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Welcome to the University Centre of the Westfjords

Thank you for choosing to study with us at the University Centre of the Westfjords in Ísafjörður! You made a wonderful choice to study in Ísafjörður, a unique town on the edge of Europe.

The Westfjords are an exciting place to be. This huge peninsula with its forty-nine deep fjords is one of the most remote regions in Iceland and stands at the gates of the Arctic. In the Westfjords, Iceland is as you imagined it: magnificent and untouched. Fishing villages nestle in deep fjords between breathtaking mountains, and a new stretch of shoreline greets travelers as they round every headland. Here you will experience the tranquility of the countryside and the restlessness of living by the sea. You will breathe in the salty air while studying in an international context, with students and teachers coming from all around the world.

At the University Centre of the Westfjords, we look forward to you joining us in a friendly learning atmosphere where class work, group work, and field work are combined.

This brochure contains most of the information you will need before coming to Ísafjörður and will refer to many convenient websites for further information. We look forward to welcoming you to an inspiring program in the magnificent setting of the Westfjords!

Bestu kveðjur/Best Regards

The University Centre of the Westfjords Staff

Greetings from Ægir

Ægir, your student association, would like to welcome you to the Coastal Marine Management program and wild Westfjords! As students enrolled in this program you are automatically members of Ægir, the one and only student association in the Westfjords.

Ægir is here to represent your needs and interests both academically and socially. Ægir was the Norse god of the sea and, as a master brewer, was chief party organizer for the gods of Valhalla. Our goal as an organization is to uphold his maritime interests while keeping his party animal image alive. We are committed to protecting the academic rights of students, organizing fun and educational activities, serving as a channel of communication between students and administration all while evoking the principles and practices of environmental sustainability.

We will be in contact with you soon regarding orientation activities. Please contact us with any questions you may have regarding student life in the Westfjords.

Best Wishes,

Daniel Metzger (Chair of Ægir)

aegir@uwestfjords.is

About the University Centre of the Westfjords

- Founded in 2005
- Has forty founding members, including all of the country's institutions of higher education and the research institutions/branch offices in the Westfjords
- Located in Ísafjörður, the largest town of the Westfjord peninsula
- A dynamic, innovative and forward-looking institution
- Provides students with free Internet access in the University Centre
- Excellent support for our international student population
- Offers several programs in cooperation with other universities
- Offers an international master's program, accredited by the University of Akureyri (<http://www.unak.is>)

Library

The University Centre doesn't have a library of its own but works in close co-operation with the library in Ísafjörður, the University library of Akureyri and the National library in Reykjavík as well as speciality libraries such as the library of the Marine Research Institute. The library is located nearby in the Culture House in Eyrartún. The library was founded in 1889 and offers a good collection of books in English and other languages. The duration of book-loans is usually one month. The library also has a selection of DVDs, CDs and videos.

In the library there are also good reading facilities, with Wi-Fi availability. Opening hours are from 13.00-18.00 on weekdays and from 13-16 on Saturdays. To be able to take books or DVDs on loan you need to have a library card, which you can buy at the library for only 2.200 ISK.

For more information, please visit: <http://safn.isafjordur.is/>

Information Technology

Students are expected to bring their own computers, as there is no computer room in the University Centre. There is one computer for public use at the University Centre. However, the whole University Centre is a WiFi hotspot so you will be able to connect with your computer anytime the building is open, from 8.00 – 23.00.

MySchool

MySchool is the University Centre's Intranet which you will be given access to upon arrival. Using MySchool you will learn about new courses, announcements, grades and upcoming events, such as our Friday lunch lecture series. You will also be given a University Centre email address once you arrive.

Master's program in Coastal and Marine Management

Coastal and Marine Management is a demanding and ambitious master's program in environmental and resource management. The program is cross-disciplinary and prepares students for diverse and exciting positions in both the public and private sectors. Among the fields, which the master's program in Coastal and Marine Management prepares students to work in are resource and land use planning, environmental impact assessment, consulting work, teaching and research. The program is internationally oriented and taught in English, as both students and instructors come from a diverse range of countries. The master's program in Coastal and Marine Management brings together people of different backgrounds who share their experience, knowledge, and ideas in a small-scale, creative and fertile intellectual environment, with the goal of finding ways of using natural resources in a sustainable way.

Academic Calendar

Our academic year is divided into intensive core and elective courses. Classes in the autumn semester will start around the 1st of September and continue generally until the middle of December. Classes resume again in the first week of January and continue until Easter. After Easter break, classes will continue until the beginning of July. When all classes are complete, students will begin working on their Master's thesis.

For specific dates, please visit:

http://www.uwestfjords.is/masters_program/program_organization/

Orientation

You should plan on being in Ísafjörður at least two days prior to the beginning of class. During those two days there will be an orientation at the University Centre.

For more information, please visit: http://www.uwestfjords.is/masters_program/

Language of Instruction

As our program gathers students and instructors from around the globe, the principal language of instruction is English. Students may use research available to them in their mother tongue but all work is to be completed in English.

