WELCOME

A warm welcome to the United Nations University Gender Equality Studies and Training (UNU-GEST) Programme. In this handbook you will find useful information for your stay in Iceland during the UNU-GEST post-graduate degree programme (30 ECTS). We recommend that you read this handbook carefully now but once in Iceland we will refer you to Moodle website for each module accessed through Ugla, the university intranet, were supporting material for the programme and its individual modules are stored. You should consult Moodle for information every week as well as your university e-mail account.

We hope your time in Iceland will be one of growth and learning.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

UNU-GEST Programme 2018
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1. THE 2018 UNU-GEST POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of this programme is to educate and train women and men in gender equality methods and theories, and to strengthen their professional capacities for advancing and implementing gender sensitive projects in their home countries. The programme’s curriculum covers gender, development and security studies, incorporates interdisciplinary approach, and encourages intellectual debates and methodological practices.

The programme aims to enhance understanding of the structures and mechanisms that need to be in place to promote gender equality within global and local contexts. The programme emphasises critical thinking skills and aims to equip fellows with the essential analytical tools for understanding gender equality issues and their impacts on social development and public policy.

The teaching methods employ interactive approaches, with emphasis on transnational dialogue, cultural difference, and social diversity. Fellows and instructors are encouraged to develop a sense for how meaning is transformed when travelling from one culture to another.

The main objectives are to bring about the development of:

- Capacity of professionals and organisations working to advance gender equality in developing, conflict and post-conflict societies.
- An understanding of the main issues in international gender equality studies and how they apply to different cultures, and how they are intersected by ethnicity, sexuality, religion, race and class.
- Skills in gender analysis and in dissemination of knowledge about gender equality methods.
- The capacity to engage in critical and transnational dialogue on gender equality issues.
- Ability to organise and manage projects focusing on gender equality.
- A sense of their own social and geographic location, and of how meanings of main concepts and practices are changed through transnational transfers and dialogues.
2. ORGANISATION

In 2018, the UNU-GEST Programme will consist of six modules, each equivalent to 5 ECTS.¹ At the end of the programme, UNU-GEST in conjunction with the University of Iceland will award a Post-Graduate Diploma in International Gender Studies to successful fellows. The diploma yields 30 ECTS, which corresponds to half a year’s work at a post-graduate level. Graduated fellows receive an official Post-Graduate Diploma Certificate from the University of Iceland and a joint certificate from the United Nations University and the University of Iceland.

If you are undertaking or are considering taking a Master’s degree in the future, you may be able to use these credits towards your degree if your area of study is within the sphere of gender-related studies. Inquire with your university when applying for your future studies.

In the spring term of 2018, the following modules, which are each 5 ECTS, will be taught as part of the UNU-GEST programme.

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Classrooms will be announced in January alongside the final syllabus and overview for the 2018 spring term. Below is the UNU-GEST Diploma Programme (30 ECTS) 2018 academic calendar draft, which is subject to minor change.

¹ European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, ECTS, which are the credit points earned for each module. This standardized credit system is intended to ensure appropriate workload between university courses.
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3. MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

Module 1: Theories, Concepts and Systems of Gender

**Brief description**

The purpose of this module is to introduce fellows to basic theories and concepts in gender studies. Through a combination of readings, lectures and in-depth class discussion, students will gain a sense of their own localization within these issues and develop an understanding of how social constructions of gender and sexuality might be changed through transnational transfers and dialogues. Special attention will be paid to how these issues play out in “developing” conflict and post-conflict societies. Gender equality and minority group issues are explored from a historical perspective and a human rights context. Students will be encouraged to think about and "map" which differences matter in the societies and organisations they come from, as well as reflect on which differences are seen to matter in a more global perspective. These include differences in terms of religion, sexuality, ethnic group, etc. Students will learn about the main international policies, agreements, and instruments, such as gender mainstreaming, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and institutions dealing with gender equality and women’s rights. Women’s political participation and women’s involvement in decision making processes at all levels are explored, as well as the need for institutional reform and for transforming gendered traditions, values, and symbol systems. The role of civil society and gender equality advocates in women’s movements are also discussed.

Topics include: gender, sex, sexualities, social constructionism, essentialism, gender mainstreaming, femininities and masculinities, queer studies, rights based approaches, empowerment, globalisation, colonialism/post-colonialism, feminism/s, welfare, symbol systems.

**Learning outcomes**

After successful completion of this module fellows should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between culture, sex and gender.
- Understand and recognise main approaches to gender equality, including gender mainstreaming and rights based approaches.
- Outline how these concepts have been appropriated in relation to the “developing”, conflict and post-conflict societies.
- Understand how gendered positions are intersected by race, class, sexuality, religion and ethnicity.
- Discuss and produce strategies for how women and minority groups can be empowered and given voice in public decision-making.
- Understand how public institutions and cultural symbol systems are gendered.

**Teachers**

Dr. Jón Ingvar Kjaran, Milica Minić and Dr. Ulrike Auga and guest lecturers.
Module 2: Practical Tools for Gender Sensitive Projects

Brief description
This module introduces methods and provides fellows with tools and skills to conduct gender-sensitive analyses of social and cultural conditions, information and policies, and to participate in developing gender-responsive policies and projects. Evidence shows that gender disparities affect the ability to achieve broad-based economic growth and development — therefore, we will examine gendered roles within the formal and informal economy by applying different practical and theoretical frameworks in order to determine how different configurations of inequality affect the projects’ effectiveness and their outcomes. Economic approaches to development and gender responsive budgeting are introduced as tools to advance gender equality. This course will also include practical training in project management, and offer knowledge and techniques to plan and develop projects to ensure intended results. Leadership skills and ways to build good relations in project management teams are also discussed.

