Reflective Practice-Based Learning
UCN’s learning approach
At UCN we consider it our primary purpose to prepare you for the labour market of the future. We do not work with theory for the sake of theory. Our study programmes are to the widest extent designed to reflect the reality that you will meet after you graduate.

In other words, the professional, social and personal competences that you achieve through your study programme will make you immediately employable in the labour market.

We call this approach Reflective Practice-Based Learning.

Reflective Practice-Based Learning is the name of our learning approach, and it gives you an insight into what you get and what you may expect when you study at UCN.

Part of the learning approach is that we also express what we expect from you as a student.

By combining theory and practice, we aim at giving you strong professional competences embedded in real life, with you becoming innovative, independent and competent. At the same time you can contribute to finding new solutions to the challenges and needs of your profession and the labour market.

Real Life Education

THE SOCIETY AND WORK LIFE OF TOMORROW WILL INCREASINGLY FOCUS ON:

› solution-oriented and interdisciplinary competences founded on strong profession-oriented identities;
› personal competences as a basis for bringing your professional competence into play and create value;
› the ability to contribute creativity and innovation in solutions as well as work processes; and
› the ability to take on responsibility for your own learning.
At UCN we work with education, development and innovation within four areas: Business, Education & Social Studies, Health, and Technology. We have about 9,200 students in academy profession and bachelor’s degree programmes, more than 9,000 course participants in continuing education and some 800 employees. UCN’s activities take place at a number of addresses in Aalborg, Hjørring and Thisted. Read more at www.ucnorth.dk/learningapproach
Learning and studying at UCN

Education is about learning, and we will ensure that you are given optimum conditions for learning while a student at UCN.

We work with learning activities that are close to real life, so that you as a student will be able to develop your knowledge, your skills and your competences within your disciplinary field.

However, not only your professional competences will be in focus in the course of your study programme. You will also develop your personal and social competences.

A good balance between professional and personal development is decisive in order to give you the clout and judgement sought after by the labour market.

In the study programme we will therefore in different ways combine your experience and knowledge with new challenges. And we strengthen your prerequisites for learning and focus on your knowledge about yourself.

We also focus on how you learn in the best way, what you can do better, and which habits you should change in order to learn more effectively.

We naturally expect you to take on a great responsibility for your learning.

One of the ways to do that is – together with your lecturers and fellow students – to set up clear goals for your own learning so that it will be clear to see which learning results to expect from you.

Focus, therefore, is on learning rather than tuition in itself, and in the course of the study programme you will gradually move from knowledge via skills to competences.

WHAT ARE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCES?

› Knowledge is subject-related and understanding of facts. That means that as a student you are capable of putting your knowledge into a context and explain it to others. Knowledge can be both about theory and practice.

› Skills are what you can do or accomplish. It could be practical skills, cognitive skills, creative skills or communicative skills.

› Competences are the ability to apply knowledge and skills in a given context; and responsibility and independence are central concepts.
The Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science has published a framework for qualifications for all higher education, which describes the knowledge, skills and competences you must have achieved during the study programme.

We combine the components of the qualifications framework with our learning approach, and we believe that by doing this we create the optimum study programme content for your professional and personal development.

You will see that in order for all these components to be part of your study programme, your days of study will include many different learning forms and types of activities, cf. our Study Activity Model which you can read more about on pages 12-13.
The focal point of all our study programmes is the combination of theory and practice. In the course of your studies, you will find learning activities connected to tasks, concepts and issues from the real world.

At UCN we combine theory and practice in three different ways:

1. **Hands-on in practice**
   In the course of your study, you will have an internship in a private or public enterprise or institution.

   During the internship, professional demands will be placed on you, and you will learn how to create coherence between the knowledge, skills and competences you have acquired in the course of study, as well as the specific tasks you come across in practical situations.

   You learn to manage yourself in a professional context in which you reflect on your own actions and those of others. During the internship you really get closer to your disciplinary field and your future work life.

