



# RUglobal

Information and debate from Roskilde University

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## Green Café

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Hanne Leth Andersen



Ib Poulsen

# RUC's new undergraduate programmes

## - four attractive alternatives

*By: Rector Ib Poulsen and  
Pro-Rector Hanne Leth Andersen*

After the summer holidays, the first students will enrol at RUC's four new bachelor programmes in the Humanities, the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences and the Humanities and Technology. Following years of preparation, this is an event we are looking very much forward to and which – very appropriately – coincides with the university's 40th anniversary.

The four new programmes are a manifestation of the further development of RUC's education and learning model. However, a number of key components have been retained such as the general introduction to the programmes, the phased choice of subjects, the house structure and – not least – the group-based, problem-oriented project work. In addition, the programmes further develop the well-known RUC qualities such as a close relationship between education and research from the outset, development of clearly identifiable project skills and well-functioning academic and social study environments. Within the framework of the new programmes, RUC also aims to make special efforts to develop students' international and inter-cultural skills to more ambitiously exploit information and communication technology and to take an experimental approach to the project work form.

According to the general skills descriptions, the objective of the programmes are for students to obtain single-subject and interdisciplinary knowledge on theory, method and

theory of science. They must have exemplary insight in historical, societal, epistemological and ethic aspects of the sciences and be able to exercise critical academic judgment. Students should also be able to plan, complete and evaluate project processes, communicate knowledge to fellow students, peers and non-specialists, handle complex and development-oriented situations, independently form part of academic collaborations, including on an intercultural basis, and be able to exploit ICT in student and professional work. Furthermore, students should learn how to structure their own learning processes and define their skills profiles and how to make informed and qualified choices of graduate programmes and occupation.

Developing RUC students' skills awareness in relation to a difficult labour market situation is a big challenge. The new undergraduate programmes highlight clear progression, focus on sub-skills in a progressive process and on creating awareness of how the subjects of the individual student profile interact. Integrating a certain element of entrepreneurship in all study programmes is important because new bachelors and new graduates must be able to break down barriers, think innovatively and create opportunities for themselves in times of unacceptably high graduate unemployment rates.

### Natural Sciences at RUC

At the end of April, the university board resolved to adopt the recommendation by the Rectorship to further strengthen the natural

sciences field by injecting additional DKK 14.5 million into the Department of Science, Systems and Models in the coming years. This is done to ensure that the current subject portfolio can be maintained and that efforts are made to profile the programmes in relation to new target groups. This together with the new laboratory building, which is scheduled for completion in 2014, is a manifestation of RUC's strong focus on natural sciences.

The characteristics of RUC's natural sciences programmes are in particular the close relationship between education and research from the outset, which we aim to enhance. The field boasts well-functioning social study environments and develops sound project skills in an academic environment characterised by an integrated quality culture. What is now important is to draw the attention to it in order to attract more students; especially students who choose to combine other subjects with natural sciences subjects will design a profile to match some of the major challenges of our time: climate, environment, health, globalisation, education, welfare, labour market, modern technology and innovation.

### We are moving forward

By offering students the opportunity to combine interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programmes in close interaction in a campus-based university the size of RUC, RUC puts its students in a very strong position. We wish you a lovely summer and welcome you back to an interesting autumn semester!

*“Succes hænger sammen med forventninger om mestring,”  
Hanne Leth Andersen. ”*



# Low self-esteem and exam anxiety go hand in hand

Imagine you're sitting an exam, your heartbeat pounding away. Suddenly you lose control of the situation and can't remember any of what you've studied. You've blanked out! If you recognise this situation, you'll have experienced a case of exam anxiety. According to Hanne Leth Andersen, Pro-Rector, internal/external examiner and professor of university pedagogics, the risk of students being overwhelmed by exam anxiety is strongly associated with their self-esteem.

*By Eva Lykke Jørgensen, RUGlobal*

“Exam anxiety is about low academic self-esteem and fear that you might confirm a worry that you're not good enough,” explains Pro-Rector Hanne Leth Andersen.

“Students suffering from severe exam anxiety have in many cases experienced an unpleasant sense of failure, either in a teaching situation because they feel they've been singled out for not having sufficient skills, or at an exam

where they've failed to achieve success – and that feeling stays with them. In other words, it has a lot to do with a student's basic academic self-esteem,” says Ms Leth Andersen. She explains that people who do not experience examination anxiety are basically more confident about themselves and their ability to perform.

“They are confident that they have what it takes and, in particular, that if they make an effort, they can acquire knowledge. These are

also people with a strong motivation to learn and they're not afraid to show it. They have a fundamental belief in themselves and their ability,” says Ms Leth Andersen. Students with a high degree of self-confidence may have done poorly at exams, but they do not have the same conviction that they will do poorly again.