Learning outcomes
After successful completion of this module fellows should be able to:

- Use practical tools for mainstreaming gender equality into policy, programme and project interventions as well as for monitoring and evaluation.
- Understand the importance of psychology behind good relations in project management.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of results-based project management.
- Design initiatives which address gender equality priorities in their communities.
- Analyse and address development issues, as well as how to design and facilitate projects.
- Assess the implications of any planned action, including policies and programmes, for women and men respectively.
- Apply knowledge of gender responsive budgeting and have the ability to identify gaps between policies and budget allocations.
- Use gender responsive budgeting as a planning strategy as well as gender auditing.

Teachers
Erla Hlín Hjálmarsdóttir, Dr. Elizabeth Klatzer, Kirstín Flygenring and Milica Minić.
Module 3: Gender, Peace and Security

Brief description
The aim of the course is to increase the fellows’ ability to understand, discuss, and convey knowledge of the gender dimensions of security, especially with regards to international legal obligations, UNSC resolutions, security sector reform and emergency operations. It examines, among other things, the concept of human security versus national security and the role of women in conflicts, peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction. Gender-based violence and sexual violence as a tactic of warfare will be of special focus.

Learning outcomes
After successful completion of this module fellows should:

- Be able to understand and explain the links between gender and security.
- Have the ability to outline positions and roles of women in conflicts, peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Have the capacity to analyse and demonstrate key issues and possible solutions related to gender and security in their home countries.
- Be able to think up strategies for empowering women in conflicts, and increasing their involvement in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Understand how gender based violence and sexual violence are used as tactics of warfare.

Teachers
Dr. Cynthia Enloe, Dr. Marsha Henry and guest lecturers.

Module 4: Gender, Health, Violence and Bodily Integrity

Brief description
This module focuses on gender relations and norms, and the resulting behaviours, which affect physical and mental health and bodily integrity. The module will explore how gender differences and inequalities result in unequal health status and access to health care. The module will also explore gender-based violence (GBV) within the framework of human rights and how unequal power relations contribute to GBV and the resulting physical, mental and economic consequences. A variety of strategies to address health challenges will be introduced and discussed including examples of community mobilisation interventions.

Learning outcomes
After successful completion of this module fellows should be able to:

- Understand the link between gender, health and well-being, and ill-health.
- Understand why health interventions and campaigns need to address gender and target communities’ needs and worldview.
- Understand a human rights-based and gender-responsive approach to policies and programmes for health, in particular mental, sexual and reproductive health.
- Understand the gendered aspects of violence and be familiar with its different manifestations.
- Understand how gender-based violence is a violation of human rights.
- Be familiar with the risk factors and consequences of gender-based violence and the different strategies to address gender-based violence.

**Teachers**

Kristjana Sigurbjörnsdóttir, Dr. Deevia Bhana, and guest lecturers.

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**Module 5: Gender and the Environment**

**Brief description**

This module examines the role of gender in unsustainable/sustainable development and natural resource management. The focus will be on gender and climate change and resilience, as well as gender relations in fisheries, energy use and production, agriculture and land management.

**Learning outcomes**

After successful completion of this module fellows should have:

- An overview and understanding of the main issues of environmental concern on global and local levels and the extent to which these are gendered and culture specific.
- An understanding of and the ability to explain important links between gender, development, globalisation, capitalism, corporatism and environment.
- An ability to discuss complex issues in relation to gender and climate change, sustainable development and natural resource management.
- Ability to do gender analyses for environmental impact assessment and projects in relation to environmental issues such as climate change and natural recourse management.
- Capacity to design and implement projects for the promotion of environmental concern at public and community levels.
- Familiarity with main global treatises and charters of the environment and a critical understanding of their applicability in different contexts.

**Teachers**

Dr. Pétur Waldorff, Dr. Jón Geir Pétursson, Dr. Joni Seager, Dr. Irma Erlingsdóttir and guest lecturers.
Module 6: Final assignment

Brief description

Fellows work on an applied project of their choice throughout the duration of the programme under the supervision of experts. The purpose of the applied project is for fellows to reflect on some of the theories, methods and skills studied during the training course, and to consider when these would be appropriate to apply in a practical context. The topic should be integrative, relate to the content of the programme, and should have relevance for gender equality issues in the fellows’ home country. The project may be in an essay form, addressing a specific gender relations problem and identifying strategies and suggestions to counter it; in the form of a project proposal which outlines all the necessary steps and activities needed to solve a problem and implement a project; a research proposal; or it can take another form which should be developed in consultation with the module coordinator. By the end of the semester, the fellows present the design and findings of their assignments at an open seminar organized by UNU-GEST.

Fellows receive 5 ECTS for their final assignment. As a part of the larger module for the final assignments, fellows attend sessions for academic writing skills, reference systems for literature review and research, introduction to the University library, professional development workshops, and learn about how to deliver professional presentations. An expert from the WikiGender University will visit UNU-GEST to hold a seminar on how to write for social media and fellows will write a short piece of choice for the WikiGender forum.

