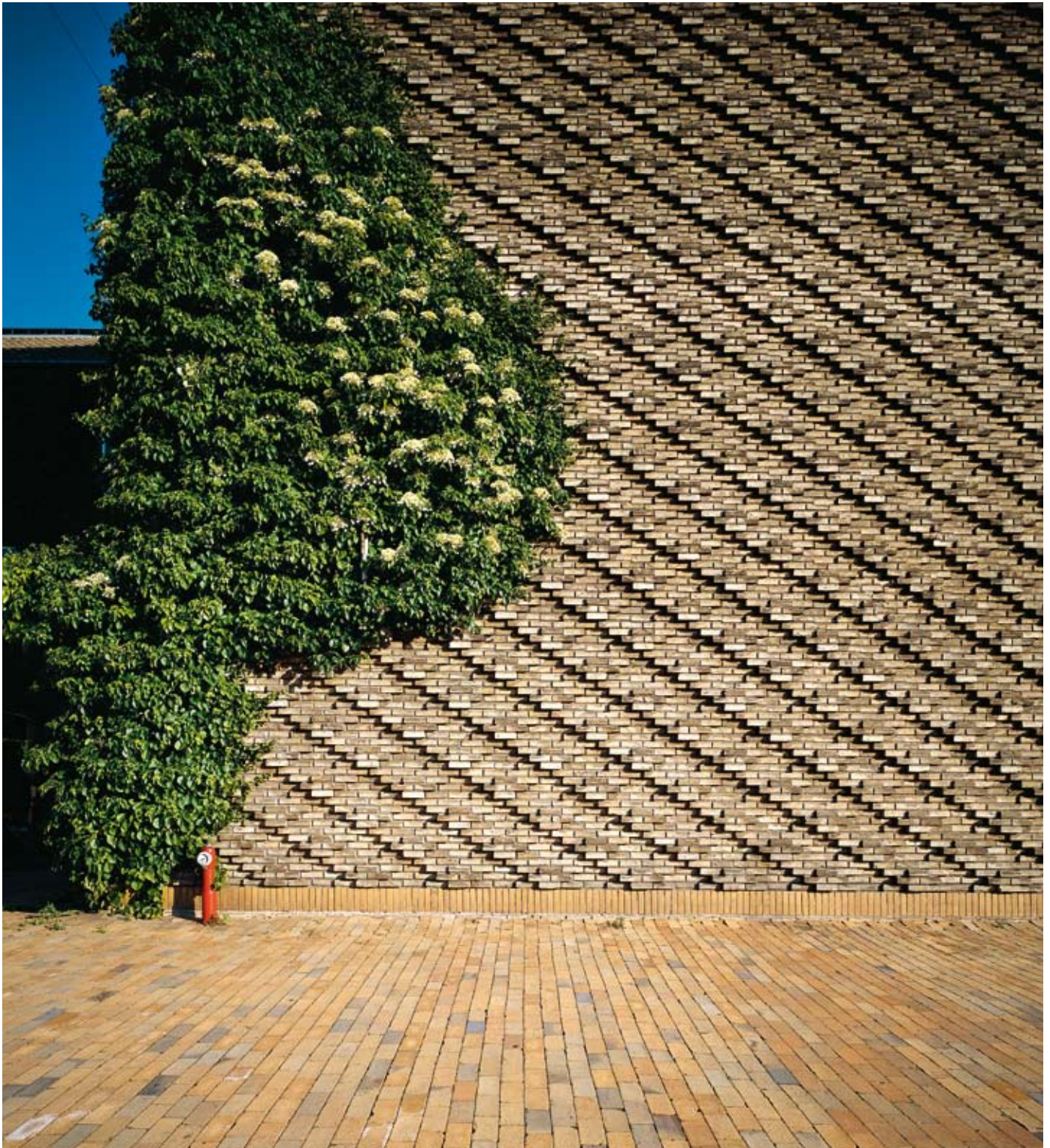


PHOTO: POUILLI HENRIKSEN

# AARHUS UNIVERSITY'S INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY 2009-2013

Aarhus University wishes to strengthen its position as a leading and visible international university. The ambition is that global collaboration becomes a natural element of all the university's core activities. A strong international involvement is fundamental to realizing the university's goals for research, talent development, education, consultancy services and knowledge transfer as described in the university's general strategy for 2008-2012.

