



Student politics are politics

Should student politics only ever be an endless rant about parking fees that has no broader impact on the society to which students belong? A common cliché people hear about student politics is that it is not, and should not be, connected to politics outside the university. The idea sounds nice, but on closer inspection, it doesn't make sense. Examining the history of student movements and the academic community, it's clear that the fight for accessible higher education and student rights is deeply rooted in politics. Students have had to fight for student housing, better study and teaching facilities, a stronger student loan system, and better universities in general. The student's voice also matters when it comes to international affairs, environmental issues, and everything else that touches the university community in a wider context. Time and again, governments have been reluctant to act, and in those moments, strong student political struggle has been crucial.

Student advocacy is politics

At its core, student advocacy is about demanding better conditions for students. It's then up to the authorities to deliver said improvements, whether that's the university itself, the municipalities, or Parliament. The examples are endless. The development of student housing and campus zoning plans go through city authorities, changes to the student loan system

and registration fees go through Parliament. The Student Union was literally created by an act of Parliament. Think about that - the Student Cellar is run by an institution established by law in Parliament, yet people still claim student politics is unrelated to national politics.

Student politics in context

Röskva's fights have always aimed to have a broader impact than just within the university. The fight for a student transport card is a fight for a more affordable and environmentally friendly society. The fight for raising basic subsistence allowance and replacing the loan system with a grant system is a fight for equal access to education, a vital weapon against economic inequality. Even small proposals, such as Röskva's initiative to establish childcare facilities on campus, are fights for equality. Higher education should also be accessible to young parents.

The University is not an island; neutrality is a stance

It's often said that one of the main differences between Röskva and the other faction in the Student Council is that Röskva takes positions on off-campus issues, especially international ones. First, the current majority faction has historically shifted between taking positions on international issues depending on the case. Second, international

issues often directly affect students. For example, when US authorities ban certain universities from admitting international students, that's not just an outside issue. Third, refusing to support an academic boycott of Israel because you don't want to take a stance is itself a stance on international affairs. Neutrality always benefits someone. Under the cover of neutrality, the current majority of the Student Council has remained silent on the educational and genocidal crisis in Gaza, as well as on other matters affecting the global academic community. If the Student Council doesn't take a stance on whether the university should do business with Rapyd, then no pressure is created for action or a boycott. Leaving the ballot blank is still a decision with consequences, in this case, harmful ones.

It's not complicated

Honestly, I might be looking too deeply into this. You really don't need more than eyes and ears to realize the university is part of society, which means society influences the university and vice versa. Equal access to education and good living conditions for students are not guaranteed; they were fought for, and are still being fought for, I might add. Röskva isn't afraid of that fight, because we are political.

Let's turn defense into offense!

Ármann Leifsson
President of Röskva

Adress from the Chairperson of Röskva

María Björk Stefánsdóttir
Chairperson of Röskva



Dear students,

Just a few months ago, I would never have imagined myself involved in student politics, let alone to this extent. If someone had told me that I would one day become the chair of Röskva, I probably would have laughed out loud and thought it absurd.

Last spring, a friend and I were invited to attend a Röskva meeting, and we decided to go. The truth is, I had no particular interest in politics, let alone student politics. I wasn't sure what to expect, but I was curious.

Shortly thereafter, I was asked to place my name in the 2nd seat on Röskva's candidate list for the School of Engineering and Natural Sciences. I decided to give it a try. When the campaign began, I quickly realized the great responsibility I had been entrusted with on behalf of the students of the University of

Iceland; a responsibility that I took seriously, and my commitment to representing your interests grew stronger by the day. Being elected to the Student Council was a personal milestone — and especially experiencing firsthand how the voice of students can have a real impact on all our lives.

Shortly after the elections, my colleagues encouraged me to step into the role of chair. I admit, it felt daunting — stepping into this position with no prior experience. Why me? But then I thought: Why not me? After all, I had studied our platform, helped shape it, and spoken publicly in its defense. A little stressful at the beginning, but it's healthy to step outside of your comfort zone.

Now that the autumn semester is underway, I am grateful for this step, grateful for the encouragement of my peers, and for the support I've received from all of you. Admittedly, the election results in April were not what we had hoped for. It was frustrating to end up once again in the minority — but I am convinced this is only temporary. The current Student Council is made up of strong individuals, and Röskva will turn defense into offense.

A strong sense of justice has always been one of my driving forces. Until now, I had not realized how much passion I had for fighting for fairness and for the interests of others, and not just my own. Röskva ignited that passion in me. Röskva has had a decisive influence on the university

community for nearly four decades. Our policy is to prioritize the interests of students, guided by socialist principles. We always work according to our three core values: Equality, radicalism, and honesty.

Röskva's list of achievements is long and has been crucial in improving student welfare at the University of Iceland in many ways. I would like to highlight a few:

- Since 2020, we have twice succeeded in stopping an increase in the registration fee at the University of Iceland — and that fight is far from over.
- We secured changes in the scheduling of make-up exams at the School of Social Sciences, so they are now held in both autumn and spring semesters.
- During our majority in the Student Council, the number of student apartments increased by 21%.
- We have actively pushed for a better student loan system.
- We fought for the abolition of registration fees, including through a lawsuit filed by Röskva members, which led to the fees being declared unlawful.
- On our initiative, a position for an international representative was created in the Student Council office, along with SHÍ's international committee.