   Through specific experiences from the internship your knowledge will come into play and this forms your basis of further learning. In the process you will experience how you come to interact with different professional groups and in that way develop your interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and competences.

2. **Bringing real life into the classroom**
   In the theoretical part of the study programme, where you are “back at school”, we include examples of knowledge and concepts from practice.

   We do that, for example, through casework, introductory speakers with experience from the field of practice, study of best practices, insight into the solutions of the future, as well as simulation and training of your skills and competences.

   We support you as a student in a learning process that goes from knowledge to action, enabling you to continuously attain the professional levels of your profession.

3. **Cooperation with practice**
   In the labour market there is a constant need for new, better and more efficient work forms. As a student you will, already during your study, be able to contribute to creating innovative solutions that can make a difference in real life.

   You can cooperate with the business community or the public sector, for example during project work, innovation camps or research and development projects.

   Through cooperation with companies and public institutions you will get the opportunity to work with concrete and real issues where you can use your knowledge.
AT UCN WE FOCUS ON THREE FACTORS THAT WILL ENHANCE THE INTERACTION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE:

1. As a student you must develop ways of applying knowledge and learn how to establish exact goals and gain confidence in your own skills.

2. During studies and tuition you must acquire knowledge and develop skills for use in practice.

3. You will become part of a work-related situation in which you will experience and use what you have learnt.
“UCN focuses more on the process than the result. While in the real world results are often important, it’s the technique that brings such results to life. This is where UCN shines, teaching the importance of every development aspect of each individual study.

To achieve this, independent and critical thinking are required and taught only by moving away from the traditional, overused memorization of books, concepts and theory. By shifting focus to practical and real world problems, students develop the ability to pro-actively react to the various challenges while also learning from mistakes.”

Sabin-Catalin Rimniceanu, studying Computer Science
We provide the framework

For UCN, cooperation with practice is decisive. We see it as our responsibility to provide the framework for:

› you as a student being able to set up hypotheses and test ideas in practice and through that practice your ability to suggest solutions and argue for certain actions;

› you being able to lay down realistic learning outcomes;

› you learning what the assignment means in practice;

› you acquiring effective learning strategies to solve assignments in practice;

› UCN’s lecturers continuously acquiring knowledge about and insight into practice via contact to the labour market, for example through combination employment and job rotation;

› involving practice experience in the theoretical tuition and ensuring a good basis for reflection and feedback on the experience of the students from practice; and

› planning tests and exams in cooperation with practice or as authentic, practice-related methods with a view to making the exam a learning situation in which you use your professional judgement.

“It is great to do an internship and sense that you can make a difference for those you work with. As a student you have the most recent knowledge, and I feel that we can contribute to practice. We have really been allowed to do that.”

Kate Vestergaard Pedersen
studying Occupational Therapistudendе
Think about it!

Work life today makes great demands on you to be able to change your course and act faster when new needs and challenges arise – in close interaction with the people with whom you work.

In the course of your studies you will therefore be inspired to be creative, to explore and to be innovative; and you will learn to look critically at your own learning, your experience, your knowledge and practice.

You bring your own values and personality into play, and through reflecting on your own practice you develop your personal judgement and ability to act professionally.

In the study programme you will also be working closely together with your fellow students. You learn to share knowledge and to work towards a common goal together with others.

The cooperation will give you an insight into the experience and learning of your fellow students, which also contributes to putting your own knowledge into perspective.

In that way you build up an important reflective competence which is decisive for being innovative, independent and productive in the labour market.

The way in which we work on developing and training your reflective competence varies from programme to programme.

It may be via reflection exercises or by means of portfolio and log, in which you systematically work on reflecting on your learning and your practice. It is also a possibility to identify your strengths and weaknesses and to set a goal for where you want to improve.

We also use feedback in different forms with participation of fellow students, lecturers or internship supervisors. In some study programmes we also use communication labs where you can analyse and reflect on your own communication and ability to impart knowledge.