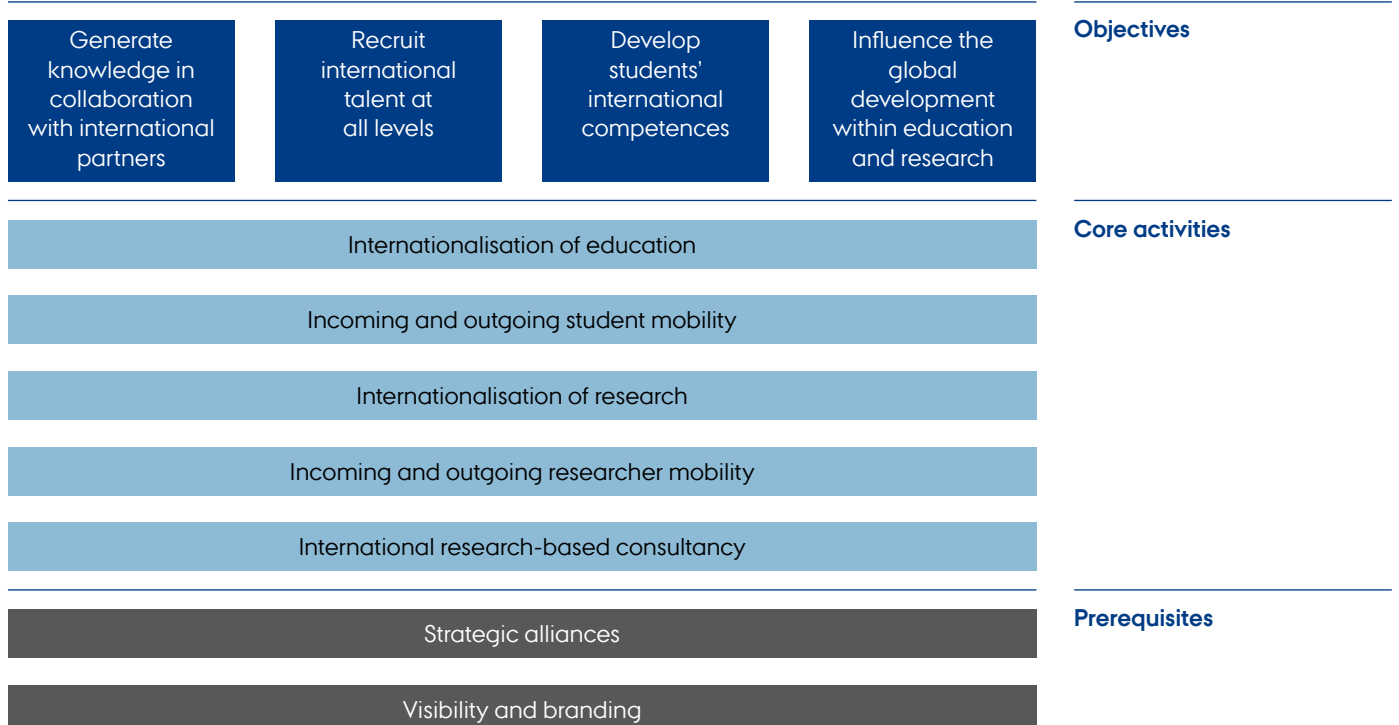
Globalisation has clearly made its mark on research and university education. International mobility among researchers and students has increased significantly in recent decades. Similarly, a growing part of research takes place in networks that extend across national borders. Close interaction with a wide range of players internationally has therefore become a basic requirement for exchanging talent, developing new knowledge and maintaining high quality standards.