Fellows will start to work on their assignment topics, selection and approach from the beginning of the semester. Supervisors are generally assigned to fellows, depending on their topic of choice, during the period from 25 January to 15 February. Each fellow will be assigned a final assignment supervisor, who is an expert in the field in which the fellow is writing. Supervisors will work with respective fellows to offer directions on the final assignment throughout the semester. One-page summary of the proposed topic must be submitted by fellows to UNU-GEST no later than February 1st. The summary will be submitted via Moodle platform. By the end of February, all fellows should have chosen their topic, have been assigned a supervisor and have met with them once.

Learning outcomes

After successful completion of this module fellows should have:

- Collect and critically examine information and data necessary for analysing their chosen topic.
- Use theoretical frameworks for critical gender sensitive inquiry into their chosen topic, its social context, and its policy environment.
- Design interventions and strategies to address the gender disparities and concerns at the centre of the project proposal.
- Apply the tools and skills gained during the programme to the issues addressed in the essay or proposal.
- Work effectively as independent and self-motivated learners.
- Demonstrate the ability to reference an extensive range of literature and utilise this in the development of analysis and discussion of ideas.
- Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate the main findings of the project proposal or essay.
- Write a coherent, critically reflexive project proposal, research report, or essay that adheres to standards of academic writing (citation, references, list of references, avoiding plagiarism, etc.).

**Teachers**

Randi Stebbins and guest lecturers.
4. TEACHING SESSIONS

The teaching is organized in modules, which in some cases (such as theories and concepts, and practical tools for gender-sensitive projects) run simultaneously, while modules 3, 4 and 5 are taught in a row every day of the week. The teaching sessions will include lectures, discussions, and workshops, as well as field visits and trips. In every module you can expect to be asked to do an assignment, either alone or with other fellows. These assignments vary and include short, written assignments, policy briefs, field observation notes, blog entries, WikiGender entries and presentations. At times, lecturers/trainers might ask you to prepare for the sessions by reading (academic) articles or preparing an assignment. You should make sure to do the assigned readings for class – the better you prepare for these sessions, the more you will enjoy them and the more you will learn. Fellows are expected to actively participate in class discussions and engage in the activities planned for this programme. Failure to do so may result in fellows not receiving their diploma at the end of the semester.

5. ASSESSMENT

*Attendance to teaching sessions in the UNU-GEST Programme is compulsory.* Fellows who attend less than 90% of the classes will not be awarded a diploma.

**Assessment in each module:** in some modules, grades are awarded (on the scale 1-10) where marks below 5 indicate a fail. In other modules, fellows are awarded either a pass or fail. **Overall assessment:** Fellows either pass or fail the programme. Final assignments that are outstanding are awarded a distinction.

You will be given a written feedback on shorter essays/assignments handed in as part of each module.

**Assessment criteria for final assignment**

**Distinction**

The assignment should be a work of exceptional quality. It should demonstrate an impressive application of a range of knowledge, skills and techniques acquired from studying in the programme. It should also include an excellent critical review and analysis of relevant previous work on the topic selected. Also of importance is its demonstration of exceptional evidence of an effective strategy, and the proposal of activities for bringing changes that are suitable for the cultural context within which it is applied. The project should also indicate a sound ability to analyse the situation and include a coherent synthesis of the findings. The fellows should aim for an outstanding presentation of the work in a clear and well-organised form. The assignment should be of such good quality that it could be accepted for implementation or publication. All aspects of the 'Pass' classification below must be addressed.
Pass
An appropriate application of a range of knowledge, skills and techniques acquired from studying in the programme. A competent critical review and analysis of relevant previous work on the topic which is selected for the assignment. It should demonstrate good evidence of an effective strategy or possible activities for catalyzing changes, and it should indicate the fellow’s sound ability to analyse the cultural context it relates to. It should also include a coherent synthesis of the findings, as well as adequate evidence of the ability to relate the proposed techniques and methods to a particular context. The assignment is to be presented in a clear and well-organised form. None of the inadequacies in the ‘Fail’ classification below should be present in this work.

Fail
A ‘Failing’ application possesses a limited application of the range of knowledge, skills and techniques acquired from studying in the programme. It shows an inadequate critical review and analysis of relevant previous work on the topic selected for the assignment. There is insufficient evidence of an effective strategy for bringing on changes, and no clear indication of an ability to analyse the cultural context that the project is addressing. The Assignment fails to present a coherent synthesis of its conclusion.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Award
Each year, one graduating fellow within the UNU-GEST programme will receive the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Award.

The award bears the name of Vigdís Finnbogadottir, the former President of Iceland and the patron of the UNU-GEST Programme. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was both Iceland’s and the world’s first democratically directly elected female president. With a presidency of exactly sixteen years, she also remains the longest-serving elected female head of state of any country to date. Women’s rights, cultural diversity, the promotion of world peace and transnational dialogues have been running themes in Vigdís Finnbogadóttir’s work, as well as the emphasis she has had on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

UNU-GEST sets out the following criteria for assignments to be considered for the award: The assignment has to show evidence of sophisticated gender analysis with appropriate academic references and be well structured and written. The assignment has to provide recommendations that address gender issues which are of concern in the fellow’s home country. Those recommendations have to be well thought through and practical.

