



### DO NOT WORK AROUND THE CLOCK

Professor Dario Leister is determined to create an elite plant science center with room for creativity and a healthy work-life balance.

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### WORLD-CLASS RESEARCH FACILITIES

With ten state-of-the-art new buildings, the University of Copenhagen is raising its research facilities to an entirely new level.

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### A GREAT PLACE TO RAISE CHILDREN

Postdoc in biochemistry Qi Yao does nothing to conceal that she is extremely ambitious and expecting her first child.

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UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

# Profile / NEXT STOP COPENHAGEN



Postdocs in cosmology:

“Moving here was a wonderful opportunity both for our careers and for our small family”

# Why Copenhagen?

High-level research is a global field. Naturally, researchers gravitate towards environments that offer the best prospects for developing talents and potential. Young researchers find it particularly difficult to establish geographical roots.

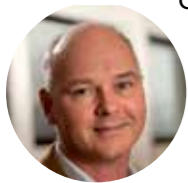
The global locations for scientific hotspots vary from one profession to another – and are constantly changing. At the University of Copenhagen (UCPH), however, we have a range of environments that are strong magnets for ambitious researchers from all over the world.

If you are a young researcher choosing between several strong universities, you will inevitably consider more than the level of research quality in isolation. Other relevant questions include: Where is the campus situated? Do research facilities meet global standards? Is collaboration across faculties encouraged? What is the country like, and the city that will be your home? Can you combine your career with family life? And will the university help with the practical and social aspects of relocation and settling in?

In this magazine, we let five young researchers who have chosen Copenhagen as the temporary setting for their scientific careers answer these questions. They describe and share their personal considerations, teething troubles and good advice.

We do not try to conceal the purpose of the magazine: We are looking for some of the most highly skilled research talents in the world. We would therefore like to present Denmark, the capital and especially the University of Copenhagen in a good light while explaining what we have to offer. And we are ready to warmly welcome you to

Copenhagen if we match your requirements and expectations for an exciting career in research with a healthy work-life balance.



Thomas Bjørnholm, prorector

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# Combining a Master's and PhD in the same laboratory

25-year-old Darryl Johnson has joined the University of Copenhagen's new Graduate Talent Programme – a cohesive five-year PhD programme that provides scope for in-depth professional study, as he explains.

**AFTER A BACHELOR'S DEGREE** in human genetics, Darryl Johnson moved from Ireland to Denmark in 2013 to work for a researcher he has great respect for: Stephen M. Cohen, a Canadian professor and leading global authority on micro-RNA biology and fruitfly development.

"I greatly admire Professor Stephen M. Cohen as a researcher, and find his field of research incredibly interesting and important. I therefore wrote and asked to join his research team. Fortunately, he agreed," says Darryl Johnson.

He is therefore participating in a five-year PhD programme in Professor Cohen's laboratory – thanks to the University of Copenhagen Graduate Talent Programme and the Lundbeck Foundation, which is sponsoring three years of his studies.

## Five years in one place instils a sense of calm

The Graduate Talent Programme is a five-year PhD scholarship for particularly talented international students. The way the programme is designed allows Darryl to study as an MSc student and a PhD student simultaneously. Many elements of his MSc programme will be integrated in his subsequent PhD project, leaving more time for in-depth study. According to Darryl:

"Taking my Master's and PhD in the same laboratory is a distinct advantage. From day one, we could plan my studies in the direction of a PhD. That gives me the peace of mind to focus on my research rather than having to apply for a new position midway through and becoming acquainted with a new field of research," he says.

Professor Stephen M. Cohen is in the process of moving his laboratory from Singapore to the University of Copenhagen, where he has established a research team at the Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine. He has received a Novo Nordisk Laureate Research Grant for seven years of research, which will facilitate work on the identification of new genes that cooperate in the development of cancer and metastasis.

## Impressed by Danish design

Copenhagen suits Darryl Johnson down to the ground and he feels at home – though it has proved rather more difficult than anticipated to get to know the Danes socially.