All of this has made a real difference for students at the University of Iceland. Röskva currently runs six committees: Events, Communications, International, Policy, Newcomers, and Editorial. I serve as chair of

the policy committee, and I find it incredibly rewarding. Applications are open until October 1st if you want to get involved.

I must say, what has surprised me most is how enjoyable this has been. Since I joined Röskva, I've made friends and met people from all faculties of the university — people I would never otherwise have had the chance to meet. It has broadened my horizons and been eye-opening to encounter such diverse perspectives.

I encourage all of you to take part. Come to meetings and add your voice to the discussion. Röskva is a platform for everyone — whether you are passionate about politics or not. And of course, we make sure to keep things fun as well. Once a month, we hold a general assembly open to everyone, and afterwards we continue the conversation together, usually over a beer.

I look forward to seeing you all and hearing what's on your mind. At Röskva, you quickly learn that every single voice matters. Let yours be heard!

With warm regards,

María Björk Stefánsdóttir
Chairperson of Röskva

Join Röskva!



TJARNARBÍÓ

Leikhúsið við Tjörnina



Editors address

Valeria Bulatova
Editor of Röddin



Hey student!
It's kind of wild how much nonsense you're expected to swallow in student politics. Recently, the chair of the current majority proudly announced in his faction's autumn magazine how excited he was to **keep national politics out of student politics**. Yes, you read that right. The person meant to defend our collective interests wants us to pretend we live in some parallel universe where student loans and housing costs are just side quests we don't need to complete. Honestly, this deserves a laugh track.

I don't know about you, dear student, but I'm not fully convinced that one can attend the University of Iceland as if it is just SimCity, while the rest of the country is some DLC pack you never bother downloading.

When I read that statement, I was instantly offended. So much so that I founded a new publication here at the university. Because it has long been obvious: Students need a new Voice. A Voice that isn't afraid to talk politics and student life in the same breath. A Voice of the social mind. **A Voice of Students. The Voice (Isl. Röddin) will now be Röskva's magazine** – a platform for bold and honest discussion about everything that matters to students, a lot of which ties directly to national politics. Because national politics and young people's interests aren't separate and never have been (See the article "*Student politics is politics*" on the front page).

But let's go back. The idea that you can "keep national politics out" of student politics is laughable - unless you take the long way around. **Engaging in student politics at all is a privilege, just like having the privilege of being "neutral" in national politics.** Saying national politics don't belong in student politics is itself a **political statement**. It's a stance of privilege, and it shapes who gets heard and who doesn't.

Anyone who sets foot in higher education knows: **Student politics is national politics**. Student loans? National politics. Rent? National politics. Taxes and transport? National politics. There's no way around it. Student issues overlap with national politics, whether it's university funding, housing, transport, financial security, welfare,

international policy, or even climate change. To say we shouldn't discuss these issues within the student movement is to deliberately keep the debate in a "safe," narrow space. **And that's a political choice.**

Even funnier is how power is actually distributed in this supposedly "cross-political" interest group. **Almost every single person elected by the Student Council in the past 2 years to paid positions in SHÍ's office has been deeply active in the Independence Party.** To add some "colorful diversity," they'll toss one token leftist onto the ballot and say: "See? We're open to everyone! You can join too!"

And just when you think it can't get more ridiculous, the president of SHÍ steps onto the stage like he's auditioning for a corruption documentary. He founded a publishing company last year and - what a coincidence - the artists from that company got gigs at Oktoberfest! Textbook conflict of interest. It's like he literally asked ChatGPT: **"How do I profit from being president of SHÍ?"** and followed the guide step by step. You didn't even need to be inside student politics to notice – just look at the posters for his company plastered around campus. In broad daylight. As if checking whether we are wildly awake (Isl. glaðvakandi).

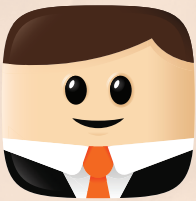
Dear student, if you think that was rock bottom, let me hand you the key to the basement. Four months ago, the University Council voted on raising the registration fee.

The majority's representative? He showed up, **pocketed his 78,870 ISK for attending the meeting, and simply forgot to vote against it.** Forgot. And then it took the majority another three months to remember to comment on the fee at all. **If that's what they call being awake (Isl. Vaka), maybe it's time to revisit the dictionary.**

And how comforting that this same man also represents you and me on the board of the Student Loan Fund. Yes – the guy who forgot to vote against charging us more is also in charge of making sure the loan system works. Maybe his next big idea will be a new service: "The Icelandic Student Loan Fund – now presents 0% interest microloans for **parking fees! You know, the ones the majority solemnly promised to block... but forgot too.**"