6. ACCESS TO STUDY MATERIAL: University of Iceland Intra-Web (Ugla and Moodle)

During your first week at UNU-GEST, fellows will finalise the residence permit process by visiting the Directorate of Immigration and undergo a health check all organized and facilitated by UNU-
GEST staff. This results in being issued an Icelandic ID number (kennitala). After that, fellows are able to open a bank account and ask for student login and password from the Service Desk at the University Centre in order to access the internet from their rooms. Once you have login access you can open Ugla (the Owl), the University of Iceland’s intranet. On that space, students can monitor the progress of their studies and access a variety of information regarding their academic life such as daily news, university calendar and upcoming events, as well as information on courses. Access to Ugla is here: https://ugla.hi.is/

Moodle is the main online teaching venue for UNU-GEST where all course material can be accessed, projects and papers can be submitted, etc. You can access Moodle via Ugla or go to https://moodle.hi.is and use the same login and password as for Ugla. You will be provided with guest access to Moodle for the first module, in case you will not have received a login for Ugla.

During orientation days in the first week, short introductory sessions will be held for Ugla and Moodle.

7. GENERAL INFORMATION

During orientation, which are the first 3 days upon your arrival in Iceland, main buildings on the University of Iceland (UI) campus will be visited together with UNU-GEST staff. A map of the University campus can be found here: http://english.hi.is/university/map_campus and below.

The University of Iceland was established in 1911 and is the biggest university in Iceland. It pursues most academic disciplines and operates around 40 research institutes. The university is within a short distance of the city centre and has easy access to transport to most parts of the city. Currently, the number of students is about 15,000, with the number of international students steadily increasing. The student society organises a number of events which aim to enhance the student experience. For details about their programme see www.student.is.

The UNU-GEST Programme office is housed in one of the newer buildings called Gimli, almost next door to the University Centre (Háskólatorg). The student housing units (Gamli Garður and Oddagarðar) are only a few minutes’ walk away. Teaching sessions take place in various buildings across the campus. Locations of importance are circled on the University of Iceland map below.
The National and University Library

The National and University Library of Iceland is the library of the University of Iceland and provides its students and faculty with library services.

Students have priority to the reading facilities and the small meeting rooms during exams and they get their library cards for free. They also get a 50% discount on various paid services at the library, such as interlibrary loans, rented facilities, etc.

The library’s opening hours are 8:15-22:00 Mon-Thu, 8:15-19:00 Fri, 10:00—17:00 Sat, and 11:00-17:00 on Sundays.

Icelandic Student Services (Félagsstofnun stuđenta – FS)

The Icelandic Student Services (ISS) is a service company for students at the University of Iceland. It operates student housing on campus, Student Career Centre, University Book Store, Student Cafes, preschools, and Háma (campus cafeteria). The ISS head office is on the upper floor of Háskólatorg at Sæmundargata 4. The opening times are Mon-Thu 9-4, and Fridays 9-3. The phone number 5 700 700 and e-mail address fs@fs.is.
The University Book Store

The University Book Store is located in Háskólatorg. Educational materials and other supplies for student studies are provided. Booklists can be accessed at the store’s website and orders can be made online.

The University Gymnasium

The University of Iceland Gymnasium at Sæmundargata is open to all students and staff.

The gymnasium offers timetabled group lessons in the hall and fitness suite facilities. Groups can also hire the hall for ball games etc. A sauna is located in the basement of the gymnasium building.

Opening hours are 7 am-10 pm Mon-Fri, 8 am-6 pm Sat. The gymnasium is closed on Sundays.

Passes are valid for all advertised open sessions in the hall, fitness suite and sauna. You can purchase passes at the University Gymnasium building, next to Háskólatorg. Price: one year pass is ISK 9,000.

Campus cafeteria and Student Cafes

There is a canteen and cafeteria on campus, Háma, in Háskólatorg. Háma is open on weekdays, 8 am-7 pm, and Saturdays, 9:30 am-4 pm. Here you will find food and beverages and hot lunch. By showing your student card you will get a discount.

The Student Cellar (Stúdentakjallarinn), located in the cellar of Háskólatorg is a bar and a restaurant where students gather for social events and to have drinks. Stúdentakjallarinn is open every day from 11 AM to 11 PM. They often have concerts or show movies.

Others Student Cafes are distributed on campus:

Student Cafe in Árnagarður, on the first floor. Open during winter: Mon.-Fri., 9 am-3:30 pm
Student Cafe in Eirberg, on the first floor. Open during winter: Mon.-Fri., 9 am-3:30 pm
Student Cafe in University Cinema, in the basement. Open during winter Mon.-Fri., 8:35 am-3:30 pm
Student Cafe in Lækagnarður, in the basement. Open during winter: Mon.-Fri., 9 am-3:30 pm
Student Cafe in Oddi, on the second floor. Open during winter: Mon.-Fri., 8 am-6 pm. Open workdays in summer 9 am-3:30 pm
Nature Cafe in Natural Sciences Building, on the first floor. Open during winter: Mon.-Fri., 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Student café in Stakkahlid, School of Education, on the first floor. Open during winter: Mon-Fri 8.30 am -3.30 pm.