"Seven months have passed and I have settled in, but it took a surprisingly long time to make Danish friends, even though I live in a hall of residence and take academic classes as part of my programme. To date, I have one Danish friend and the rest are international."

In his spare time, Darryl Johnson and his friends often visit art exhibitions. He is also impressed by Danish design.

"I like Copenhagen. It's a very aesthetically attractive city with beautiful buildings and interior design. Generally, Danish homes are more comfortable and tastefully furnished than I am used to seeing in Ireland. That helps compensate for the harsh Danish winters," he smiles.

## Graduate Talent Programme at the University of Copenhagen

Some of the strongest research environments at UCPH offer a five-year PhD scholarship for the most talented Bachelor degree graduates.

You will start your PhD project from day one, enrolling as an MSc student and PhD student simultaneously.

After the first three years of the programme, you obtain an MSc degree. As many of the optional elements of the MSc programme as possible, including the writing of your Master's thesis, will be integrated with your PhD project. This gives you and your supervisor more time for research.

You will have the same principal supervisor during the entire programme at the department where you will be carrying out your project, and together you will design a five-year plan for your PhD project.



*Darryl Johnson pursued his goal to join Professor Stephen M. Cohen's team of researchers at the University of Copenhagen. Now the young Irishman is following a five-year PhD programme at Professor Cohen's laboratory.*

# A great place to raise children

31-year-old Qi Yao from China, a postdoc at the University of Copenhagen, is expecting her first child. Though the new addition to the family was unexpected, Qi is looking forward to welcoming the baby into the world in Denmark, where prospects for parents with young children are bright.



My PhD counsellor had visited Copenhagen and warmly recommended it. And the Danes are good at English, which was also important to us.

QI YAO IS EXTREMELY AMBITIOUS and does nothing to conceal it. She is a postdoc in an international research team at the Institute of Cellular and Molecular Medicine (ICMM), the University of Copenhagen, and has co-authored a number of published scientific articles. And that is only the beginning:

“I set myself very high professional goals and am extremely dedicated to my research. Naturally, I prioritise having scientific articles printed in high quality publications,” she smiles.

However, though there will be an adorable little speed bump in her career path in the near future, her long-term ambitions remain clear. Qi Yao is expecting her first child in two months’ time in the midst of her postdoc position.

“We hadn’t planned to start a family. So naturally, this will divert some of my short-term career plans. However, I’m hoping the baby is easy so that my break from my research is not too long and I’m pleased that the facilities for parents in Denmark are so good. The lengthy maternity leave available with pay means that our financial situation will remain stable and the childcare facilities are well organised,” she says.

“As a PhD fellow, postdoc/assistant professor or office trainee you can choose to have your period of employment extended corresponding to your maternity leave. That is also reassuring for researchers,” she points out.

## Found employment quickly

Her husband, Hui Li, is also Chinese and, like Qi Yao, researches the field of biochemistry. He moved to Copenhagen three years ago from the couple’s home town, Wuhan, to accept a research position at a University of Copenhagen institute where he now conducts skin cancer

research. The job was announced in *Nature*, and he applied as it represented a challenging career move and UCPH had been recommended to both him and Qi Yao.

“My PhD counsellor had visited Copenhagen and warmly recommended it. And the Danes are good at English, which was also important to us,” Qi Yao explains.

For two years, the couple lived half a world apart: He lived in Copenhagen while she lived and studied at the University in Wuhan. After completing her PhD, Qi Yao came to Copenhagen to live with her husband and quickly found a postdoc appointment:

“I applied for three postdoc positions. I was interviewed for all three, offered the job at the institute here and am now affiliated with the Center for Healthy Aging (CEHA), which I am most interested in because of my research focus,” she says.

Research at the centre includes age-related diseases, and Qi Yao’s research team investigates the biochemical, molecular and cell biological functions of DNA repair factors in eukaryotic cells and how these factors act to maintain chromosome stability. In particular, with a focus on genes that, when defective, give rise to disorders in humans associated with the premature onset of aging and/or age-associated diseases such as cancer.