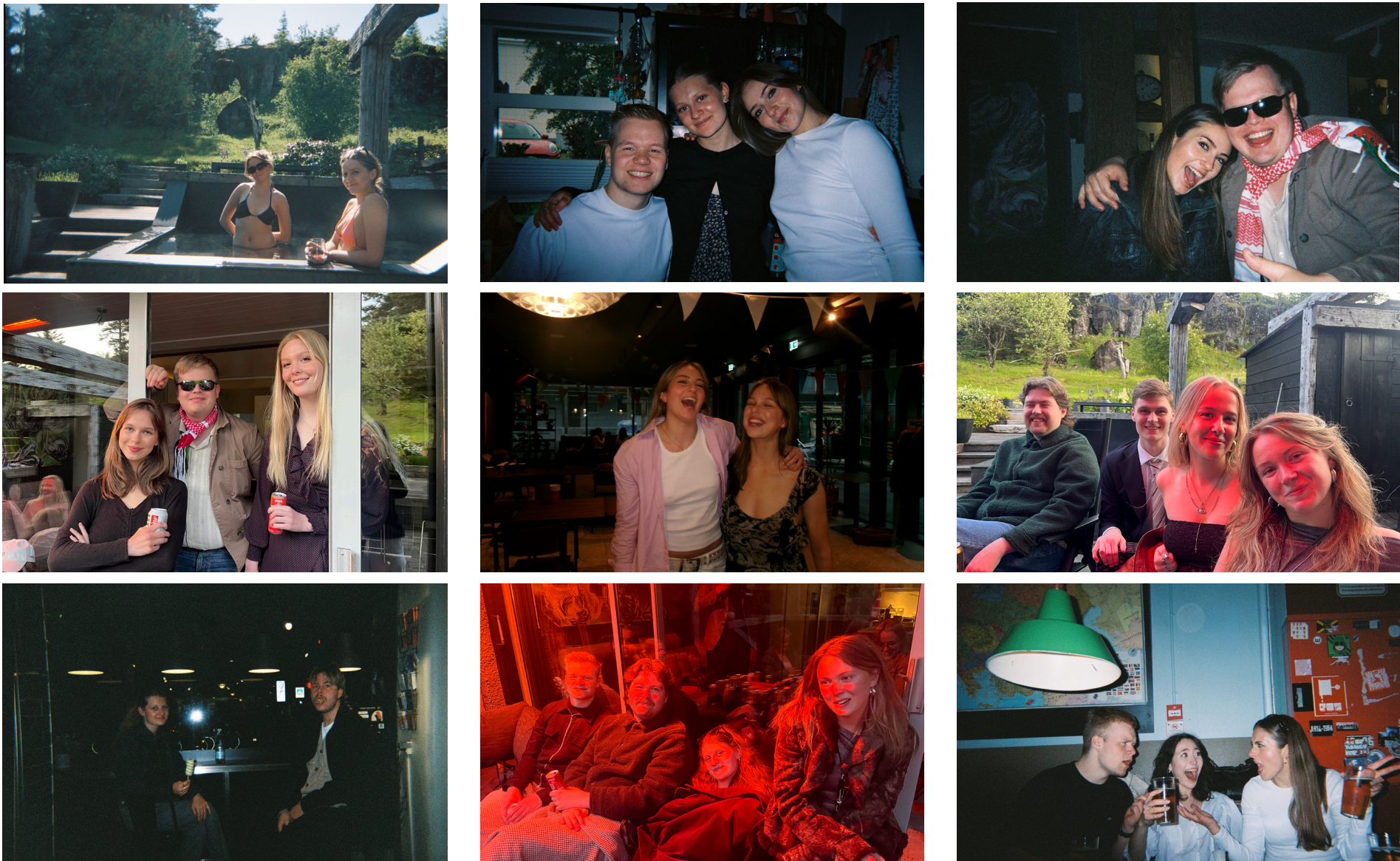
So for now, dear student, I can't offer you a revolution. But I can give you a Voice. And what you choose to do with it is up to you.

Þetta er
allt í
appinu!



alfreð





Do we always have to dig with a shovel?

Maggi Snorrason
Engineering student



Society comes with inertia. Now, I'm no social science student, just someone studying engineering, so I'd probably find it easier to calculate velocity

in an inertia system than to explain what I mean by this. But when I think about society, the feeling of inertia in physics and inertia in society feels the same. After all, inertia is about things staying as they are unless energy is put into changing them. That effort can be massive; but if the similarities between societal and physical inertia hold true, one thing is clear: The work pays off many times over when applied correctly, and that's something the student movement needs to recognize.

That doesn't mean that if the student's

movement's goals aren't fully achieved and ideas don't completely actualise, the work was for nothing. Quite the opposite: it is usually a push in the right direction – regardless of its application. Just like when a hole is dug with a shovel instead of an excavator, the work takes longer but still gets done eventually. Sometimes you can't even see at first how the excavator could be used, or maybe it simply won't fit. Then there's only one option: dig with the shovel.

The same applies to advocacy, like when the goal is to change legislation. That may require a shift in public opinion, which often only happens through heavy work and broad cooperation between organizations; with the shovel. We see this in the discourse about the student loan system. The student movement constantly runs ad campaigns to get the public to realize how poor the system is, or even to convince them that students deserve support at all. Society's inertia seems enormous when it comes to supporting

students adequately, like other countries do. However, there are moments when the chisel strikes the stone at exactly the right spot, and I believe I've witnessed one of those moments. On one freezing March morning in 2023, Röskva activists stood together outside the Prime Minister's residence at Tjarnargata. The temperature was -7°C, but the students' message was urgent enough to endure it. The message was simple: the University of Iceland needs one billion ISK to make ends meet, otherwise the quality of higher education will decline. Among the students was Rebekka Karlsdóttir, president of SHÍ at the time, on behalf of Röskva, with well-prepared documents to support the movement's case. On the sidelines, journalists from the country's main media outlets stood ready. Ministers began streaming out of the residence after the cabinet meeting. Rebekka was quick and handed a copy directly to Katrín Jakobsdóttir as she exited.