8. PRACTICAL ISSUES ABOUT ARRIVAL IN ICELAND

Note that the UNU-GEST staff handles much of your affairs, including organizing and assisting with finalizing your residence permit process, opening a bank account and staff liaises with Student Housing and Registry before your arrival. Once you are in Iceland, you are asked to visit both Student Housing to sign a contract with them and go to the Student Registry to obtain login and password for the internet and academic resources, which are all online.

Throughout the programme, the UNU-GEST team might need to contact you. This will be done principally through your e-mail. We will post announcements on Moodle (the university intranet) when needed. Make sure you check your UI e-mail regularly (clear up space when your account is about to fill up) and provide the UNU-GEST team with your phone number once you get a new one in Iceland.

Travel Essentials
Before coming to Iceland, fellows receive a logistic note with directions regarding their international travels. Staff also consults with each fellow regarding his/her travel itinerary when travel arrangements are made. Fellows are picked up at the airport when arriving in Iceland, and they receive basic groceries to cover the period before they are able to visit the store.

What to bring

The weather in Iceland is varied, so be prepared because it can get quite windy. Gales and blizzards are all part of the winter experience. There is also, as you will probably find out the hard way, a grain of truth to the joke that it rains horizontally in Iceland. If possible, it is a good idea to pack good quality boots (sturdy with good grip), warm clothes; coats or jackets that are warm, wind- and rainproof, as well as sweaters, hats, scarves, woolly socks and gloves or mittens. Since you may not have access to such clothes you will receive a small clothing allowance upon arrival and we will try to help with choosing appropriate clothes.

Even though it can be cold and windy outside, the houses are warm and cozy. This is because they are heated with geothermal water. It is a good idea to dress in layers, so that you can take your
warmer things off when you are inside and then put them on as needed once you go outside. We will provide you with a warm duvet.

Computers and communication

Full UNU-GEST fellowship participants will be provided with laptop computers and basic software for your use while you stay in Iceland. Erasmus+ students are asked to bring their own computers. You will be able to access the internet from your room on campus once you have access to Ugla. You will be provided with most of the basic readings by the teachers either in the form of photocopies or files which you can access online in Moodle, the online learning management system. Please note that you cannot use the internet from your room on campus until you are formally registered at the University of Iceland. That can take up to one (max. two) weeks. However, you can use the internet from other areas of the campus from the day of your arrival.

Shortly after you arrive, it is wise to buy an Icelandic SIM card for your phone. UNU-GEST staff will give you directions as to where to buy those after you arrive in Iceland. If your friends and relatives have access to the internet we strongly advise you to communicate with them either via e-mail or by using a Skype phone (http://skype.com/intl/en/). It is also possible to buy telephone cards for international telephoning which is relatively cheap. This cost should be covered by you.

International dialing codes

To Iceland: +354 and number from Iceland: 00 + country code and number.

Accommodation

During your stay in Iceland, you will be living in student housing at the University of Iceland. Most of you will be staying at Gamli Garður (see circled in red in the map above), a student housing unit for individuals. However, some fellows will live in Oddagarðar and Eggertsgata.

In all residencies, a bed, a desk and a chair is provided in each room. In Oddagarðar, three shared kitchens are on each floor, each serving between 7 and 10 rooms. The kitchens are fully equipped. A common laundry room and a bicycle storage facility are on the first floor of each house. A storage
locker is provided on each floor. All rooms are connected to the internet via the University of Iceland’s Ethernet and Internet connection (HI-net). Fellows are required to clean their own rooms on a regular basis and very well before leaving for their home countries.

Strict house rules apply in student housing and we ask you all to acquaint yourselves with them when you arrive. One of those rules is that you cannot smoke anywhere inside the building. This includes your personal room. Please abide by these rules.

Emergency telephone number

The emergency telephone number for police, ambulance or fire is 112. Note that phone calls to 112 from coin-operated phones do not require payment.

Business Hours

The opening hours of most businesses are from 9:00 until 17:00. Some institutions and companies change their work hours to 8:00 to 16:00 in the summer months.

Shopping hours are generally from 9:00 or 10:00 until 17:00 or 18:00 during the week (Monday to Friday). On Saturdays, many shops are open only for a few hours from 10:00, while some are closed on Saturdays in summer. Most shops are closed on Sundays.

However, shopping malls, supermarkets, some bookstores and various shops catering to tourists have longer opening hours, and are mostly open every day. Many supermarkets remain open until 11 pm, seven days a week.

Finances

Money

Some fellows have been granted a full scholarship which include a clothing allowance and living allowance. This covers the cost of food and other daily needs. Different measures apply to Erasmus+ fellows who will receive e-mails and information from UNU-GEST prior to arrival.

We will assist you with establishing your own bank account, which can take up to two weeks.

The unit of currency used in Iceland is the króna or “crown,” abbreviated ISK. All banks can exchange currency, and some shops (especially those catering to tourists) will accept payment in US dollars or Euro.

Most shops and businesses accept major credit cards and debit cards so it is not generally necessary to carry much cash. Debit and credit cards are commonly used in Iceland even for quite small transactions. It is best to exchange your money into ISK in Iceland, and re-exchange any
surplus before you leave, as foreign banks may not deal in ISK. You can exchange your money at the bank at the airport on arrival and departure and in all major banks.