## Open-minded Danes

This is the first time Qi Yao has resided outside China, and she feels she has settled in well:

“The Danes are very open-minded. While taking a walk, my husband and I have more than once been asked spontaneously by helpful Danes if we need assistance finding our way. And the Danes have a good sense of humour,” she smiles.

Ultimately, she expects to return to China as both she and her husband have no siblings and have elderly parents to look after. Yet the couple wish to spend some years in Denmark first. Qi Yao plans to apply for a fellowship at the University of Copenhagen when her postdoc appointment expires.

“We would like to stay here for some years. Our parents will therefore have to visit us and help look after our son so that we can prioritise both family and research,” she smiles.



*Qi Yao sets herself very high professional goals and is extremely dedicated to her research. She is pleased that Denmark offers good opportunities for combining parenthood with a career.*

# A unique urban oasis

The Danish capital has been awarded the title of the world's most livable city thanks to its people-friendly green urban planning, explains a leading global expert in urban quality. And the excellent quality of life in the city makes Copenhagen a particularly appealing university city.

**COPENHAGEN CONSISTENTLY TOPS** the list of the world's most livable cities. In 2013, for the second time, the lifestyle magazine *Monocle* ranked Copenhagen top of its annual list of most livable cities, basing the choice on “the trickiest of balancing acts between progress and preservation, stimulation and security, global and local”.

Copenhagen masters this balance through urban planning that *Monocle* describes as “undeniably seamless”. Professor Jan Gehl agrees. An architect and professor emeritus of urban design at the School of Architecture in Copenhagen, he advises city officials all over the world about urban design.

“Copenhagen ranks high on all the lists of most livable cities and there is no doubt that this relates to the systematic approach to creating good urban spaces that Copenhagen has implemented for the past 50 years or more – an excellent achievement,” he says.

## The best cycle city in the world

With a targeted strategy dating back to the 1960s, Copenhagen was one of the first cities in the world to pedestrianise its main street, Strøget, at the heart of the city centre, which remains a thriving shoppers' paradise to this day. Since then, Copenhagen has systematically expanded facilities for pedestrians while focusing on improving conditions for the city's cyclists. The result is an impressive street scene featuring cycles and cyclists, and purpose-built cycle track, green cycle routes and short cuts for cyclists criss-crossing the city and lanes flanking all the busiest streets. And cyclists will enjoy even better facilities in the future: Since 2011, the city has cultivated a political strategy to be the best city for cyclists in the world, aiming to give cyclists the ultimate cycle experience.

Throughout the entire period, the city council has been collaborating closely with researchers and experts in architecture and urban life, who have documented and studied quality of life in the city. This has created an entirely unique focus on creating appealing, attractive urban environments. Jan Gehl explains:

“Research projects have progressed hand-in-hand with urban development in Copenhagen and clearly this helps to explain why Copenhagen is now the role model for cities

*World-renowned Danish architect and urban planner Jan Gehl on the steps of the university's old main building in the heart of Copenhagen.*



Copenhagen has a thriving pulse that students and researchers find appealing. I have met countless researchers who have settled in quickly and easily.

worldwide. The countless streets, squares and spaces in Copenhagen comprise a special hallmark that other cities are now attempting to copy. They are so inviting that Copenhageners enjoy visiting them – not only when they have specific errands to run.

## Competing with Harvard

Jan Gehl believes that the University of Copenhagen easily measures up to and perhaps outshines prestigious universities such as Harvard, Berkeley and Cambridge University in terms of offering researchers and students an attractive urban environment.

“As universities often drive urban development in a progressive direction, many of the world's leading university cities are becoming greener, with more people-friendly urban planning than average. This also applies to the University of Copenhagen, which has the additional advantage that it is based in a larger, more dynamic city than Cambridge in Massachusetts, where Harvard is located.

He is quick to advise researchers and students from all over the world to come to Copenhagen and bring their families with them:

“Copenhagen has a thriving pulse that students and researchers find appealing. I have met countless researchers who have settled in quickly and easily. Without exception, they are all deeply impressed by Copenhagen. Their only criticism concerns the high prices, but that is also the case in many other university cities,” he says.