But when she handed one to Bjarni

Benediktsson, there was nothing to do but feel admiration. Despite Bjarni's decades of political experience and his attempt at the classic move of dismissing the students' demands, Rebekka made sure the message came through. She asked Bjarni sharp, direct questions that showed just how well-prepared she was, and it was clear he quickly gave up trying to downplay the seriousness of the issue. This action made it onto *Vísir*, *Mbl*, *RÚV* evening news, and *Stöð 2*, sparking reflection among the public. This shows that we don't always have to dig with a shovel. Sometimes, we just need to bring out the excavator, like Rebekka did. Plan and prepare thoroughly, show passion in action, and don't be afraid to use creative and bold methods.

Leigðu bíl á
34.950 kr.* á mánuði
(ef kæró borgar helminginn)

* Fullt verð frá 69.900 kr. á mánuði.

GO leiga



It is possible to prevent the increase of the registration fees

Katla Ólafsdóttir
Röskva Campaign Manager



Since 2020, Röskva has successfully fought against – and prevented – an increase in the registration fee, twice. Now, it is not just a matter of discus-

sion anymore, but an actual bill has been submitted to raise the fee, because with Vaka leading the Student Council, there is a complete and utter lack of student advocacy. I know that all this talk about the registration fee can be rather complicated, so I want to try to explain the process in a simple manner. Let's start in 2020, when the University Council resolved that the rector should seek approval from the minister to raise the registration fee from ISK 75,000 to ISK 104,000. To increase the registration fee, the law must be amended, as this is a service fee that can only be collected with clear legal authorization. The Minister of Higher Education must therefore submit a bill to Parliament to raise the maximum fee that public universities are permitted to charge students. If such a legal amendment is approved, the University Council may then decide to raise the registration fee.

When this came up in 2020, the Student Council, with Röskva holding the majority, immediately went into action to defend student interests. After a meeting

with then-Minister of Education Lilja Alfreðsdóttir, it was agreed that the fee would not be raised. Röskva argued that there was real doubt as to whether the collection of the fee was even legal – let's look into that.

Does it really cost one hundred thousand krónur to register at the university?

The short answer is no. The law on public universities clearly states that the university may not collect registration fees except for costs directly related to registering students and providing services to them, and the fees may not be used for teaching or research. Röskva did not stop in 2020 and took the registration fee case to the Student Appeals Committee, with Röskva member Jessý Jónsdóttir leading the effort, since we believe that part of the fee is unlawful. The fee actually goes to many other services beyond student registration, regardless of whether a student uses those services or not. Röskva questions whether this complies with the law on public universities – in other words, we believe the university is charging students more than legally permissible.

We do not hold this belief alone. In October 2023, the Appeals Committee ruled that the University of Iceland had not based its decision on sufficiently reliable calculations and therefore considered the fee unlawful. The university could not show how the money was being used, which revealed that the registration fees are essentially hidden tuition fees rather than service fees.

Röskva is still working on the case, despite being in the minority. Once more, in light of new calculations from the University of Iceland, the appeal is before the committee, with a decision still pending.

Röskva's continued advocacy

The registration fee was not raised in 2020, thanks to the Student Council's strong efforts under Röskva's leadership and the Röskva member who filed the appeal. However, in 2022, it was announced that another attempt would be made to raise the fee, this time to ISK 95,000. Once again, Röskva succeeded in preventing it. As soon as the Student Council found out, preparations began for the campaign "Students Chip In". As the name suggests, the campaign focused on the idea that students should not be forced to fill the gap caused by the underfunding of universities through increased registration fees, when public funding for higher education in Iceland is well below the OECD average.

The campaign peaked when the Student Council held a protest outside the Prime Minister's residence, where then Student Council President Rebekka Karlsdóttir grilled Bjarni Benediktsson and Katrín Jakobsdóttir, who eventually stated that the registration fees would not be raised.

The situation now

This past May, the University Council once again agreed to seek an increase in the registration fee from the minister, this time up to ISK 180,000 – a 140% increase.

In September, Logi Einarsson, the Minister of Higher Education, announced that he intended to raise the registration fee to ISK 100,000, which, while still a relief compared to what had been proposed, is nonetheless significant.

However, it is very reckless and illogical to attempt to raise the registration fee when its legality is still being contested and a ruling from the Appeals Committee is still pending. It is also disheartening to see how little the Student Council, under Vaka's leadership, has concerned itself with the issue, even though they have been aware of it since last spring when the matter went before the University Council. History shows that it is possible to prevent increases in the registration fee – but not if Student Council leaders fail to show up to meetings and then scratch their heads afterwards.



I WANT STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO AFFORD VELO FREEZE AND I FIND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES BORING

Jóhannes Óli Sveinsson
Journalist at Röddin



There's nothing I hate more in this world than when I tell my mom I'm dead-broke and she, without looking up from her phone, tells me to quit using nicotine pouches. Firstly, it's insane how strongly she feels about me using nicotine in the healthiest form available (Velo Freeze),

and secondly, that way of thinking is just unbearable. We've all heard this: When you're in university, you're not supposed to have money but rather eat instant noodles, not go to the movies, and absolutely never eat out! And when you finally scrape together 1.380 kr. to go to Sundhöll Reykjavíkur, there's some old guy in the hot tub talking about how young people don't know how to work hard, have it way too easy, and are always traveling abroad. The old man is probably right. I'm a total loser and don't know the first thing about hard work, but I don't care. Why can't I just be in university and live with financial security, finish a BA, and take a five-point Velo Freeze, or live off student loans and not buy Euro Shopper pasta?

