
SPANISH GOLD

The University of Oviedo in Spain is fulfilling its ambition to become one of Europe's finest universities thanks to its commitment to world-class standards

One of the oldest educational institutions in Spain, the University of Oviedo is at the forefront of its country's mission to position its universities alongside the finest in Europe. Founded in 1608, the university is located in the Asturias region of northern Spain. Today it has more than 25,000 students and offers 51 different degree disciplines and over 40 master's programmes.

'AD FUTURUM' PROJECT

The University of Oviedo was one of the nine universities to be first recognised as an International Campus of Excellence (CEI) – a programme launched by the Spanish government in 2009 as part of its strategy to modernise the country's tertiary education. The key to the university's CEI status is an innovative scheme called 'Ad Futurum', which incorporates the wider Asturian society.

"'Ad Futurum' is founded on knowledge transfer, internationalisation and graduate employment," explains Dr Vicente Gotor Santamaria, the university's Rector. As a result of the project, the university has developed two educational 'clusters': energy, environment and climate change, and biomedicine and health.

The first of these clusters focuses on innovation in clean energy and energy efficiency. Its success stories include the creation of an

experimental station off the coast of northern Spain, which generates offshore energy and acts as a laboratory to test equipment in genuine conditions.

The biomedicine and health cluster, on the other hand, specialises in molecular and clinical oncology, regenerative medicine and transplants. It has quickly established itself as a 'meeting point' for research within the region, and looks set to establish an international reputation.

These clusters are vital, not only in terms of creating specialist knowledge, but also in helping the university to meet its commitment to social values. The 'Ad Futurum' programme has helped bridge the gap between the campus and the community in Asturias, and established the university as a driving force in research.

The University of Oviedo is committed to forging links between students and employers, and almost all of its degree courses offer an internship. In addition, it has launched a programme to promote entrepreneurship. Participants are assigned an 'entrepreneurial godfather' – a tutor who mentors students interested in starting up a new business.

Teaching takes place in three different campuses at the University of Oviedo. There are 11 faculties in total, including biology, teacher training and humanities, and six schools, including mining and sports medicine. The university offers

a variety of bilingual degree courses – in Spanish and English – as well as international master's and double PhD programmes.

ATTRACTIVE LOCATION

The university is located in a region rich in culture and history, which boasts beaches, mountains and nature reserves. This makes it an attractive site for international students to immerse themselves in Spanish life, as well as gain a first-rate education.

Around 1,100 overseas students currently attend the university from countries including the UK, Germany, China and the USA. And they are in good company, with numerous eminent Spanish thinkers, writers and scientists having passed through Oviedo's lecture halls over the years. The university has also welcomed high-profile speakers such as Bill Gates and Stephen Hawking in recent times.

Looking ahead, the academic heavyweight aims to build on its CEI status. There are plans to introduce further bilingual degree courses and offer more double degrees, international master's degrees and joint PhD programmes in conjunction with partner universities.

'The University of Oviedo aspires to be in the top positions of the international talent rankings and become a talent magnet,' says Dr Gotor Santamaria. It is clearly already well on its way to achieving that goal.



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