In 2006 and 2007, Aarhus University merged with the Herning Institute of Business Administration and Technology, Denmark's National Environmental Research Institute, the Aarhus School

of Business, the Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences and the Danish University of Education. The university's traditional areas of strength within science, medicine, humanities, theology and social sciences – in combination with the merger – have given the university the size and academic breadth necessary to achieve international visibility and impact. Testimony to this fact is Aarhus University's ranking among the 100 top universities in the world.

The university will adopt a proactive approach to internationalisation and its ambition is to seize the opportunities that globalisation presents for developing knowledge and talent, and influencing the international development in research and higher education.

Aarhus University's international commitment for the period 2009-2013 will be centred on four main objectives. These are supported by a number of core activities that characterise the university's international involvement. Aarhus University will also focus on two areas that are prerequisites for achieving the strategy's objectives.



## PRINCIPLES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL WORK



PHOTO: POULE IB HENRIKSEN

Aarhus University will comply with a number of fundamental principles in its efforts to achieve the objectives described in this strategy.

Focus will be on international collaboration that supports the university's core activities and results in added value. Aarhus University will therefore emphasise reciprocity and international interaction in which all players stand to gain by exchanging knowledge and talent.

Aarhus University wishes to strengthen the international dimension in depth as well as breadth. This involves respect for academic differences within the university's nine main academic areas. However, the ambition is clear: internationalisation must be embedded within all academic environments and the university must create optimum conditions to enable all parts of the university to seize opportunities for international collaboration.

The university will apply a flexible and reasoned language policy. A limited number of Bachelor's degree programmes will be developed in English to ensure a balance in exchange programmes. At

the Master's and PhD level a significant number of programmes will be offered in English. Decisions regarding the language of instruction will be based on possibilities of attracting talent from abroad and providing Danish students with international competencies.

It is a firm principle that subjects offered in English must comply with the same quality standards as other degree programmes at Aarhus University. The university will therefore support lecturers in developing the necessary language and intercultural skills.

Geographically, Aarhus University aims to develop the existing broad collaboration with institutions in Europe and North America. At the same time, the university will focus on collaboration with China, which has made massive investments in research and university education in recent years. In addition, Aarhus University will participate in networks and activities that provide access to strong academic environments in other parts of the world, and cover areas that are expected to develop into key knowledge regions within a few years.

# INTERNATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION



PHOTO: LARS KRUSE / ALPHOTO

In order to attract talented international students, the university must offer a sufficient number of degree programmes in English. With its provision of more than 1,000 courses and 65 complete degree programmes in English, Aarhus University is well-placed to develop into a key player on the international market for higher education.

Internationalisation of degree programmes aims at much more than attracting students from abroad. International exposure is a key element in ensuring relevance, topical interest and quality in the degree programmes offered. In addition, students acquire important intercultural and linguistic qualifications by participating in courses in foreign languages alongside students from other parts of the world.

The European Bologna Process has been an important component in the efforts to create more coherent and comparable university degree programmes in Europe. The current trend is moving towards even closer collaboration through the development of joint degree programmes that draw on the strengths of universities in different countries.

## Priorities

Aarhus University wishes to strengthen the international dimension of its degree programmes. The students must be equipped to compete on the global job market and an optimum framework must be created for recruiting talented international students. In addition, Aarhus University wishes to be among the leaders in the development of higher education within Europe and to take the initiative to interact closely with international elite universities regarding the content and planning of the degree programmes.

## Focus areas

- **Availability of more subjects and complete degree programmes in English.** Based on a flexible language policy, Aarhus University wishes to increase the number of subjects offered in English. The subjects must be of the same high quality as degree programmes in Danish and it must be ensured that international students at Master's level have access to full-time programmes. The university will aim for a planning schedule that gives sufficient time to develop targeted international information campaigns.
- **Establishment of an international Aarhus Summer University.** Aarhus University plans to increase the offer of international summer schools. The aim is to create more flexibility in the degree programmes, provide good opportunities for lifelong learning, and boost the recruitment of international talent through increased visibility of the university's academic environments. The modules must qualify for credits and – if it is considered to add value – be made available in collaboration with strategic partner universities abroad.
- **Increased international collaboration regarding the content and planning of the degree programmes.** In the coming years, the university will focus on developing new, research-based Master's degree programmes in collaboration with one or more international universities. In close dialogue with relevant authorities, Aarhus University will endeavour to create a set of national rules and regulations in this area that support closer international collaboration about matters such as joint degree programmes.
- **Increased use of international quality standards.** Aarhus University will continually develop and promote its educational activities through international accreditation and evaluations. In addition, Aarhus University will maintain the structured and systematic approach in the field of education required to maintain its ECTS Label.