The Student Loan Fund (Menntasjóður námsmanna, hereafter MSNM) is one of the most important equalizing tools our society has, for it makes higher education accessible for people without a strong financial background. But frankly, right now, it sucks. The living cost loan from MSNM is 265.000 kr. for single renters. However, according to the cost of living calculator of the Debtors' Ombudsman, a childless individual needs 230.000 kr. just to cover basic living costs, excluding rent, heating, and electricity. Meaning, according to

the state's own calculations, students living off government loans have 35.000 kr. left for rent, heating, and electricity. That leaves only one option: work while studying, with all the stress and deteriorating academic results that entails. Additionally, if you work too much, MSNM cuts your loans. That way, they make absolutely sure you won't go around splurging on Rummo pasta or a 400ml draft beer, because you're not allowed to enjoy anything nice while living on student loans. This needs to change. Basic subsistence allowance loans must increase, the income threshold must rise, study costs must go down, and something must be done about the outrageously high rent in the capital area. None of this happens in a vacuum. It requires students to keep up strong advocacy, draw attention to the issues, and demand change. Not just for one year, but continuously. Politics moves slowly, so the demand has to be crystal clear year after year if anyone's going to listen.

P.S.

After spending a couple of years in junior college trying to save the world on Twitter and skipping classes to protest the government's inaction, I decided to stop pretending. I'm not interested in, nor particularly afraid of, climate change, okay? I said it—I find it boring. Don't get me wrong, I want us to reduce emissions, recycle, and pollute less, but I'm not going to act like I have an opinion on this. I just want some scientist who's way smarter than me to come up with a plan that the government follows through with. Pretty basic. That's why I wasn't all that appalled when I first heard about the last Student Council campaign, "Stúdentar taka til" – some sustainability thing. I thought I'd just find it uninteresting, but that it was probably really something important. I've been to enough Gullegg-vísó to know sustainability is

good. So at first, I took it in stride. But now that I've thought it over this summer, I've done a U-turn. I'm not just poorly informed - it was a terrible campaign.

Think about it: Icelandic students have the highest rate of working alongside studies in Europe, student housing rents are way too high, and a new nicotine tax is being slapped on Velo Freeze. Student loans suck, too. The basic subsistence allowance is far too low, the interest rates are too high, and if you work too much over the summer, you'll get an email from some bureaucrat saying "NO, you can't take more of our crappy loan to survive - forget it, buddy". Meanwhile, while the Student Council office was rolling out its sustainability campaign, a brand-new government had just taken office, the perfect opportunity to crank up the heat and put pressure on ministers eager to prove themselves. Knowing all this, knowing the challenges students face, the Council still decided to say nothing and instead go compete with the Nordic Swan over handing out sustainability stamps to companies. The good thing is, these campaigns usually happen once a year, so this winter the Student Council has a chance to improve immediately!

I suggest that this year, the focus should be on something that matters to all students: lowering study costs, preventing spikes in registration fees, or granting exemptions from parking fees for those who need to drive to school. That is what matters, that the advocacy is active and visible to the whole society. Victories aren't won in a single year but by pushing relentlessly, year after year, until the government actually improves student life. That's how we secure continued expansion of the student housing program, lower study costs, and higher-quality education.



Is Strætó the best option for students?

Árni Steinn Norðfjörð
Journalist at Röddin



How much could you save per year by taking the bus instead of driving to school? As gas prices continue to rise and UI starts charging honest students for

parking, it's fair to ask: Is driving fiscally the smartest mode of transportation for students? Could the bus, often seen as the last resort, truly be the best financial choice?

Here's an example: A student living in the outer parts of Reykjavík drives to school 5 days a week for 9 months (from September to May), covering about 15 km a day. That's 1,925 km per school year. Based on average fuel consumption and gas prices (around 320 kr/l), fuel cost alone could reach 60-90,000

kr. per year. Add in car maintenance and the mandatory monthly parking fee in UI (18,000 a year) and the total cost could quickly add up to 150,000 kr.*

Students older than 18 (basically all college students) get a 50% discount on a 1-year card for Strætó at 56,000 kr. That's potentially 100,000 kr of savings per school year based on previous calculations. Additionally, it goes without saying that public transport is also good for our environment. Driving to school releases ~400 kg of CO₂ per school year. Utilising the bus significantly reduces your carbon footprint. Notably, traffic also decreases when more students ride the bus together. Less traffic, more breathing room.

However, there are also disadvantages to taking the bus that you should keep in mind. With a car, you can leave at any time and go directly to your destination, but the

bus is a bit more complicated. It stops occasionally, doesn't always go directly to UI, and sometimes you have to change buses. So more time is devoted to the journey, and you definitely need to leave earlier than you otherwise would. On top of that, the bus is not very reliable during peak times or in bad weather, and a seat is not always guaranteed.

For a long time, Röskva has advocated for better public transportation for students. For example, the organisation fought for the return of the night bus (isl. Næturstreð), a crucial service for students traveling home late in the evening or on weekends, e.g., after a night out. It's a far cheaper fare than a taxi, and by a mile. Since 2018, Röskva has also been pushing for the U-pass, a discount card that would make public transport options like strætó, rideshare, and e-scooters even more affordable.

When you weigh costs and environ-

mental impact, the answer is pretty clear: Strætó is not a last resort. It's not exactly luxurious, but it's financially smart. It's good for your wallet, for the planet, and potentially for your mood at the start of the day, since you don't have to wrestle with traffic or find a parking space. Sure, having a car can often be more convenient since you can leave whenever you want, but the more people take the bus, the more the service will be improved. More demand = more supply. So, why not give it a try?

*Of course, insurance and other fees could also be factored in, but here we're only focusing on taking the bus to school, not completely getting rid of a car.