Other Programs Offered at the University Centre

Icelandic Courses

The University Centre offers a variety of Icelandic courses; three-week courses, one-week course, weekend courses and two courses in Gísla saga and classical Icelandic language taught both in English and German.

All students are invited to participate in the Icelandic language and culture intensive for three weeks over the summer before they begin their studies. There is charge for the program, but we highly encourage all of our students to participate. The course will help you acclimatize to Iceland, its language and its people.

If you cannot make it to this course or you would like to continue your Icelandic language study, there is an adult education centre within the same building as the University Centre which offers Icelandic language. Just ask the University staff upon arrival.

For more information and time schedules, please visit:

http://www.uwestfjords.is/icelandic_courses/

Summer and Field Schools

The University Centre offers a wide variety of summer schools and also helps to create field schools tailor made to the needs of individual institutions. For example, the University Centre works in close co-operation with the Museum of Jón Sigurðsson and has been arranging summer courses at Hrafnseyri since 2006. Here, respected social scientists, such as Liah Greenfeldt, of the Boston University, and Ole Wæver, of the Copenhagen University, have lectured. Regular guests during summer are the field school groups from the University of Manitoba, Canada and the School of International Training/World Learning in Vermont, USA.

For more information and time schedules, please visit:

http://www.uwestfjords.is/summer_schools/

Arriving in Iceland

Coming to Iceland: Important Matters

Before coming to Iceland, it is important to inform yourself about various issues that need to be considered when staying in a foreign country.

For specific and detailed information, please visit: www.studyiniceland.is. This website offers important information for both EU and non-EU/EEA citizens about issues such as:

- Residence permit
- Work permit
- Health Insurance/Health Care
- Medical Examinations
- Cost of Living
- Money and Credit Cards
- Banks and accounts
- Accommodation
- Public holidays
- Religious practices
- What to pack
- Iceland in general
- Travel opportunities
- General practicalities

On the website, you will also find information about arrival in Keflavik and the best and cheapest way to get from Reykjavik to Ísafjörður. You can also contact the website of the Multicultural and Information Center: www.mcc.is/english.

In case you need to stay for a night in Reykjavik, here is a selection of inexpensive hostels:

- Reykjavik Backpackers: <http://www.reykjavikbackpackers.com/>
- Reykjavik City Hostel: <http://www.hostel.is/>
- Reykjavik Downtown Hostel: <http://www.hostel.is>

Life in Ísafjörður

The Westfjords are the most remote region in Iceland and stand at the gates of the Arctic. Still Ísafjörður, the largest town in the region, has all the services that you will need. The town has about 3.000 inhabitants, but together with the neighboring villages there are 5.000 inhabitants in the Ísafjörður region and 7.100 in the Westfjords as a whole.

Ísafjörður stands on a narrow spit in the Skutulsfjörður fjord. The town is surrounded by mountains which offer endless opportunities to enjoy nature and the wilderness during all seasons of the year, and superb winter sports facilities. The town is known for its rich cultural life. Music and arts have a long tradition and firm roots in the town's history. Among the larger cultural events in Ísafjörður is the rock music festival *Aldrei fór ég suður* ('I never went south'), which is held during Easter, along with the Ski-festival held at the same time. These events bring in thousands of visitors each year. These are only some of many events and festivals each year in the area, and it's safe to say that everyone should be able to find something to match their interests.

Useful Locations and Stores

- *Banks*

There are two Icelandic banks that have branches in Ísafjörður: Landsbankinn, and Íslandsbanki. They are both located on the main street, Hafnarstræti, in Ísafjörður. Banking hours are weekdays from 9.15 to 16.00.

- *Post office*

The post office (Ice. Pósturinn) is located downtown, in a building better known as Neisti (same as Samkaup). Pósturinn is open weekdays from 9.00 to 16.30.

- *Phone companies*

Two phone companies have branches in Ísafjörður. Vodafone is located in downtown Ísafjörður, within a company called Póllinn, Pollgata 2, phone: + 354 456 3092. Síminn Phone Company is represented by Netheimar at Aðalstræti 20.

For more information on phone issues and Internet, please visit: <http://www.studyiniceland.is/page/practicalities>

- *Supermarkets*

There are two food stores in Ísafjörður: Bónus and Samkaup. Samkaup is a bit more expensive, and it's located in a building called Neisti, in downtown Ísafjörður. Samkaup, in some respects, offers higher quality products and more variety, but Bónus is comparatively cheaper. Bónus is a 3-5 minute drive and 30 minute walk from the downtown, in an area usually referred to as the Fjörður (fjord). The bus (strætó) runs there regularly during the weekdays. Samkaup is open weekdays from 10.00 to 20.00, Saturdays from 10.00 to 20.00

and on Sundays from 12.00 to 20.00. Bónus is open Mondays to Thursdays from 12.00 to 18.30, Fridays from 10.00 to 19.30, Saturdays from 10.00 to 18.00 and Sundays from 12.00 to 18.00.

For information on Icelandic food, please visit the Shopper's Guide to Icelandic Food: <http://bondi.is/Pages/908>

There is also a liquor store in Ísafjörður, called Vínbúdin. It is located in downtown Ísafjörður at Adalstræti 20. The store is open Monday to Thursday from 12.00 to 18.00 (11.00 to 18.00 during the summer), Fridays from 11.00 to 19.00, and on Saturdays from 11.00 to 14.00 (11.00 to 16.00 during the summer).