**Banks**

Banking hours are Monday - Friday, 9:15-16:00. Branches in some shopping malls have longer opening hours.

*The nearest bank to the University* is Landsbanki at Háskólabíó and Arion-banki at Hótel Saga, both at Hagatorg. This is only in a few minutes walking distance from campus. UNU-GEST staff will assist you in opening a bank account in the first week of the UNU-GEST programme.

**Automatic Teller Machines (ATM)**

An ATM card/debit card may be the most convenient way to obtain money in most countries. You can use an ATM card to withdraw money from a bank account in your home country.

The money withdrawn will be in Icelandic currency. Check with your home bank to find out what their fees are for foreign withdrawal, as it varies from bank to bank.

The major credit cards used in Iceland are VISA and Eurocard/Mastercard but Diners and American Express are also accepted in Iceland. Credit Cards are widely used and accepted throughout the country. As most businesses, including taxis, accept debit and credit cards, and thus you may not require to use much cash. When your bank account has been established, you will receive a debit card for your use.

*On campus*, there are ATMs in Háskólabíó and Oddi.

**Getting Around**

**Yellow pages**

The yellow pages are a telephone directory of businesses and individuals in Iceland. The online directory, [www.ja.is](http://www.ja.is) also offers links to websites and location on map, and is therefore a very useful resource.

**Transportation**

When it comes to public transportation Reykjavik has an excellent bus system (called Strætó in Icelandic) with regular services to and from all of the city’s major towns and attractions.

Strætó lists all routes and schedules online, and also offers a free online app for your smartphone: [http://www.straeto.is/app](http://www.straeto.is/app) that allows you to locate buses and pay for rides.

The buses run on schedule from 6.30 am-11 pm Mon-Fri, 8.30 am-11 pm Sat and 11.30 am-11 pm Sun and on public holidays.
One way fares cost 420 ISK and can be bought on the bus, either by cash or via your smartphone. You can also buy tickets in Háma, the University cafeteria or in 10/11 stores downtown.

Note that no change is given on the bus and you will need to have the correct amount (no debit cards accepted). When you pay for your bus fare, be sure to ask for a transfer ticket, or “skiptimidi” in Icelandic. The transfer ticket is the fare for your second bus trip, as long as it is taken within 75 minutes of receiving the transfer ticket.

Reykjavik’s Central Bus Station Hlemmur is located on the main shopping street Laugavegur in Reykjavik.

Taxis are relatively expensive in Iceland, but Hreyfill (phone: 588 5522) and BSR (phone: 561 0000) can be called for shorter rides when needed.

For bus tours outside of the city, see either the services offered by straeto or www.bsi.is, the central bus station. For domestic flights, visit: http://www.isavia.is/english/passengers/domestic-flights/. There are a number of car rentals in Reykjavik for those who wish to rent a car for exploring Iceland.

**Health Issues**

**Health Clinic**

Your nearest clinic is the Seltjarnarnes Health Clinic (Heilsugæslan Seltjarnarnes), by Sudurstrond, tel. 513-2100 and e-mail: seltjarnarnes@heilsugaeslan.is

The general opening hours are weekdays from 8 am to 6 pm. If the matter is urgent, it is best to come between 4 and 6 pm. An appointment with a doctor at the clinic costs approximately 6.300 ISK, an unscheduled visit between 4 PM and 6 PM costs approximately 9.100 ISK.

If you need a doctor later in the evening or on the weekend, there is a clinic in Laeknavaktin, Smaratorg 1 in Kopavogur (15-minute drive from campus) that is open between 5pm and 11:30pm on weekdays and 9 am-11:30 pm on weekends. You do not need to make an appointment, but if you wish to call the clinic beforehand, you can call on 1700 and a nurse will advise you. You can check Straeto website to see exact bus route.

For emergencies, call 112.

**Pharmacies**

Pharmacies are listed in the telephone directory (yellow pages: www.ja.is) under "Apótek" and are normally open: Mon.-Fri. 9:00 -18:00 and Sat. 9:00 - 16:00.

**The nearest pharmacies to the University are:**

**Apótekarinn** at Eiðistorg 17, Seltjarnarnes. Opening hours are 10am-6pm Mon-Fri.

**Lyfja** at Laugavegur 16. Opening hours are 9 am-6 pm Mon-Fri, 11 am-4 pm Sat.
Stígamót – Education and Counseling Center for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence

Stígamót provides free individual counseling for survivors of rape, sexual molestation, sexual harassment, pornographic exploitation and prostitution. The service is for women and men. The people at Stígamót do not identify themselves as providers of traditional therapy, but rather as a support and counseling service for those seeking to learn and engage in self-help. Often people seek support many years after they were violated. It is never too late to begin the healing process.

Stígamót are located at Hverfisgata 115, 105 Reykjavík, and opening hours are between 9 am and 7 pm all weekdays. Questions can be sent by email or information requested by phone.

Phone number: 562-6868 / 562-6878
More information: http://stigamot.is/

Shopping

There are two larger shopping malls in the Reykjavík area, Kringlan and Smaralind. Neither mall is within walking distance from campus but easily accessible by bus.

There are also many outlet stores in the Skeifan area, a 5-minute drive from the center.

Check online at Straétó website to see bus routes and timetables.

In the downtown area, Laugavegur, which is around 15 minute walk from University campus you can find boutiques, designer labels, arts and crafts galleries. They are usually more expensive.