Some universities are located far from the nearest city centre. Jan Gehl is a keen opponent of this as it drains the university environment of energy and life. He believes universities should be based in city centres, and the University of Copenhagen fulfils that concept to some extent.

“Once located in the oldest part of the city centre, the University of Copenhagen has grown and spread to include other parts of the city. They are not far apart, however, and all the faculties are so close to the city centre that you can cycle there in no time,” he says.

## Jan Gehl

Architect (MAA & FRIBA) and professor emeritus of Urban Design at the School of Architecture in Copenhagen.

Founding partner at Gehl Architects, an urban research and design consultancy.

Awarded numerous honorary degrees and international prizes for his contribution to human-centred urban planning in cities around the world – among them New York City.

# The best ideas often appear outside the office

“Ground-breaking research requires unique thoughts and you do not get those buried under piles of books.”

*Professor Dario Leister enjoys living and spending time close to nature. He appreciates that exploring the countryside is easy from Copenhagen.*

Head of the new Copenhagen Plant Science Centre at the University of Copenhagen, Professor Dario Leister, from Germany, is determined to create an elite institution with top plant researchers from around the world and time off on the agenda.

**DARIO LEISTER HAS HAD MANY OF HIS BEST** research ideas while cycling. As head of the University of Copenhagen's new research centre for plant science, his message to researchers is – do not work around the clock because creativity suffers:

“I've had many of my best ideas while cycling to work and I'd advise my colleagues against working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. Long term, it's a bad choice of priorities. Ground-breaking research requires unique thoughts and you do not get those buried under piles of books,” he says.

## Joining the Champions League

Groundbreaking research is exactly what Dario Leister is intending to create at the helm of the new Plant Science Centre. The centre's structure is therefore inspired by elite institutions in China and the US, where researchers can devote themselves to research supported by a large staff of postdocs and PhD students.

“We are aiming to join the Champions League within plant research and want to attract top-calibre researchers. With three or four PhD students and postdocs on their team, researchers will not need to spend time on writing research applications and other administrative tasks that can otherwise drain their resources,” explains Dario Leister.

He started to specialise in photosynthesis research at the Max-Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research in Cologne and continued these activities at the Ludwig-Maximilian's University in Munich. The new centre in Copenhagen will investigate the systems biology and synthesis biology of plants, which involves assembling the building blocks of nature (genes and proteins) in new ways to benefit mankind. “Essentially, each researcher can focus on contributing original and truly innovative ideas,” he adds.

Dario is impressed by the level of efficient organisation at the University of Copenhagen. That has paved the way for the new centre, though it also involves slightly more bureaucracy than he is used to:

“There is slightly more formal administration but this ensures everything is very well-organised and efficient. That is clearly an advantage for researchers from outside – provided it does not promote a culture where fear of making mistakes prevents employees from thinking independently,” he adds.

## An appreciation for nature

47-year-old Dario Leister commutes to Copenhagen from a small town just outside Munich, where he lives with his family. As he is currently flying to Copenhagen to stay in a hotel for two days on alternate weeks for a programme packed with meetings, his impression of Denmark off campus is rather limited. He is particularly looking forward to exploring the Danish countryside.

“I enjoy living and spending time close to nature, so I appreciate that exploring the countryside is easy from Copenhagen. So far, I have only had time for one trip out of Copenhagen: After a seminar near a beach, I strolled along the water's edge collecting stones. That kind of affinity with nature opens my mind to new creative ideas that spill over into my research and management activities.”

# All within walking distance

US couple Kristian Finlator and Moire Prescott conduct research into phenomena that are light years away. However, everyday life is close at hand as they work within walking distance of home and their son's day-care centre.

**IT WAS WINTER** when the couple, Kristian Finlator and Moire Prescott, both researchers, visited the Dark Cosmology Center at the University of Copenhagen for the first time. They had both been offered postdoc positions at the centre, which studies the dark regions of the universe, and the couple travelled all the way from Santa Barbara in California to decide whether to seize the opportunity and move to Copenhagen with their son, who had yet to be born at the time.

