

**Address by Jón Atli Benediktsson, Rector of the University of
Iceland, at the introduction for new doctoral students.**

Held at Litla-Torg, Thursday 5 October 2017, 3 p.m.

Dear doctoral students at the University of Iceland.

It is my honour and pleasure to speak to you at this introductory meeting for new doctoral students at the University of Iceland.

Doctoral programmes at our institution have evolved and developed greatly in the past ten to fifteen years. The continuous promotion of doctoral studies strengthens the University's status as an international research university and allows us to fulfil our role as the leading educational institution in Iceland. In order to be and remain competitive when it comes to science, innovation, and professional development, Iceland needs such a powerful research university.

Doctoral students contribute greatly to the research work carried out at the University of Iceland, and their projects have played a significant role in promoting and strengthening the University's high status on a national as well as international level. The success of the University of Iceland has been confirmed time and time again. The University has been ranked amongst the world's top 300 universities according to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings every year since 2011. Moreover, this year, the University has—for the first time—also been listed in the Shanghai Ranking with several research subjects very highly ranked.

Currently, about 600 students—spread across all Faculties—are enrolled in doctoral programmes at the University of Iceland. The number of foreign students has risen steadily, and right now they account for approximately 30% of doctoral students at our institution.

It is of the utmost importance for us to welcome and take good care of our doctoral students; and our aim is to ensure that students receive high-quality education to the greatest extent possible.

The Strategic Plan of the University of Iceland for 2016-2021 emphasises the importance of strengthening the framework for doctoral studies, for example by increasing support for supervisors and doctoral students. One aspect of this is to offer more courses which advance the general skill set of doctoral students. In this regard, it can be mentioned that just this autumn, a three-day course in Ethics of Science was held for the first time, tailored specifically to the needs of doctoral students. Students showed great interest in this course; and our current plan is to offer it each year.

Today's introductory meeting is another example of how we strengthen doctoral studies at the University of Iceland. It is a venue for several units within the University, which provide services to doctoral students, to introduce themselves and their work. I hope that by the end of the day, you will know exactly where to turn to in order to find help for any issues that may arise during your studies. Once the formal agenda has concluded, you will have the opportunity to chat with the staff of these units, and last but certainly not least, you will get the chance to mingle with and get to know other doctoral students.

Finally, I would like to welcome you all to the University of Iceland,
and hope you have a great experience here.

Thank you.