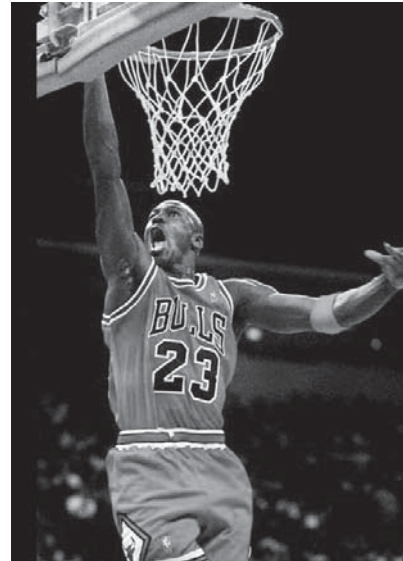
“When you have low academic self-esteem, you perform in order to avoid failure. If you have high self-esteem and positive expectations that you will do well, then you perform better. Self-esteem is hugely related to the expectations a student has about him- or herself. In other words, a student with positive expectations will not perceive failure as something that will repeat itself,” says Ms Leth Andersen, referring to social-cognitive theories on motivation and mastering.

According to Ms Leth Andersen, some students also experience that they have an ability to concentrate when taking an exam that they don't have in everyday situations. “In fact, some people just love taking an exam and getting a chance to talk about subjects they find hugely interesting, and with an approach like that, you obviously expect to do well,” she explains.

The good news is that it is possible to change your approach to taking exams and thereby avoid exam anxiety. To learn more, read the advice in the next article.



*“I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”*



# How to get rid of exam anxiety?

Here is some good advice on how to avoid exam anxiety from Pro-Rector Hanne Leth Andersen. Together with Jens Tofteskov of the Copenhagen Business School, she co-authored the book ‘Eksamen og eksamensformer: Betydning og bedømmelse’ (2008).

## **1** Take an analytical and emotionless approach to your exam

“Try to push your emotions aside and take an analytical approach to what you need to know for your exam. What are the requirements for this specific exam? What exactly is it you need to know? My suggestion is to try and take a more rational and emotionless approach when assessing your skills. Find out what requirements you consider difficult and which ones you are capable of meeting. Ask yourself: Can I structure my work? Do I have the necessary analytical skills? Do I have an understanding of the subject matter? Do I know what the exam is about?”

## **2** Prepare mentally – You can do it!

“The main thing is for you to prepare by reading up on the material and prepare mentally. In your mental preparations, you build a feeling that ‘you can do this’. You enter a preparatory mode and that helps you to become better and better. And it will be really exciting to take the exam and get the chance to perform. Try and build up

your self-confidence; to create the approach that ‘I actually believe in myself. I can do this!’ And: things may well have gone wrong once in the past, but it is exactly because I’m taking this approach that I will do well at this exam.”

## **3** Get a good friend to ask you questions about your exam anxiety

“Get a good friend among your fellow students to help you by asking you questions on what exam anxieties are actually about. It can be extremely helpful if a fellow student is there for you to listen and help you to analyse and reflect on your upcoming exam, but without giving too much advice. It is important that you find your own reasons and motives, and your own approach to doing well at exams. Think about what it is you’re afraid of, and how things have gone wrong in the past. What actually happened – emotionally and academically? This is one way of dealing with exam anxiety. It is a way of getting to the core, of processing it and finding out what you need to do to tackle it the next time you sit an exam.”

## **4** Don’t let your nervousness become an issue at your exam

“You don’t need to tell the internal and the external examiners how you’re feeling. They know very well how people feel when sitting an exam. In fact, just tell yourself that this is a natural state to be in. See if you can avoid turning it into an issue – if you don’t, it will take up even more of your concentration.”

## **5** Be grateful for adrenaline

“When you become nervous, adrenaline rushes to your brain, and when that happens your brain performs a whole lot better. That’s why adrenaline is something to be grateful for. Adrenaline is a hormone that is released in the human body when people need a special performance. From the dawn of time, it has been man’s fight-or-flight response. In an exam situation, we need to fight and use our entire brain capacity.”

# The naked truth

What a wonderful world. Birds are singing, the sun is shining every week and the tree of life grows all the spiritual fruits you can wish for, if only you give it all a chance. Possibilities are endless, and if you are nosing about at RU – trailing through the entire area – you will find little elements, all part of the great mosaic.

But isn't it so that RUC also deserves to come under intense scrutiny? Don't you

think that all the many little things going on at RUC should be looked at twice before being closely assessed? Well, indeed they should.

In another article in RUGlobal, this writer therefore speaks his mind and reviews everything on campus with a cheerful whistle and a twinkle in the eye. Everything deserves mentioning, which means that I will be blunt and to the point.