"It was cold and dark outside but as soon as we stepped through the doors of the centre, we felt welcome among the highly skilled research colleagues in the warm, open atmosphere. When we were also offered very attractive research positions, we seized our chance. It was a wonderful opportunity both for our careers and for our little family," says Moire Prescott.

## With junior on the job

They both study how galaxies evolve but from different approaches. 37-year-old Kristian Finlator's research is theoretical and includes advanced computer models whereas 34-year-old Moire Prescott bases her work on her own and other researchers' telescope observations. Sharing an office has proved invaluable, especially during their first six months at the centre. They did not find childcare facilities for their son until he was almost a year old. Until then, he went to work with his parents.

"Our son was only five months old when we arrived here, so he came to the office with us and we took turns looking after him and working. Our office hours are very flexible and our colleagues were incredibly understanding. No one minded when I took part in a meeting cradling a sleeping baby in my arms," says Kristian Finlator.

## Valuable help getting settled

What surprised him most about Denmark is that the Danes use the same ID everywhere:

"As an American, I was concerned that the system could be abused, but that is hardly ever the case here in practice. The Danish system makes it incredibly easy to move to Denmark and settle in at the university without spending time applying for countless different log-in passwords."

He is full of praise for the relocation assistance he has received from the University of Copenhagen.

"Relocating with a baby makes you particularly vulnerable but we received help with everything from opening a bank account to house hunting. Social events are also organised for foreign researchers but we miss those because of having a small child," he smiles.

## New playground every day

The office is just a short walk from the family's flat and their son's kindergarten. Consequently, the couple do not need a car and they do not miss it, according to Moire Prescott.

"We walk everywhere. It takes 15 minutes to walk to work from the flat we have rented and there are plenty of cafés and shops just around the corner. Our son is looked

after close by and Copenhagen is full of parks with playgrounds where we can have fun. We can almost choose a new one every day," she says.

Learning Danish from day one is not necessary. One in three colleagues at the Dark Cosmology Center are from outside Denmark, and the Danes speak English very well, according to the couple. Even so, both Kristian and Moire prioritise attending Danish classes, and their 18-month-old son already knows some Danish words.

None of them want to move away from Copenhagen but their employment contracts expire in three years:

"Relocating is part and parcel of our life until we find permanent positions but we are certainly intending to return to Copenhagen and the institute often," says Moire.

“

Relocating with a baby makes you particularly vulnerable but we received help with everything from opening a bank account to house hunting.

*Kristian Finlator and Moire Prescott outside the Dark Cosmology Center. They relocated from California to Copenhagen to find two attractive postdoc positions and a good base for their family.*



# World-class research facilities

As scientific breakthroughs are stemming increasingly from collaboration between scientific disciplines, the University of Copenhagen is building its future research on principles of transparency and flexibility based on a multi-disciplinary approach.



*Deputy Director Anders Boe Hauggaard is responsible for ten major construction projects that are currently in progress. He emphasises that the university's buildings will be visibly transparent and appealing.*

WITH ITS TEN AMBITIOUS state-of-the-art new buildings, UCPH is raising both its day-to-day research and teaching facilities as well as its international reputation and profile to an entirely new level.

At the turn of 2013-2014, UCPH's ten major engineering projects, at various stages of planning, design and execution, were worth a total of nearly EUR 1 billion. Some of these buildings are co-funded by the government while others have also attracted support from private sponsors.

"This comprehensive transformation will cover half of our entire campus, improving facilities for half of the university's daily users in the years ahead," says Anders Boe Hauggaard, deputy director and head of the University of Copenhagen's Campus Service.

He explains that as outdated and less expedient buildings will be vacated as the new hitech, purpose-built R&D and teaching environments are taken into operation, the overall floor space will remain the same.

"The extensive campus improvements will propel UCPH into the premier league and global spotlight, as these valuable assets will be one element in attracting top-calibre researchers and talents from all over the world – though naturally, the excellent research and teaching taking place at UCPH will always be the core attraction," says Anders Boe Hauggaard.