Samfylkingin

Vertu með!

Skráðu þig í Samfylkinguna

xs.is/takathatt



Your money can work too

Árni Steinn Norðfjörð
Business student



Dear reader, don't get me wrong, I'm not putting you in the wimp category for wanting to drive. I simply want to show you, with a business student's

lens, where your money could be better off, instead of in the fuel tank of the shitbox you bargained for from a middle-aged man on Facebook.

When it comes to your finances, it's never a bad idea to have a part of your savings in stocks or funds. Many people think such investments are only for the rich, but that's simply not true. It is vital, especially during your university years, to start building a foundation for your financial future. Investing some of your savings, regardless of the amount, will lead to significant long term growth. Whether you're an expert or a beginner, as long as you learn the basics, you can make your money work for you.

But what are investments? It's putting money into something that has the potential to grow in value. You're essentially making

Investing basics

your money work instead of it sitting in your debit card. Two things make investing so powerful: compound interest and patience. Compound interest is what happens when the interest you earn starts accumulating its own interest. When the interest grows, it builds up faster, like a snowball rolling down a hill.



Here's an example: You invest 20,000 kr. a month into an index fund with about a 10% yearly return. After 10 years, you'll have contributed 2.4 million kr., but thanks to compounding, it will be worth about 3.8 million. After 20 years, around 13.7 million. After 40 years, nearly 120 million. That's the magic of compound interest combined with patience. The most common ways to invest are stocks, funds, and cryptocurrency. Stocks and crypto can be risky and often

require diligent research to yield desirable results. For most students, funds or bonds are safer bets. Here are three straightforward investment options, from the least risky to the riskiest.

Bonds are essentially lending money to the government or a company. They pay you interest regularly and repay the full amount on a set date. Bonds usually come with lower risk than stocks, but also lower returns. People often choose them for stability rather than big profits. You can browse and buy Icelandic bonds directly through most banking apps.

Mutual funds pool money from a group of investors and are managed by professionals. The fund buys different securities like stocks and bonds to spread the risk. As an investor, you own a share of the fund and earn returns based on its performance.

The risk depends on what the fund invests in. Stocks are higher risk; bonds are lower. With apps like Trading 212, you can invest in international funds with no commission fees, while Icelandic options like IS Funds or Stefnir can be accessed through your bank's app.

Index funds and ETFs track a specific market index, such as OMXI15 or the S&P 500, by holding most or all of the securities in that index in the correct proportion. Some cover the entire market, while others focus on specific industries like tech or energy. The fees are low, and the goal is to match the market's performance, not beat it. ETFs are similar to index funds but are listed on the market and can be bought and sold like stocks.

For us students, investing our savings in stocks or something less risky like an index fund can be crucial for our financial future. But one important thing to keep in mind is that investing is (in most cases) not a quick way to make money. The only reliable way to beat the market is to play the long game.

There is only one left-wing student movement at the University

Auður Halla Rögnvaldsdóttir
Journalist at Röddin



I hear the sentence “*student politics don’t matter*” very often, and I used to completely agree with it. When my friends would try to get me involved with Röskva, I thought: “This student politics thing is just some glorified Parliament role-play,” and I would cringe whenever someone talked about it as if it mattered in any way. However, when I decided to take part in this little play, I realized that it might actually matter who speaks on behalf of the students. It actually matters who sits at the table when decisions that affect all students are being made. The Student Council at UI does have real power. We, the students, are by far the largest group within the university, which gives us significant influence. But that influence is meaningless unless we use our voice. It matters who speaks for us.

It matters what values the people in the Student Council stand for.

When we vote in parliamentary elections, we think: “Which party reflects my values? Who shares my vision for society?” That’s because we know that those we elect will make significant decisions on our behalf, and we want those decisions to align with how we see the world and what we want to see in it.

The same applies to student politics. There, too, we are choosing people whom we entrust to make decisions on our behalf that affect our daily life at school, our finances, and our well-being. People who are supposed to safeguard our interests. And so, the choice in student council elections is actually simple: Do you want to vote for a movement that acknowledges and stands for a clear vision, the vision of socialism, where equality, regardless of financial background, accessibility, and justice are guiding principles—or do you vote for a movement that calls itself “politically neutral” but has appointed members of the Independence Party to

all key positions in UI’s Student Council office for two years in a row?

Neutrality does not exist in politics. Neither in national politics nor in student movements. Presenting an apolitical front when your decisions reflect certain values and priorities is simply misleading.

We should know who stands for what.
We should make an informed choice.
Vote for people who share our values.
Vote for socialism.

Vote for Röskva

Kaffibolli og bók?

Gerist ekki betra

Bóksala stúdenta

Opið 9-17

bóksala stúdenta

What Röskva type are you?