# INCOMING AND OUTGOING STUDENT MOBILITY



PHOTO: LARS KRUISE / AUPHOTO

Aarhus University has a distinctive international profile and offers high-quality research-based education. In addition, the university collaborates extensively with European and overseas partners regarding student exchange within the framework of the Erasmus programme and the transatlantic networks TASSEP and MAUI. This has made Aarhus University attractive for exchange students and international students pursuing a full degree.

Aarhus University receives approximately 1,000 exchange students per year and sends about 800 students on periods of study and training abroad. In addition, there are approximately 2,300 international students enrolled in full degree programmes at Aarhus University.

## Priorities

Worldwide, there is a considerable increase in the number of students who choose to study outside their home country. Aarhus University wishes to attract some of the best-qualified students in this target group. The intake of international students contributes to a dynamic learning environment and constitutes an important source of recruitment of talented researchers.

Aarhus University also wishes to give students at the university optimum conditions for engaging in international mobility. It will be an integrated component in the degree programmes to provide the students with competences that qualify them to work on a global job market.

## Focus areas

- **Strategic use of scholarships.** It shall be easy for international students to access information about all types of financial support at Aarhus University. The university will also ensure that its scholarships attract the most talented students.
- **Professional arrival and support system for incoming students from abroad.** To attract and retain international students, Aarhus University will develop service packages with clear standards that cover all types of international students. This service will include offers of accommodation, assistance with residence permits, a mentor programme, introductory courses, Danish lessons, career guidance, etc.
- **Alumni network for international students.** Aarhus University wishes to stay in contact with international graduates with a view to exchanging knowledge and developing the university's international network. An alumni network with relevant offers for international graduates will therefore be developed and integrated with similar offers for Danish students.
- **Increased number of Danish students going abroad.** Aarhus University wishes that its students develop a global outlook, intercultural understanding and language skills. All students at the university should have an opportunity to include in their study programme a period of study or training abroad that provides full credit transfer. The university should also offer professional guidance in connection with the planning of a stay abroad and establish a smooth process for preliminary approvals and credit transfers of study components completed at a foreign university.

## INTERNATIONALISATION OF RESEARCH

Aarhus University produces research of a high international standard. International evaluations of research impact place Aarhus University in the international top class – and in the world elite for a number of research groups.

The research covers the entire spectrum, ranging from basic to strategic and applied research as well as knowledge exchange. The university's academic breadth also provides good opportunities for developing knowledge that extends across traditional academic disciplines.

Achieving excellence requires close interaction with other international elite environments. Therefore, Aarhus University takes an active part in international research collaboration and has a considerable number of strategic alliances with universities and research institutions around the world. This is reflected in a dramatic growth in the number of scientific publications in collaboration with researchers abroad.

The university participates actively in the European Research Council and the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. In addition, the university collaborates closely on specific research projects with players in areas such as North America. Aarhus University acquires about DKK 100 million (approximately EUR 13.5 million) annually in research grants from the European Union and a similar amount from other international sources.

### Priorities

Aarhus University wishes to create optimum conditions for the internationalisation of research. Research is conducted at the decentralised level and the choice of international partners therefore rests with individual research groups. The university will ensure that strategic alliances reflect the needs and aspirations of the research environments for international networks.

Danish research councils provide support for projects with international participation and opportunities for obtaining external finance through the European Union and international foundations are on the rise. Aarhus University will give high priority to obtaining external funding for research in order to develop innovative knowledge in collaboration with public and private partners abroad.