## Society in focus

Significantly upgrading such large parts of the infrastructure in one carefully coordinated step provides a unique chance to create the best possible future-oriented university environment. This holistic approach will also respect the university's solid reputation and architectural heritage, which span an impressive 500 years.

"Universities are interacting increasingly with society, demonstrating the relevance of their activities rather than working behind closed doors," explains Anders Boe Hauggaard. "We therefore appreciate and abide by the virtues of transparent architecture and openness to society practised by truly global institutions of research and learning."

Openness involves strengthening links between researchers, students and local communities, other knowledge environments and private companies. The new Copenhagen Science City will transform the university's northern campus, an area that already represents one of Europe's highest concentrations of education, basic research and applied research within pharmaceuticals, healthcare and natural sciences.

"Our campus mindset is also inspiring changes in other areas of the city. By improving the university's infrastructure and integrating it with activities in a specific area, we can stimulate a dynamic urban environment with all the features appreciated by researchers, students, companies and community stakeholders," says Anders Boe Hauggaard.

## The new buildings will:

- Be visibly transparent and appealing
- Support collaboration between disciplines
- Make efficient, future-proof and flexible use of space
- Reflect sound environmental and climate-friendly values.

## Inter-disciplinary, flexible and green

The layout of the new buildings will also reflect that inter-disciplinary collaboration is expected to drive future scientific breakthroughs. Experts from different research environments will have easy access to each other – with plenty of opportunities to meet and collaborate on a daily basis. The flexible infrastructure will mean that laboratories can be established and adapted quickly to suit changing requirements. Buildings and facilities must be sufficiently robust to fulfil future needs, many of which are unknown and unpredictable due to the ever-evolving nature of prevailing research trends.

"Speed is frequently a crucial aspect of major research investments, including how fast the necessary facilities can be up and running after an agreement is signed. Our flexible infrastructure is therefore a vital aspect of our competitiveness," says Anders Boe Hauggaard.

He considers implementing sustainable climate-friendly architecture a natural part of the process since this is one of the university's specific fields of research:

"Together, the university buildings, campus and activities will form a living laboratory for research and education that will pioneer sustainability in areas such as the application of permeable coatings, smart grids, energy-optimised refrigeration systems etc.," he explains.

The University of Copenhagen also has an ambitious strategy for reducing both its energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Having more than fulfilled its goals to reduce both these parameters by 20% per job year (from 2006 to 2013), the university is now ready to set new green targets.