What Röskva win is your favorite	
<div><div>A</div>Night bus (næturstrætó)</div> <div><div>B</div>Preventing the registration fee from being raised twice</div> <div><div>C</div>Allowing make-up exams in January at the School of Social Sciences</div>	Where is the best place to study? <div><div>A</div>Stúdentakjallarinn (or VR2)</div> <div><div>B</div>Röntgen</div> <div><div>C</div>The school itself</div>
Where do you get your caffeine?	What is your favorite song?
<div><div>A</div>Energy drink</div> <div><div>B</div>Cappuccino (coffee with milk)</div> <div><div>C</div>Black coffee</div>	<div><div>A</div>Lífið er veisla by GEMIL (Life is a Party)</div> <div><div>B</div>Giver by Chappel Roan</div> <div><div>C</div>Maistjarnan (The May Star)</div>
What is your favorite Röskva event?	Which student issue do you care most about?
<div><div>A</div>Ragnarök!</div> <div><div>B</div>The autumn trip, because the policy work is so much fun</div> <div><div>C</div>The “Ice Block performance” in front of the University Square</div>	<div><div>A</div>Stopping yet another rise of the registration fee</div> <div><div>B</div>Securing exemptions from the parking fee for parents and people from rural areas</div> <div><div>C</div>Turning the student loan system into a grant system, like in Denmark</div>
<div><div>Most of A : The Partier</div><div>Most of B : The Politician</div><div>Most of C : Fighter</div></div>	



Röskva for International Students

Abdullah Arif &
*International Representative
of Röskva*
Hildur Agla Ottadóttir
Journalist at Röddin



Röskva for International Students

The number of international students at the University of Iceland (UI) is steadily increasing. In 2023, there were 2,019 international students, making up 14% of the student population. Many of them are in graduate studies, with nearly half of all PhD students coming from abroad. International students are therefore an integral part of the university community, enriching UI with culture and diversity. They also increase the university's visibility on a global scale and create international connections with educational institutions worldwide. However, international students often have unique interests and needs, and it is important to safeguard them. Röskva does just that.

Röskva was the first to introduce the International Committee to the Student Council. This serves to protect the rights and interests of international students and supports internationalization at the University of Iceland. Before, no such committee existed in the Student Council. Röskva fought for their rights from the start. This step is a testament to our strong commitment to ensure that international students are represented, heard, and supported in all areas of university life.

What do we want to improve?

Clear and Accessible Information

Röskva believes that all key information (e.g., about grading, registration, and grants) should, at the very least, be easily accessible in good English. Röskva therefore supports bilingual communication on all levels of UI. Röskva also encourages the university to offer free Icelandic courses to international students. Language barriers often create both social and academic difficulties for international students.

Residence and Work Permits

For many international students, Iceland's residence and work permit system is one of the greatest challenges, partly because the application process through Útlendingastofnun (Directorate of Immigration) is often slow and unclear. Students are sometimes forced to wait months for a decision, and many receive their permits only after the semester has already begun. This makes it difficult to attend classes on time, especially when some courses require physical presence from day one. Röskva believes this process is unnecessarily stressful and must be made easier, faster, and more transparent.

Work permits present another serious challenge. Unlike domestic students, international students face very strict rules enforced by Vinnumálastofnun (Directorate of Labor). Students must first secure a job and then apply for a work permit before they can start working legally. Approval can take one to three months, with no clear timeline provided. During this waiting period, students are left with no income in a country with a high cost of living, creating significant financial stress.

Furthermore, work permits are tied to a

single employer. If students wish to change jobs, they must repeat the entire application process. This restriction also affects student jobs within the university, such as teaching assistant or research assistant positions, which are directly related to their studies. Röskva advocates for work permits to be granted in parallel with residence permits, tied to the individual rather than a specific job, and for the applicant, instead of the employer, to submit the application. Röskva believes that international students deserve fair access to Iceland's labor market and that these restrictive rules must be reviewed and improved.

Access to Housing

International students often face limited access to safe and affordable housing and typically have little or no support network in Iceland. Many arrive without an understanding of how the housing system works, and the available information is often unclear or difficult to navigate. Student housing comes in several categories and types, but when students apply, they are simply placed on waiting lists according to their student status. It is rarely explained which types of housing are more realistic to secure, which have long waiting times, or how the system actually works in practice. As a result, international students may wait for months without receiving any offers, and are eventually forced to look for accommodation on the tough Icelandic private rental market. With high prices and limited availability, this often becomes financially unsustainable.

Röskva believes that this lack of transparency creates unnecessary stress and uncertainty. The university must ensure that information about student housing is clear, accessible, and realistic, especially for international students who are unfamiliar with the Icelandic housing market. Guidance should be provided in English and other accessible formats, explaining how the waiting list system works, which housing options are more likely to become available, and what students can realistically expect to receive.

Inclusion and Support

While international students constitute an important part of the university's community, many still face loneliness and difficulties in integrating into Icelandic society. Unlike exchange students, who often benefit from dedicated programs, events, and networks to help their settlement, degree-seeking international students usually receive very little structured support. Language barriers further hinder participation in student life and create obstacles in both academic and social settings. Without a strong support system, many international students feel isolated and disconnected from the broader university community. Röskva believes that inclusion must extend beyond welcoming students at the beginning of their studies. International students should have equal access to information, events, and services throughout their time at UI. More initiatives are needed to foster opportunities for international and Icelandic students to meet, collaborate, and build friendships. Social events, mentorship programs, and enhanced academic guidance in English are just some of the ways to achieve this.

Röskva's stance is clear: international students deserve a support system that enables both academic success and social belonging. By strengthening inclusion, the University of Iceland can cultivate a truly international environment where diversity

is celebrated and every student, regardless of background, can thrive.

Equality in Costs

International students often face higher fees for access to services or encounter more complicated and costly processes for obtaining certificates and registration. Discounts and financial benefits should apply equally to all students. Röskva wants study conditions to be affordable for everyone, regardless of nationality.