### Focus areas

- **More research projects with international partners.** Aarhus University wishes to develop international contacts and research networks in order to strengthen the university's position among



Professor Jens Christian Skou, Aarhus University, is awarded the 1997 Nobel Prize in chemistry for his discovery of the 'sodium-potassium pump'

PHOTO: ANDERS WIKLUND, SCANPIX

the global elite. The university will therefore seek to include international partners in research projects where research groups see an added value in the form of knowledge, talent and higher quality.

- **Increased international research funding.** The university's Research Support Office will provide advice about funding opportunities, contribute to the preparation and quality assurance of applications and help manage complex international projects. In addition, Aarhus University will focus on creating solid partnerships with international elite institutions to develop joint project applications targeting European and North American research funds.
- **International publication of research results.** Aarhus University will make large parts of its research available via internationally recognised journals. The international peer-review that is required for articles to be accepted is a seal of quality that makes the university's research visible and underpins efforts to establish new working relations with foreign research groups. In addition, Aarhus University will contribute to international attempts at providing free access to research publications via Open Access.

# INCOMING AND OUTGOING RESEARCHER MOBILITY



PHOTO: LARS KRUISE / Aalborg PHOTO

Researchers are internationally mobile and increasingly move to the strongest academic environments and to those with access to funding. Aarhus University must take advantage of this. In the coming years, the supply of government globalisation funds and the demographic development will create many new opportunities for research careers at the university for highly qualified graduate students and researchers from abroad.

Aarhus University offers research talent development of an international standard and its PhD degree programmes are an essential basis for the university's activities. In its strategy, the university has made it a goal to double the number of researchers educated and trained at the university. In the PhD area, in particular, there will be a need for an increased effort to attract the best talents, nationally and internationally.

An important motivation for international researcher mobility is the opportunity to be part of unique environments that offer the freedom to pursue the unexpected. With its strong research environments, Aarhus University is well equipped to take part in the competition to attract the best researchers. However, if the university is to retain internationally recruited researchers, it requires a holistic approach that includes the researcher's family.

## Priorities

Aarhus University wishes to attract the best international researchers at an early stage of their careers. The university intends to focus on increased recruitment and retention via proactive efforts, attractive career pathways and professional reception of international PhD students and researchers from abroad.

At the same time, the university will give high priority to increasing the outgoing mobility of PhD students and researchers from Aarhus University. This will strengthen the academic development at the university and create new opportunities for developing knowledge in collaboration with other leading research environments.

## Focus areas

- **Professional efforts to recruit foreign research talent.** Career opportunities at Aarhus University will be made visible via advertisements in international journals and databases, proactive use of international networks, and personal contacts to qualified PhD students and researchers abroad. The university will also seek to attract recognised visiting professors to the university.
- **Development of an arrival and support system for incoming and outgoing researchers.** The university will establish an administrative unit to help foreign and Danish academic staff handle all necessary practical and legal challenges connected to stays at Aarhus University or postings abroad. In addition, the university will focus on the integration of incoming staff and their families into Danish society in close dialogue with the authorities and other key players in the university's immediate environment.
- **Promotion of outgoing mobility of researchers.** Aarhus University wishes to increase the incentives for international mobility of the university's PhD students and academic staff. This will be ensured through a focus on international experience when recruiting staff, by creating opportunities for sabbaticals and by allowing stays abroad to count as years of service. In addition, the PhD degree programmes at Aarhus University should include a period abroad to the greatest extent possible.

# INTERNATIONALISATION OF RESEARCH-BASED CONSULTANCY



PHOTO: JOHN KORSGAARD

Aarhus University provides research-based consultancy to both national and international partners. The university has national obligations, especially within the fields of the environment, agriculture and climate, as well as education. In addition, the university collaborates closely with Aarhus University Hospital about forensic medicine and health.

The research-based advice to international authorities has a wide scope. It includes tasks relating to the monitoring of international agreements, contributions to international reports and evaluations, as well as the completion of consultancy and project-based assignments abroad, e.g. in developing countries.