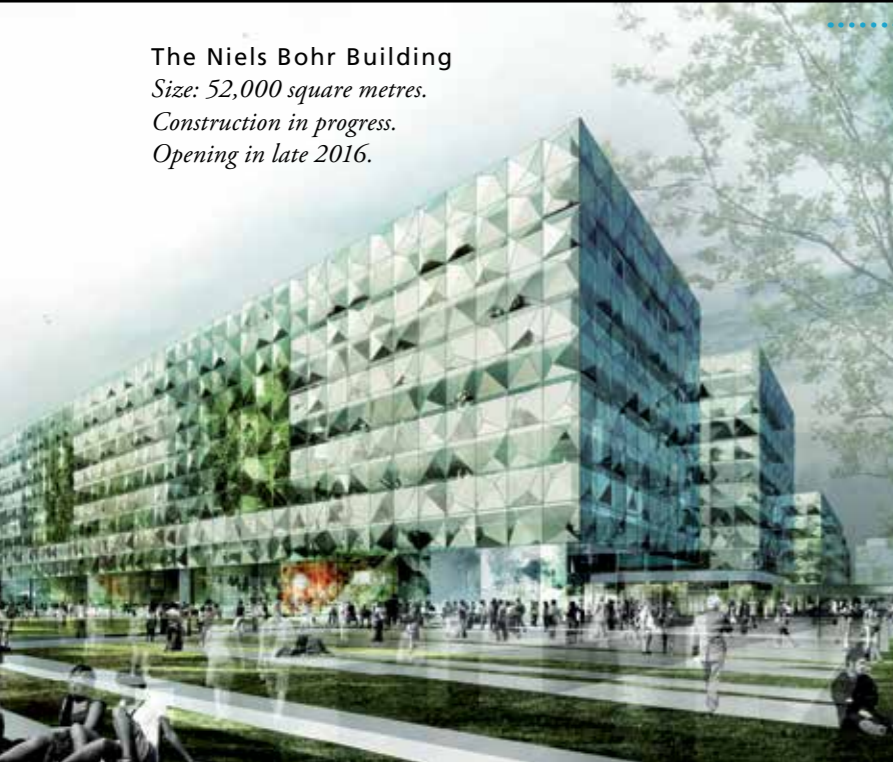


Universities are interacting increasingly with society, demonstrating the relevance of their activities rather than working behind closed doors.



**The Niels Bohr Building**

*Size: 52,000 square metres.  
Construction in progress.  
Opening in late 2016.*



Subjects such as physics, chemistry, computer science, mathematics and the didactics of natural science will gain an entirely new environment for research, dissemination and education when the new Niels Bohr Building opens. The new facilities will be used on a daily basis by about 3,000–4,000 students and more than 1,000 researchers and PhD students.

The plan is to add an extension at a later date that encompasses a Data Management and Software Center to collect and analyse data from Europe's first neutron spallation facility, the European Spallation Source (ESS). Together with the MAX IV X-ray source, ESS will be one of the best research facilities in the world. Here, researchers will be able to investigate all kinds of materials, thereby creating valuable new insight into the structure of materials. The entire facility, which will be located in the Swedish town of Lund just one hour's drive from Copenhagen, is scheduled for completion in 2020.

**Copenhagen Plant Science Centers I and II**

*Size: 7,250 square metres and 6,800 square metres.  
Construction in progress. Opening in 2016.*

The modern new research facilities will give researchers and students at the Faculty of Science the best possible environment for future plant research.

At this new facility, researchers will strive to solve major global challenges triggered by increasing pressure on the planet's resources. Research will include increasing plant yields with fewer resources, producing plastic materials without the use of crude oil, optimising plants for medical use as well as better use of plant-based substances for feed, fibre and food ingredients.

Meet Professor Dario Leister, head of the new centre, on page 10.

## Building a university for the future

**The Natural History Museum of Denmark**

*Size: 55,500 square metres (of which 17,000 square metres is for research).  
Planning and financing in progress.  
Expected to open in 2018.*



The Natural History Museum of Denmark (SNM) houses one of the oldest and most important natural history collections in the world, which encompasses 14 million objects collected from all over the globe over the past 400 years.

Of immense interest and value for research purposes and for the Danish and international public, the collection is currently dispersed at various separate locations. Now the entire collection will be united at a new purpose-built museum beside the Botanical Garden in the heart of Copenhagen.

Visitors will experience a unique collection of whale skeletons as well as specimens of rare beetles, butterflies, polar bear skulls, giant sloths, pressed plants, dried flowers, meteorites, rock samples and crystals. The museum will also feature live specimens of meat-eating plants, orchids, cacti and oak trees – a total of approx. 9,000 plant species at the Botanical Garden.

With its links to the University of Copenhagen, the museum is already a focal point for top international research, and houses three basic research centres among its facilities: the Center for Geogenetics, Centre for Star and Planet Formation and Center for Biodiversity. With its new building, the museum can merge research into zoology, geology and botany, thereby paving the way for a wider range of valuable multi-disciplinary research results.

**The Maersk Building**

*Size: 42,700 square metres.  
Construction in progress. Opening in late 2015.*



The Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences will be expanding its existing facilities with a fifteen-storey tower reaching 75 metres into the skyline and covering approx. 140,000 square metres.

Twelve of the floors will house some of the world's leading research teams within health and medical sciences. Here, front-line research will be conducted in areas that are vital in the quest to find future treatments for cancer, dementia, diabetes, heart disease and allergies.

The ground floor will feature modern auditoriums, classrooms and a canteen. The top floor will include a hospitality centre with public access – and perhaps the best view Copenhagen can offer.