""We are working with a portfolio where it is important to look inwards and see what you are good at, and what you are less good at. I would of course like to improve my weak spots. You can make a note of that and make it a goal for the next semester that I would like to become better at, say, economics. Then you choose, for example in group work, to take on responsibility for just that area."

Simon Christoffer Kroustrup
studying Architectural Technology and Construction Management
“We had a module where we were asked to write reflection papers once a week or once every two weeks. We were to write down everything we had learnt based on three recurring questions. That really gave us a chance to reflect on the inputs we had received during tuition, and it worked really well.”

Maja Sloth Andersen, studying the Teacher Education Programme
Together with the other university colleges, UCN has developed a model, the Study Activity Model, which provides an overall view of the study activities in our programmes.

The purpose of the Study Activity Model is to show you as a student the many-sided types of study activities in your programme, the demands we make on your efforts and the opportunities you have to get the most out of your programme.

Our learning activities are divided into four categories, each representing special forms of learning activities with participation of different players. The four categories require a total effort from you corresponding to full-time employment.
Examples of different study activities in the four categories of the Study Activity Model.

**CATEGORY 1:**
Participation of lecturers and students — initiated by lecturer
- Classroom lectures
- Skills lab
- Inclusive lecturing
- Student guidance and study groups
- Communication labs
- Innovation camps
- Exams and tests
- Team presentations
- Feedback on assignments and efforts
- Proposals for assignment exercises and learning processes
- Involvement in research and development projects
- Cooperative learning
- Project cooperation with professions/trades

**CATEGORY 2:**
Participation of students — initiated by lecturer
- Study assignments
- Study group work
- Study techniques
- Peer learning
- Blended learning, flipped classroom
- Project work
- Internship periods
- Observations
- Clinical/practical tuition
- Study visits to the profession-trade
- Logs/portfolio

**CATEGORY 4:**
Participation of lecturers and students — partly initiated by students
- Presentation of study products and processes
- Discussion events
- Evaluation of tuition forms and own learning
- Theme days
- Dialogue forums

**CATEGORY 3:**
Participation of students — initiated by students
- Study groups and joint preparation
- Independent studies
- Independent assignment work
- Interdisciplinary student relations
- Exam preparation
- Preparation of study products
6 QUICK TIPS!

› DO ATTEND CLASSES! Not for our sake – but for your own and your fellow students’ sake
› Use your lecturers – they know more than just the syllabus
› Be curious – seek knowledge
› Take on responsibility for benefiting enough from the study programme
› Exams are important – but your learning is more important
› Go test your study outcomes! Knowledge must work in real life
Participate in the study environment

The study environment is of course also an important part of the study programme. At UCN we support a study environment in which you and your fellow students can share knowledge, create synergy and develop professional, social and personal competences.

We strive to have up-to-date facilities that provide the framework for the good study environment, including library, auditoriums and classrooms, skills rooms, workshops and labs, possibilities of group work, cafés and social student-driven activities.

UCN’s physical study environment also invites various learning activities across professional groups and reflects the affiliation to the professions and trades for which you and your fellow students are educated.

The study environment not only exists in a physical form, but to a high degree also virtually on our digital platforms; and both physically and virtually we provide a framework for professional absorption, cooperation and being together, formally and informally.

Student life must give room for us to involve each other, have expectations and take on responsibility for our own efforts as well for each other, both as employees and students.

You will also experience that it will be possible to have influence on your own study environment as well as on UCN’s development by actively engaging yourself professionally and socially – also in student politics.

As you have been able to read in this brochure, it is UCN’s goal to educate you for reality in a constantly changing world. Therefore, the interaction between theory and practice combined with personal reflection remains the absolute core of all our study programmes – and the basis of the learning approach.

We see Reflective Practice-Based Learning as an ongoing development work which must always seek to reflect the needs of the trades and the professions, now and in future, so that you may develop your potential to make you as qualified and employable as possible.

Have a great time studying with us!

www.ucnorth.dk/learningapproach