The international dimension is important as research-based consultancy services at Aarhus University are very often concerned with global issues. Sustainable solutions within areas such as climate and the environment require close international collaboration. In addition, many national rules and regulations are based on and regulated by international conventions and legislation.

## Priorities

Aarhus University will maintain a high-quality internationally oriented research base with a view to performing tasks on behalf of national and international authorities. In addition, the university intends to establish close contact with relevant foreign research environments and other players that require research-based consultancies.

## Focus areas

- **Development of the research base through international collaboration.** Aarhus University wishes to support and further develop its collaboration with internationally leading research environments within subject areas in which the university provides research-based consultancies. This will be achieved by strengthening the international mobility among the university's researchers and students and by attracting renowned researchers from abroad.
- **Consultancy services to key players abroad.** Aarhus University provides research-based advice to a number of international authorities and organisations. These relationships will be further developed. International investment banks, international authorities and development agencies procure and co-finance international advisory tasks that require a solid research base. Aarhus University will make its current research competences more visible to key players internationally and use the university's international networks to identify promising opportunities for collaboration.
- **Increased focus on developing countries.** An important element in Aarhus University's international consultancy services is the work targeting developing countries, primarily in Africa, but also in Asia and Latin America. The university wishes to give higher priority to these activities by strengthening its collaboration with national and international development organisations and universities. The ambition is to establish collaboration on research and consultancy services that support the goals of the developing countries.





## STRATEGIC ALLIANCES



PHOTO: POULE B. HENRIKSEN

Aarhus University is party to a wide range of bilateral and multilateral agreements on staff and student mobility and research collaboration.

As part of the Erasmus programme, Aarhus University has entered into about 780 agreements regarding student exchange with universities across Europe. In addition, it maintains more than 100 agreements with universities overseas and collaborates closely with the Nordic countries as part of the Nordplus programme. These agreements constitute the backbone of Aarhus University's student exchange activities.

Aarhus University is a member of a number of networks and alliances. Among the most prominent is the membership of the European Coimbra Group. Aarhus University is also part of the Utrecht Network, Euroscience, the Columbus Network, the Nordic University Association (NUS), the Southern African-Nordic Centre (SANORD), the Latin America-Nordic Centre (LANORD), the Nordic

Centre at Fudan University in China and the Nordic Centre in India (NCI). Finally, Aarhus University is taking part in the establishment of the Sino-Danish Centre for Education and Research in Beijing (SDC), in collaboration with other Danish universities, and the Graduate University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

In addition to participating in formal agreements, researchers and research groups at Aarhus University participate in a considerable number of more or less formalised research partnerships regarding research projects, the use of major research infrastructure and the mobility of young researchers. Agreements of this type are often driven by personal contacts and mutual academic interests.

### Priorities

Both for individual departments and for the university as a whole, Aarhus University wishes to establish and further develop strategic alliances with strong academic environments abroad. Central to this effort will be the need of the research environments for international networks and opportunities for increasing mobility among students and young researchers.

### Focus areas

- **Review of international collaboration agreements.** A review will be undertaken of all centralised and decentralised international collaboration agreements at Aarhus University. The aim is to give priority to agreements of strategic importance and a satisfactory level of activity.
- **Focus on collaboration with elite universities.** In the coming years, the university will focus on establishing and further developing its collaboration with elite universities within the strategy's geographical focus areas. Aarhus University will use its academic strength to proactively identify international partners that match the university's strengths.
- **Strong involvement in key university networks.** Aarhus University will participate actively in university networks that support the university's overall goals. Possible focus areas include a further extension of the collaboration within the Coimbra Group, and contributions in the form of research and accredited education to the Sino-Danish Centre for Education and Research in Beijing.

## VISIBILITY AND BRANDING

Aarhus University's position among the 100 top universities in the world gives it significant international visibility. However, international competition for the best students and researchers is fierce and a focused effort is therefore required to reach relevant target groups with information about the university's research and education opportunities.