Together, the Maersk Building and neighbouring Copenhagen University Hospital, one of the largest and most specialised hospitals in Denmark, will comprise a power centre for health and medical sciences in the centre of this thriving capital.

# Commuting compromise for devoted spouse

Italian Michela Gaifami moved to Denmark with her German partner when he was offered a research position at the University of Copenhagen. However, finding nearby long-term employment as a spouse was more difficult than expected.

**33-YEAR-OLD MICHELA GAIFAMI** relocated to Copenhagen with her partner when he was given a contract spanning several years as a researcher at the University of Copenhagen. Finding a challenging job in Copenhagen as a spouse proved so difficult, however, that Michela Gaifami finally accepted a job at the other end of Denmark and now commutes.

“It is important for me as a spouse to have a meaningful job, and now I have a very interesting and professionally stimulating career. The only major disadvantage is that working 300 km from Copenhagen means I fly backwards and forwards and see my partner mainly at weekends,” explains Michela Gaifami.

## Applied for 20 jobs

Michela Gaifami is Italian. She and her German partner lived and worked in Munich until he was offered a position as a physicist at the University of Copenhagen. With a Master's in European Studies and specialising in EU funding, she was sure she would easily find a job in Denmark. And she was right – initially, at least. Before leaving Munich, Michela was offered a temporary position as project officer for an EU programme with a secretariat in Copenhagen:

“My first year in Denmark was wonderful as we both had jobs in Copenhagen and could make the most of the many opportunities the city has to offer. I grew up in Milan, and I think Copenhagen is a fantastic city with just the right distance to everything. And during the summer there are plenty of concerts and events in the capital.”

When Michela Gaifami's contract as a project officer expired, she left no stone unturned in her quest for work in Denmark. She wrote many job applications but not a single Danish employer invited her to an interview, which surprised her.

“It was easy to gain a picture of vacant positions and surprisingly many vacancies matched my profile. Yet I was

never invited to interviews. I wondered why, as my expertise in funding is extremely relevant for Danish universities and consulting companies, for example,” she explains.

## Useful advice on job hunting

She visited the University of Copenhagen's department for International Staff Mobility, where she was given individual advice on job hunting and participated in a workshop on how the Danish labour market functions. It was an eye-opener, as she says:

“For instance in Italy it is taboo to call a potential employer after submitting your application. It would be seen as an attempt to cheat. Here it is entirely normal and actually an advantage though I was unaware of that. So I would definitely advise spouses to seek guidance on job hunting here.”

Michela Gaifami speaks Italian, English, French, Portuguese, and some German but not Danish. In her experience, this has restricted her employment opportunities.

“Reading between the lines, many Danish employers I have approached prefer candidates who speak Danish. I therefore began learning Danish as soon as possible. It's not an easy language but as an expat in Denmark, you are eligible for up to three years of free Danish classes.”

## Weekends together

Michela Gaifami is currently a trainer and developer with the INTERACT Programme, an EU programme with a secretariat based in Viborg, Jutland, a Danish province 300 km from Copenhagen. She lives in Viborg from Monday to Thursday or Friday and returns home to spend weekends with her partner. Commuting backwards and forwards from Copenhagen every day is out of the question as the trip from home to the office in Viborg and back by plane takes three and a half hours.

“I chose a compromise, furthering my career in return for accepting a job far away,” she says.

“

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*Finding a challenging job in Copenhagen as a spouse proved so difficult that Michela Gaifami finally accepted a job 300 km away and now commutes.*



# Worth knowing

## about the University of Copenhagen

Read more at  
[www.ku.dk/english](http://www.ku.dk/english)



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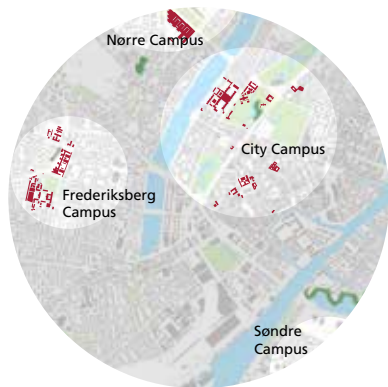
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