Mikkel Wendelboe

## Assessment:

Greenness:	
Apple juice temperature:	
Innovative thinking:	
Jam selection:	
Chicken sandwich selection:	

### Clarion call!

Anything you would like RUGlobal's straight-to-the-point reviewer to scrutinize for you? If so, just send an e-mail to [miwe@ruc.dk](mailto:miwe@ruc.dk), and we will have a look at the subject be it new, old or something completely different.

# Code word: Green!

All the residents at RUC know it.... the home-made lunch pack's enemy number one and the land where apple juice and piles of tempting Danish pastry are only waiting for the hordes of hungry students anxious to buy them. Whether we enter this land for the first time as newly enrolled students with gelled lively hair locks and brave smiles on uncertain lips or as more experienced professors whose primary focus lingers on the fundamental, big questions in life, we are there for the same reason: to eat and drink; a break in our everyday lives or a frustrating thorn in the flesh when chicken sandwiches have sold out again or the change only just doesn't cover yet another cup of deep brown Mokka coffee. Situated in the centre of campus, the canteen in building 01 is like a magnetic organ attracting people every day to this legendary place – these sacred catacombs of foods, thus making it even more relevant for RUGlobal to take a closer look at this place; this place where generations have had lunch together, have shared laughs, anxiety and nervousness and then ended up buying a couple of warm beers together, and which has even undergone an intriguing change of ownership recently. The writer is on the spot again, reviews the canteen in all its beauty and might – and delivers the naked truth....

# Green Café

Green lifestyle is a trend in today's society, and the canteen has now followed suit. Out goes everything unhealthy, and in comes anything rustic. What clever sales tactics!

# Green Café By RUC

The canteen at RUC has a new name and new owners. Green living is the keyword, and the writer is happy.

EGEKILDE  
REN NATURKRAFT



greenkitchen  
healthy food

**Text and photo: Mikkel Wendelboe, RUGlobal**

"Apple juice!", is the immediate reaction from my brain, but I ignore it with indifference. By now, the golden drink made from the ripe fruits of the apple tree is the only thing that can drive me towards the canteen, but still I have this feeling of excitement in my stomach. I sense something new is hovering as an attraction above the building and therefore try to meekly brush aside my previously so precious prejudices and perceptions of this place. Feeling ashamed, I suppress words such as *misplaced*, *low dive* and *total lack of chicken between bread* in my unconscious, just as the title of the new place flickers flirtatiously before my eyes. It is a title that truly calls to mind the current (and the writer's) most glorified trend.

"Green Café By RUC".

"And green it is...", I establish to myself with a fair amount of curiosity as I step into the holy premises and take in the first impressions of the new, improved canteen. Brave new world. The structure is the same, yet different. The shelves targeting impulse buyers have been taken down, favouring a more rustic and cosy style. Piles of something resembling organic crisps are placed near the tills next to jars of jam, and the many tempting chocolates and

easy calories have, in no time, become a thing of the past. Just my spirit, but hopefully not naive in times when Twix and sugar-powdered sweets sell better than churned berries and boiled sugar, as you well know.

The coffee vending machines are carefully wrapped in jungle-inspiring green shades and even if the leaves are printed in laminate, the colour is in fact more refreshing than I dare admit at the moment. Much to my relief, the hot meals, the salad buffet and the plexiglass boxes containing sandwiches can still be found in their usual places, exactly as I remember it after having wandered about – like a stray dog – searching for food for hours on end. The refrigerators contain a large selection of beverages – and especially of mineral water, which seriously warms the cockles of my heart. "Vitaminwater". The latest craze. An obvious launch to make people ride the green wave.

There is no mistaking the green message of the redesigned canteen. The more I scan the room to take it all in, it becomes more and more clear to me. The green message is spot on in light of the mentality that ungraciously prevails everywhere on campus – in the rosy world of its lovely residents, but is it also spot on in light of their purchase mentality? I am not fully convinced when – deep in thought

– I take my well-known apple juice out of the fridge; however, the tingling coolness from the life-giving elixir, which immediately spreads to my fingertips, makes me sigh sentimentally. Ice-cold juice is what RUC's canteen is to me, and it is still capable of reviving that feeling – despite the green "coat".

The cashiers and the smiling guards are the same as before despite their new working coats, and while reflectively I pay the meticulously saved 14 Kroner for my apple juice, the cashier gives me a smile. With cheerful ringing sounds, the coins find their way into the till, and the ice-cold drink runs down my throat (giving me the usual frostbite of the brain) so I am happy with what I have seen.

The new owners have tried to change little things, and whether their green fingers will leave their mark, time will show. However, these little things have not changed the fact that the canteen looks like its old self, behaves like its old self and breathes like its old self. It serves its purpose, and no matter what – that is the most important thing. The fact that the green concept cheers me up along the way is just an extra plus point in my book.

"No doubt, I will soon be back for yet another apple juice".