In recent years, Aarhus University has made a concerted effort to spread knowledge of the university's education programmes abroad. As a result of the work with the European Credit Transfer System, all subject descriptions and level assessments are now available in English. At the same time, Aarhus University has developed printed and web-based information in English targeting an international audience. Finally, several faculties have been involved in international marketing of courses and programmes.

### Priorities

Aarhus University wishes to focus its international profile and be known as one of Europe's leading research and study environments. It will therefore be a priority for the university to create coherence and consistency in its international communication and ensure that it reaches relevant target groups. In addition, Aarhus University wishes to contribute to events in Denmark and abroad that promote knowledge of the university and support the strategy's other focus areas.

### Focus areas

- **International profile.** Aarhus University will launch initiatives abroad in order to attract talent at all levels. In particular, and embedded in the academic environments, it will focus on making the university more visible to potential postdoctoral scholars and international students at Master's and PhD degree levels. The university will use many different forms of communication, which in terms of content and delivery will be adapted to different relevant target groups.
- **Organising high-profile conferences with international participation.** Aarhus University will organise major international conferences with a view to making the university's research and competencies visible to an international audience. The conferences will reflect the university's strengths and be embedded in the academic environments.
- **Representation in key international forums in the university field.** Aarhus University will strengthen its profile and influence through leadership and representation in subject-specific and university-wide international forums such as the European University Association. The university will therefore encourage academic and administrative staff at all levels to represent the university in an international context.



PHOTO: JESPER RAAS / AU PHOTO

Example of Aarhus University's branding activities 2009

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

PHOTO: LARS KRUSE / AU-PHOTO



The university will adopt the principle of subsidiarity in its efforts to implement the strategy's objectives and activities. Aarhus University's international involvement is firmly based on quality in research and education in each of the nine academic areas. It is researchers and lecturers who have the greatest knowledge of how international collaboration can add value to the university.

Responsibilities placed at the central administrative level should be characterised by economies of scale and the potential for achieving synergies by coordinating efforts.

The main academic areas will be responsible for creating and maintaining academically based international collaboration that covers the strategy's five core activities. At the same time, support functions that are specific for the individual academic areas will be decentralised. Important tasks will include academic supervision of international students, the international

recruitment of research talent and the development of degree programmes in English.

User-friendly and efficient support functions that cut across all nine academic areas will be developed at the central administrative level. The objective is to coordinate and upgrade support for incoming and outgoing researchers and students. In parallel, capacity will be created to support promising partnerships, increasing the international visibility of Aarhus University and assist with the organisation of summer schools and major international events.

Aarhus University will develop close collaboration with public authorities and key players in the university's immediate environment. The aim is to create the best possible framework for receiving international students and foreign researchers, and integrating them and their families into the local environment.



PHOTO: POLU IB HENRIKSEN

## FACTS AND FIGURES

Institution: Aarhus University  
Founded: 1928  
Employees: 10,000  
Students: 37,000 (60 percent at graduate level)  
Turnover: 712 million EUR

### Academic areas:

- Faculty of Humanities
- Faculty of Health Sciences
- Faculty of Social Sciences
- Faculty of Theology
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Agricultural Sciences
- National Environmental Research Institute
- Aarhus School of Business
- Danish School of Education

### Centres of excellence:

- Centre for DNA Nanotechnology
- Centre of Functionally Integrative Neuroscience (CFIN)
- Centre for Geomicrobiology
- Centre for Carbonate Recognition and Signaling
- Centre for Massive Data Algorithmics (MADALGO)
- Centre for mRNP Biogenesis and Metabolism
- Centre for Oxygen Microscopy and Imaging (COMI)
- Centre for Black Sea Studies
- Centre for Research in Econometric Analysis of Time Series (CREATES)
- Centre for Insoluble Protein Structures (INSPIN)
- Centre for Water and Salt Research
- Centre for Materials Crystallography
- Centre for Quantum Geometry of Moduli Spaces
- Centre on Autobiographical Memory Research
- Centre for Membrane Pumps in Cells and Disease (PUMPKIN)

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