- *Shopping*

Most stores, (clothing, books, etc.) are located on the main street and further down near the University Centre. Most of these are open weekdays from 10.00 to 18.00 and Saturdays from 10.00 to 14.00.

- *Swimming pool*

The swimming pool is located on Austurvegur 9 and is open weekdays 07.00 to 08.00 and 19.00 to 21.30, and Saturdays and Sundays from 10.00 to 17.00. There is a small entrance fee of 510 kr., but for regular guests coupons is a good choice to cut costs. For information about other swimming pools in the area, please visit: www.swimminginiceland.com

- *Cinema*

The cinema is located in downtown Ísafjörður and usually shows one film every one or two weeks. For information on movie times and dates, you can visit its Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1491260947&ref=ts>

- *Sports*

There are various sport clubs active in Ísafjörður, ranging from football to horseback riding, to running, skiing and yoga. The best way to get information about these sport clubs is to contact the local sports association at <http://www.hsv.is>. There are also several gyms, of which Studio Dan offers a student discount. For more information, please ask the University staff or visit www.studiodan.is.

- *Churches*

The largest parish is the Lutheran Church, located at Sólígata 1, a tall yellow building. The church is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, which is the state church. There are services every Sunday at 11.00. The church is open daily from 10 to 16. Another church is Hvítasunnukirkjan, the Pentecostal church, located in Fjarðarstræti 24, with gatherings every Sunday at 17.00. The Catholic Church has a chapel in Mjallargata 9 where Mass is held every Sunday at 11.00. Confessions are half an hour before Mass or when needed by contacting the priest, tel. + 354 456 3804.

There is also a Baha'i community and their contact is Dagný Einarisdóttir, tel. + 354 866 5316. Soka Gakkai International is a Buddhist network also represented in Ísafjörður and their contacts are Sigríður J. Sigurjónsdóttir and Steingrímur Einarsson, tel: + 354 45 4167. Finally, there is the Jehovah Witnesses group, located in Aðalstræti 19 and may be contacted by phone: + 354 554 6246.

- *Pubs, Cafés, and Restaurants*

There are several cafes, bars and restaurants located in downtown Ísafjörður. For a detailed overview, please visit: http://www.isafjordur.is/where_to_eat/

- *Edinborg Cultural Centre*

The cultural centre is located at Aðalstræti 7. For more information, please visit: <http://www.edinborg.is/>

- *Small children activities*

There are two kindergartens in Ísafjörður and they accept children from the age of one year. For availability in the kindergartens contact the Municipal Office on the 2nd floor of the Town Hall. If there isn't space your name will be put on a list and you will be informed of options in home daycare (dagmamma).

The hospital offers swimming classes for babies. Please call there for further information. The Lutheran Church hosts a mommy morning (mömmumorgun) where you can meet other moms. The library has a children's section that is lovely to visit.

Students who are citizens of countries outside the EEA zone and wish to bring children/family to Iceland are encouraged to get acquainted with the regulations of the Icelandic Directorate of Immigration: <http://www.utl.is/index.php?lang=en>

Usually, the best way to know what's going on in town or in the area is to check the community boards at Bónus and Samkaup. You will also see many events advertised in the windows of many stores. For more information on events in Ísafjörður, please also visit the local paper's website www.bb.is as well as www.isafjordur.is/english.

If you are interested to keep up to date with the Icelandic news, you should visit www.grapevine.is, www.icelandreview.com and www.icenews.is

The End of Your Stay

National Registry

International students must go to the National Registry (where you got your kennitala) with a change of address form which can be downloaded from www.thjodskra.is. The form will ask for a new address here in Iceland, ignore that, and put in your home country address. You may fax this form to +354 569 2949 after leaving Iceland, but we don't advise this, please give in the form before leaving Iceland.

Accommodation

Speak with your landlord regarding any expectations the landlord may have before your departure regarding cleanliness, etc. Misunderstandings can lead to extra bills upon your departure. Please note that often the terms of notice state giving 3 months notice before departure.

Important Contacts and Useful Links

The University Centre of the Westfjords

Sudurgata 12

400 Ísafjörður

Tel: + 354 450 3040 | info@uwestfjords.is | www.uwestfjords.is

Ísafjörður Hospital

450-4500

Tel: + 354 450 4500 | www.fsi.is

Doctor on call + 354 863 8000

Emergencies (ambulance, police or fire dept.) : dial **112**

Ísafjörður Dentists

Torfnæs (same building as the hospital)

Tel: + 354 456 3737

University of Akureyri Library

Sólborg, Norðurslóð 2

600 Akureyri

bsha@unak.is | www.unak.is

National and University Library of Iceland

Arngrímshgata 3, 107 Reykjavík

Tel: +354 525 5600 · Fax: +354 525 5615

lbs@bok.hi.is | www.bok.hi.is

For more useful websites and important contact information, please visit:
http://www.studyiniceland.is/page/useful_links