

Core narrative

for the Faculty of
Natural Sciences at
Aarhus University



The researchers, teachers, politicians, business people and stakeholders who founded Aarhus University in 1928 were pioneers. It was the driving force back then, that knowledge at an international level should be generated, developed and communicated in Aarhus and not just in Copenhagen. Their keywords were – and still are – courage, skill and persistence. Located close to the city - and, today, in the city centre - the university developed along with society, because both the city and the university depend on the life and the knowledge originating in both places.

Pioneers within natural science also established the Faculty of Natural Sciences in 1954. The Faculty was established as a collection of existing departments within the classical science subjects of physics, chemistry, mathematics and geography, and shortly after it expanded to include astronomy and biology. Since it was established, the Faculty has been at the forefront of developing new courses and programs that have later become independent departments, e.g. computer science (from 1971 and from 1998 as an independent department), molecular biology (from 1968) and nanoscience (from 2002).

The Faculty of Natural Sciences has grown via ambitious researchers and curious students who have moved the boundaries and defined new fields of research and new departments, and thus defined the Faculty as it stands today.

PIONEERING SPIRIT, COLLABORATION AND AMBITION FORGE STRONG BASIC RESEARCH IN NATURAL SCIENCE

The values from 1928 have been passed on: science pioneers, with focus on world-class education and basic research. Thanks to courage, skill, enthusiasm and persistence, subjects and research that started as niche areas have developed into full-fledged subjects and research areas. We will continue to be recognised for these qualities.

The Faculty of Natural Sciences is thus based on basic research, the pursuit of excellence, curiosity and focus on contributing talented graduates and research-based solutions to societal challenges. The pioneering spirit characterises Natural Sciences: We have a strong and ambitious community in which talented students can become an active part of laboratory research, fieldwork and the development of theoretical subjects. We have a flat structure, high ambitions and a strong international orientation. At the Faculty, we strive to be among the best in the world, and we know that great results are created by exceptional and ambitious researchers. We are proud to have a vibrant and collaborative study and research environment, and behind every major result is important collaboration between researchers, students, technicians and administrative staff. The Faculty will define frameworks to support the continued development of strong academic environments.

By working together across departments and centers, we have a tradition of creating degree programs and research environments that would be almost impossible to establish at a single department or center. A good example of this is iNANO, where researchers from many departments and faculties have been forging a joint platform across academic boundaries since 2002. On the basis of our strong core disciplines, we will develop our interdisciplinary collaboration further in the years to come.

At the Faculty, we grow through our pioneering spirit, curiosity, skill, basic research, ground-breaking results and persistence. This requires room for ideas, room for research to thrive, and room to develop new methods of teaching, new ways of working and new research fields.

When organisations grow, so does interest from society and its need for governance and regulation. This is also the case for Aarhus University and the Faculty of Natural Sciences. The number of rules concerning education, research, employment and international collaboration has grown along with the university environment and our Faculty. Rules support and provide a secure framework for the development of free research and opportunities for development, collaboration and innovation. We constantly challenge ourselves to further streamline our processes, so that we can spend more of our time developing our core tasks *together*: delivering world-class education and research.

WE NURTURE CURIOSITY AND SHARE OUR KNOWLEDGE

Not many large university faculties can expand in a coherent location in a city centre, where the cultural life of the city is just outside the door. But we can!

We reap the benefits of our unique and cohesive location in the heart of the city, in the centre of Denmark, and in the centre of the world, with close ties to surrounding society – public institutions, companies and educational institutions – and to international universities and research environments. The IT City Katrinebjerg is a good example of an environment in which researchers, students and companies have been forging a new and vibrant ecosystem for IT research and digitalisation since 1999. We will continue to provide the framework for the dynamic academic communities of the future across organisational boundaries.

At the Faculty, we lead the way in efforts to promote societal interest in the natural science, and to stimulate curiosity and the joy of discovering new things. We will contribute efforts to stimulate young people's curiosity for natural science - from primary/lower secondary school, through upper secondary school and onwards to university. For example, the Science Museums and our popular Public Lectures on Natural Sciences, with many thousands of participants, play a key role, and we will develop this even more for the generations to come.

We will develop our collaboration internally at the Faculty and with other faculties in order to find answers and solutions to how new research can help create a better world. And we have a clear ambition to communicate new research results openly and widely, not only to the people who will apply them but to everyone interested in gaining insight and knowledge. We have the courage to think across departments and faculties, and we reach out to companies and organisations that share our thirst for knowledge and insight.

SUPPORTING TALENT AND CULTIVATING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Faculty of Natural Sciences offers an ideal framework for researchers and students to exploit their curiosity and talent and to participate in the top of the international research communities. With room to follow your curiosity comes the responsibility and freedom to develop your talent. Therefore, students, teachers, laboratory technicians, researchers and administrative staff alike have an obligation to develop their skills and produce more and greater results. At the Faculty, we are recognised for striving for ultimate quality: in our degree programmes and teaching, in our research and in the way in which we engage with the world. We are driven by our desire to be at the top of our class, internationally!

Natural science is inherently global. The global community has succeeded in advancing and developing research and changing society by working together across national borders, businesses and universities. We are already part of the global university and research environment, and we are working to be even more visible, both nationally and internationally.

The Faculty has managed to forge an international quality research infrastructure within the framework of a large campus centrally located in Aarhus. At the same time, our researchers own, operate or participate in international research infrastructures in the Arctic, at CERN, ESS and MAX IV in Lund, the Canary Islands and many other places. And we have partnerships all over the world that we will continue to develop.

We are constantly reaching out to the international research community that we are part of - by travelling abroad and by attracting researchers to conferences and positions in Aarhus. We welcome international researchers and students with openness and responsiveness. They should feel that they are even more seen, included and welcome.

WORLD-CLASS DEGREE PROGRAMMES

We offer and develop world-class degree programmes in which academic excellence and didactics go hand in hand throughout the entire course of study. The degree programmes at Natural Sciences attract dedicated and talented students who, throughout their studies, immerse themselves and hone their skills in the fields of study at the Faculty. One of the particular characteristics of our programmes is close integration between research and education, where internationally recognised researchers provide teaching, and where students are involved in research projects during their studies.

Students should also be clear about how a career path with a degree within natural science can be followed in the private or public sector, e.g. at an upper secondary school, a private company, as an entrepreneur or as a researcher at the university. Regardless of what a student chooses, it is our ambition for all students to be even better prepared and ready to follow the path they choose. That is why we must continually develop our career guidance and our teaching to enhance student awareness of all the options available.

ATTRACTIVE AND STIMULATING WORKPLACE

We will develop the Faculty to become an even more attractive workplace for ambitious researchers, teaching staff and administrative personnel – those we produce in-house as well as those we recruit. We will actively reach out and engage with the rest of the world to recruit the best.

We believe that world-class comes from developing and supporting individual careers, so that thoughts, ideas and research initiatives can flourish. The Faculty focuses on clear career paths and clear expectations, so that everyone can see the conditions and the expectations for their continued development. We are committed to a proactive approach to gender equality and diversity as an integral part of our efforts to recruit and to create a good workplace culture.

Pioneers made Aarhus University. Pioneers and ambitious researchers created the Faculty and the departments. And curiosity, excellent research and ambition will give us future degree programmes of the highest quality, more and greater research results, international collaboration and the ability to attract, retain and develop talent.

We will continue to develop our pioneering spirit as well as world-class research and degree programs.

Pioneering spirit,
collaboration and ambition
forge strong basic research
in Natural Science



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