Every Saturday and Sunday throughout the year, from 11am-5pm, Reykjavík’s flea market Kolaportið takes place at Tryggvagata down by the harbor. There you can get a variety of second-hand clothes, books, some local food and more at a low price.

Food and Drink

Groceries

For groceries, prices differ considerably between stores. There is a small convenience store on campus, which may be slightly more expensive than others found in town. The most popular and inexpensive one is Bónus, but you may need to find specialty stores for spices and food items from home.

Closest supermarkets and grocery stores to Gamli Garður:

Bónus at Hallveigarstígur 1. This is by far the cheapest supermarket in Reykjavík. The opening hours are 11 am-6:30 pm Mon-Thu, 10 am-7:30 pm Fri, 10 am-6 pm Sat, 12-6 pm Sun
10-11 at Eggertsgata 24 on campus. It is considerably more expensive than Bónus and has little fresh food, but it is open around the clock.

Shell gas station at Birkimelur 1, next to the University Library. Probably the shortest distance to go – they sell very basic foodstuffs (e.g. milk) and necessities.

Melabúðin at Hagamelur 39. A very cozy local grocery store next to the neighborhood swimming pool, but rather expensive.

Alcohol

Wine, liquor and beer can ONLY be bought at the state liquor outlets called VÍNBÚÐIN. Store locations and opening hours can be found on their website.

Not to miss

Swimming Pools

The swimming pools in Iceland are wonderful and you can swim outdoors even during high winter. This is because the pools, like the houses, are heated with geothermal water. Do pack your swimming costumes. It is wonderful to float in the warm water and see the snowflakes drift above you.

There are seven geothermal swimming pools (sundlaugar). The swimming pools are most often outside and usually have hot pots and a steambath as well.

The closest swimming pools to the University are:

Vesturbæjarlaug at Hofsvallagata. The opening hours are: 6:30 am-10 pm Mon-Thu, 6:30 am-8 pm Fri, 9 am-5 pm Sat, 11 am-7 pm Sun.

Sundhöllin at Barónsstígur 45a. Sundhöllin is the oldest swimming pool in Reykjavík, built in the 1930s. The pool itself is indoors but the hot pots are outside on a balcony. The opening hours are: 6:30 am-10 pm Mon-Thu, 6:30 am-8 pm Fri, 8 am-4 pm Sat, 10 am-6 pm Sun.
Laugardalslaug at Sundlaugarvegur 30. The opening hours are 6:30 am-10 pm Mon-Fri and 8 am-10 pm Sat-Sun.

More information on swimming pools in Iceland: swimminginiceland.com

Also, check out the Thermal Pool Rules

9. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ICELAND

Iceland is located in the North Atlantic Ocean. It is the second largest island in Europe, with an area of about 103,000 km². Its location on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge makes Iceland volcanically and geologically active and the volcanism has defined Icelandic landscapes in various ways with different types of volcanoes, glacial rivers, glaciers and sand fields. The frequent volcanic activity makes the Icelandic landscape change rapidly. The volcanic eruption in Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 made headlines when it affected air traffic in Northern Europe. The eruption took place in a remote area of Iceland and had little impact on life in Reykjavik. A new island, Surtsey, was formed south of the mainland in 1963, and a major eruption took place in 1973 when a volcano on the island Heimaey spilled lava into the town of Vestmannaeyjar. About 75% of the land is more than 200 meters high with most of the land being high plateaus and mountains. Its highest peak, Hvannadalshnúkur, rises to 2,110 m. Glaciers cover 11,200 km², including Vatnajökull the largest glacier in Europe, while suitable agricultural land only covers 1,400 km². Only the coastline is inhabited, and there are no inhabitants in the central highlands. The population of Iceland is about 329,100 with more about 64% of the population, or 208,000 people living in the capital area.

History- The republic of Iceland

Iceland was settled by Nordic people in the years around 874 AD and in about 930, the Icelandic settlers founded one of the world’s first republican governments. The Old Commonwealth Age, described in the classic Icelandic Sagas, lasted until 1262, when Iceland lost its independence. In 1918 it regained its independence and in 1944 the present republic was founded. Iceland has a written constitution and a parliamentary form of government. The president is elected by direct popular vote for a term of 4 years, with no term limit. The president’s role is mostly ceremonial. Most executive power rests with the Government. Althingi is a legislative body of 63 members from 6 districts elected for a term of 4 years by popular vote. A cabinet of ministers stays in power until the next general election or a new government is formed. There are currently nine ministers and one prime minister. The ministers sit in Althingi, but if they have not been elected, they do not have the right to vote in parliament.

According to Iceland’s constitution, ratified in 1944, the government is divided into three branches, the legislative, the judicial, and the executive branches. Althingi, where laws are made and amended, is the legislative branch. Executive branches, such as the Ministries, directorates
and various other government agencies, carry out laws. Judicial power lies with the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and the district courts.

About Reykjavik
It's been called Europe's hottest capital. Slick advertising campaigns have championed the city's famed nightlife, but there is more to Reykjavik than pubs and clubs. Reykjavik held the prestigious title of “European City of Culture” in the year 2000; a welcome recognition of the energetic and colourful cultural life of the capital. Reykjavik has the best of both worlds: the qualities of a modern, forward-looking society are complemented by a close connection to beautiful and unspoiled nature in the city's vicinity.

