Overview

Semesters Available: Fall, Spring, or Academic Year
GPA Requirement: 2.75
Language of Instruction: English & Icelandic
Academic Calendar:
  Fall: August-December
  Spring: January-June

10 Fun Facts about Iceland and Reykjavík
- Iceland is the most sparsely populated country in Europe
- 71.7% of all energy used in the Iceland is produced from the country’s own resources
- Icelanders value literacy and hold the world record for number of books per capita
- Icelandic language has been virtually unchanged for the past 1000 years
- 13% of the country is covered by snowfields and glaciers.
- Many Icelanders believe in Elves
- Reykjavík means “smoky bay”
- Reykjavík is located only two degrees south of the Arctic Circle
- Many think Reykjavík is constantly frozen, but average mid-winter temperatures are no lower than in Toronto, Canada or the Northeastern coast of the U.S.
- Geothermal energy is so inexpensive that in wintertime sidewalks in Reykjavík are heated!

Founded in 1911, University of Iceland is the largest university in the country with more than 75% the country’s higher education students matriculating. In the past century, University of Iceland has grown from a small civil servants’ school to a bustling modern university, offering instruction to 14,000 students in almost 400 programs spanning most fields of scholarship.

In the last decade the University of Iceland has become a growing international university. As of 2011, it has ranked in the top 2% of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

The university’s main administrative building

The university tries to offer courses and research opportunities which are unusual and in some cases unique to Iceland. Such resources include Icelandic census records dating back to 1703 as well as exceptionally complete genealogical data and climatological, glaciological, seismic and geothermal records. The University of Iceland also holds a leading role in sustainable energy and environmental research.

Excellent study facilities are widely available for students. An easy-to-use intranet system allows students to register for classes and keep track of their progress throughout the semester. Each faculty is equipped with study spaces, a library and numerous computer labs.
CALS-related Areas of Study in English

When searching for courses, look for the letters G, M, or F at the end of the course number. These indicate at which level the course is taught.

- **M** = Intermediate (for Bachelor or Master level students)
- **G** = Undergraduate
- **F** = Graduate (special admission is needed; each department has its own policy as to whether they’ll consider undergraduates for Master level courses)

If a course is marked with a British flag it is taught in English, otherwise most likely in Icelandic.

1. **Earth Science for Foreign Students** (although a full-year program, students can attend for just one semester)
   - A one-year course of study is offered for science students in the Faculty of Earth Sciences. It covers topics in geology, oceanography, and geophysics. Emphasis on aspects of Icelandic geology like volcanic and geothermal activity, glaciers and plate tectonics, as well as the North Atlantic Ocean. All teaching is in English.

2. **Education and Teaching**

3. **Environmental Engineering**

4. **Earth sciences, other**

5. **Life and Environmental Science**

6. **Research project in biology (10 US credits)**

7. **Biometry and Statistics**

8. **Environmental Economics**

9. **General business**

10. **Food Science**

11. **Nutrition**: Nutrition courses are not traditionally taught in English, but if there is an international student in the course it will be taught in English. Textbooks and Exams are in English.

Students may also take **Icelandic as a second language**, Icelandic culture and **other humanities**.

Students are registered into a single department; Sixty percent of courses taken must be within that department.

Credit system & grading

University of Iceland uses the ECTS system, where 60 credits amount to one year of full-time study. Exchange students must register for a minimum of 30 ECTS credits per semester. On average, courses vary between 6-10 ECTS credits.

An intensive language course in Icelandic is offered to exchange students every summer in August by the Office of International Education. CALS students are required to participate in this course.

Students must earn a 6/10 in courses to earn Cornell credit.

Student Life

Learn about Life in Iceland

Housing

There are a limited number of on-campus housing assignments available each semester. More commonly, however, students live in off-campus accommodations. Upon acceptance, students are given access to a database with available housing for the semester. Please keep in mind that...
even for students living on campus, there is no meal plan included. Types of accommodation may include:

- Rooms in guesthouses with access to shared kitchen and bathroom
- Shared apartments/flats with other students
- Rooms in private homes

Housing is easier to find in the spring than fall.

Modern facilities throughout campus.

Outside the environmental science building

On-campus market.

Social Life

There are over 50 student associations and interest groups operating at the university. Some of the most popular include the University Choir, Student Theater group and the University Dance forum, all of which are a part of the city’s cultural scene and are open to all students.

There is a mentor program for incoming students. When students apply for the exchange the mentor is assigned. Mentors sign a confidentiality agreement so that students feel comfortable discussing personal matters, if necessary.
Reykjavik boasts an easy and reliable bus system, Straeto, that provides service around the city proper as well as most surrounding suburbs. Schedules and routes change frequently, but the system’s Journey Planner can make getting around simple.

The city is also easily maneuverable on foot and a growing network of cycle lanes make bicycles an option.

Beyond Reykjavik, buses are also the most reliable means of travel. Bus service links Reykjavik to all other major cities. Iceland has no train transport, so in some cases a car rental may be a good option when trying to reach a remote location.

**Miscellaneous**

**Program Costs**

Students are billed their regular CALS tuition, with no added administrative fees. Students purchase plane tickets and pay remaining costs such as housing, meals, student visa application fees, local travel, and personal expenses. Some partner institutions charge student activity fees and/or health insurance plans which students are also responsible for.

Financial aid travels with students going abroad. Students must complete with grades equivalent to a Cornell “C” or better. Financial aid for study abroad is need-based, consistent with university and government policies and covers all costs relevant to study abroad, including tuition, all mandatory program fees, housing, meals, books, personal expenses, and round-trip airfare. If you are currently receiving financial aid, your aid package will be adjusted based on your determined level of need and the projected costs for your study abroad program. University grant aid and loan awards may be either increased or decreased to meet study abroad need. The normal work-study component of aid packages will be converted to student loans.

**How to Apply**

You will apply to the exchange after meeting with the CALS study abroad and exchange advisor in 140 Roberts Hall. All application materials will be returned to CALS—not the university directly.