The population of the city is about 200,000 including its suburbs and nearby villages. Reykjavik is spread across a peninsula with a panoramic view of the mountains and the Atlantic Ocean on almost all sides. In the summer, you can sit by the harbour at midnight and watch the sun dip slightly below the horizon before it makes its way up again.

For practical information and events in Reykjavik, see visitreykjavik.is
Grapevine.is also offers a useful overview of news and events in Reykjavik. For those who are news thirsty, Iceland Review and Iceland monitor offer a local news service in English.

Administration
Ministries, committees and government institutions are the administration. The administrative authorities make various decisions regarding the rights and obligations of individuals.

In order to protect the rights of individuals there are various laws that the administration must adhere to.

Official Language
Icelandic is the native tongue of Iceland. It belongs, along with Norwegian and Faeroese, to the West Scandinavian branch of the North Germanic family of languages. Morphologically it has
remained the most conservative of the Scandinavian languages, retaining, for example, three genders and a full system of case endings for nouns and adjectives. It is the same language spoken by the original Norse settlers from western Norway in the ninth and tenth centuries with, of course, the addition of modern vocabulary. Most Icelanders, particularly those of the younger generation speak good English, and visitors can easily ask for directions and assistance in English.

Research

The Icelandic system of research and development is a multilevel system with a dispersed decision-making structure. It has a number of fully-fledged research institutions, essential funds and a strong force of well-trained scientists, and covers all major fields in science and technology. Icelandic scientists face a challenging task of maintaining the quality and range of research activities. Concentration of research in key areas is important in order to optimize resources. Science and technology have been divided at an institutional level, reflecting a particular historical development and institutional division of labour.

Religion

About 74% of all Icelanders officially belong to the state supported national church of Iceland, an Evangelical Lutheran denomination. However, many Icelanders do not attend church services on a regular basis.

There is a small community of Muslims in Iceland, information is found here: http://www.islam.is/podlinki/english/english.htm

The main Catholic Church is located near campus, information on parish life and services is found here: http://en.catholica.is/

Other religious groups:

http://filadelfia.is/english

http://www.orthodox.is/

For information on other religious groups you may need, consult the UNU-GEST staff.

Climate

Iceland enjoys a much milder climate than its name and location adjacent to the Arctic Circle would imply. A branch of the Gulf Stream flows along the southern and the western coast which greatly moderate the climate. However, this brings mild Atlantic air in contact with colder Arctic air resulting in a climate that is marked by frequent changes in weather and storminess. Furthermore, this leads to more rainfall in the southern and western part than in the northern part of the island. The summer tourist season is from late May to early September. During the first half of this period the sun stays above the horizon for almost 24 hours and the interplay of light and shadows on mountains, lava fields and glaciers yield an ever changing landscape. However, even during the middle of summer the sky is frequently cloudy or overcast and the sunshine does not warm the
air much. Hence, during daytime the air is usually cool (“refreshing” is the local euphemism) and cold during night times.

**Food**

Icelandic cuisine has a long history. Important parts of Icelandic cuisine are lamb, dairy, and fish, due to Iceland’s proximity to the ocean. Popular foods in Iceland include skyr, hangikjöt (smoked lamb), kleinur, laufabrauð and bollur. Points of pride are the quality of the lamb meat and seafood.

Other local ingredients that form part of the Icelandic chef’s store include seabirds and waterfowl (including their eggs), salmon and trout, crowberry, blueberry, rhubarb, Iceland moss, wild mushrooms, wild thyme, lovage, angelica and dried seaweed as well as a wide array of dairy products.

Animal products dominate Icelandic cuisine. Popular taste has developed, however, to become closer to the European norm, and consumption of vegetables has greatly increased in recent decades while consumption of fish has diminished. Fresh lamb meat remains very popular.

In the capital, Reykjavik, you can find many diverse restaurants and fast food chains that serve everything from Icelandic cuisine, to American and Italian cuisine, as well as Middle-Eastern cuisine.

**Energy**

Situated on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, Iceland is a hot spot of volcanic and geothermal activity. Thirty post-glacial volcanoes have erupted in the past two centuries, and natural hot water supplies much of the population with cheap, pollution-free heating. Geothermal heating of houses began around 1930, and today all of Reykjavik is heated by the Reykjavík Energy district heating system. Throughout Iceland, about 90% of the population now enjoy geothermal heating (not all parts of the country have utilizable hot water resources). The hot water that comes running from the faucets in houses in Reykjavik comes from Nesjavallavirkjun and can be up to 80°C so people should be very careful when using it. Rivers are, moreover, harnessed to provide inexpensive hydroelectric power. The electrical current is 220 volts, 50 Hz. Electricity in Iceland uses the Europlug/Schuko-Plug (CEE types), which has two round prongs.

**Economy**

The economy is heavily dependent upon fisheries, which are the nation’s major resource, and almost 60% of all exports are made up of seafood products. Yet only a small proportion of the
workforce is active in this sector (5% in fishing, 6.2% in fish processing), and over 50% of the workforce is employed in services, public and other.

Iceland is a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the European Economic Area (EEA).

**Time**

Local time in Iceland is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) all year round. This is one hour later than Central European Time during winter but two hours later in the summer time.