Röskva's Stance on Tuition Fees for International Students

Röskva strongly opposes the intention of the sitting minister of Higher Education to charge students from outside the EEA tuition fees amounting to hundreds of thousands of ISK. Enrollment of international students at UI is already relatively low compared to other universities worldwide. Those who do enroll are often in programs such as Icelandic as a Second Language, Geology, or Medieval Studies. Graduates from these programs frequently contribute to the Icelandic labor market or academia, providing clear societal benefits. Notably, Vaka has never opposed the proposed tuition fees for students from outside the EEA.

Röskva also emphasizes that many graduate and doctoral-level programs at the University of Iceland have a significant international student population. These students play a vital role in advancing knowledge, driving innovative research, and supporting the development of Icelandic society and the broader academic community. Imposing high tuition fees or restricting access for international students would not only reduce the university's diversity but also slow down Iceland's progress in education, research, and societal development.

Access to Democracy

Röskva believes that elections and participation in the Student Council, its committees, councils, and affiliated student associations should be genuinely accessible to international students. Currently, many face barriers due to a lack of information in English, unfamiliarity with Icelandic student politics, and limited opportunities to present themselves as candidates. To address this, Röskva actively works to make these processes more inclusive. We provide clear, accessible, and multilingual information about how elections and committee memberships work, so that all students, regardless of language or background, can understand and engage fully. Röskva also supports multilingual candidacies, encouraging international students to run for positions and contribute their perspectives to decision-making processes. By creating more inclusive structures and actively promoting international student participation, Röskva ensures that the Student Council reflects the diversity of the university community. Greater representation of international students strengthens democracy, improves decision-making, and guarantees that the voices of all students are heard and considered in shaping policies, events, and initiatives at the University of Iceland.

Academics

Röskva believes that international students should be able to apply for extended exam times, exams in English, and the use of dictionaries during tests. It is also important that international students are allowed to submit assignments in English.

Röskva recognizes that many courses, even within strictly English-taught programs, are often offered only in Icelandic. This can prevent international students from taking

classes essential to their specialization or interests and may hinder the timely completion of their studies. To ensure academic accessibility and support internationalization, Röskva believes that all international programs should provide the majority of their courses in English or offer the option to take them in English whenever possible. Expanding English-language course offerings allows international students to fully participate in their programs, strengthens the university's global reach, and demonstrates a clear commitment to inclusivity and academic success for all students.

Networking and Career Opportunities

Röskva recognizes that access to internships, research projects, and student employment is essential for international students to gain practical experience and fully benefit from their studies. Many international students face barriers due to strict work permit rules and limited information about available opportunities, which restricts their ability to participate in activities related to their programs.

Röskva advocates for enhanced career support tailored to international students. This includes providing guidance on navigating the job market, organizing workshops on CV writing and interview skills in English, and creating networking events connecting students with potential employers and research supervisors. By improving access to relevant professional experiences, the University of Iceland can help international students build meaningful careers, contribute to Icelandic research and innovation, and strengthen the university's global reputation.

Practical Help

International students often face challenges navigating the practical and administrative aspects of life in Iceland. Much of the information regarding residence and work permit renewals, taxation, housing benefits, and healthcare is only available in Icelandic, making it difficult for students to understand the local systems and their rights and responsibilities. Many students are unfamiliar with trade unions and how they operate, how to understand and read their salary slips, how and when to file taxes, and how they can access personal tax benefits, orlof, or housing benefits. Even basic procedures like going to a GP or handling medical emergencies can become confusing sometimes without clear guidance.

Röskva believes that these practical resources should be available in English. This includes clear guides, workshops, and support workshops that help the international students navigate Útlendingastofnun (Directorate of Immigration), Vinnumálastofnun (Directorate of Labor), taxation, housing, and healthcare systems. By providing these tools and support, UI can ensure that international students can live, work, and study in Iceland safely and confidently, largely limiting extra barriers or stress. This is why Röskva has published a short guide with the most essential practical information for international students.

With Röskva, the voices of international students are heard! Together, we are building a community that is truly inclusive, diverse, and globally connected.

Speaking but Delivering Nothing

Katla Ólafsdóttir
Röskva Campaign Manager



These are difficult times, for students at least. The University of Iceland has started charging for parking, prices in Háma keep rising, the Student Loan Fund is a disaster, and the Minister of Higher Education plans to raise the registration fees to 100.000 kr. I guess I'm lucky, I only have one year left at HÍ, but it's difficult to see the current course. Parking fees have now hit HÍ, despite the pretty promises of the other party that they would absolutely fix this! "Röskva charges", according to the other party. Even though during the seven years Röskva held the majority, from 2017 to 2024, the fees were never impemented (even though UI tried), because Röskva opposed them unless countermeasures for students were introduced. Still, I can't criticize the other party too harshly just for the fact that the fees are here—it was simply unavoidable—but I don't think it's honest to promise to stop something that is, in reality, inevitable.

There are many reasons UI has decided to start charging for parking, and it's unnecessary to list them all, but I'll try to summarize this briefly. The main reason is that in Vatnsmýrin, there are some of the biggest workplaces in the country, e.g., the National University Hospital, and UI, as well as many other companies and services, which are growing rapidly. We want a lively university campus, but it's been a long time since predictions showed that something had to be done, since it is literally impossible to fit all of those people into the area if everyone comes by car. The people concerned therefore, joined hands many years ago and began planning how they could encourage people to use different modes of transport to get to the area, and the parking fees are one of those actions.

Röskva has, from the start, emphasized that it is necessary that students get a subsidized transportation card if the parking fees were to be implemented, and in addition, that consideration must be given to students who have no other option but to come by car. UI had promised this, and we fought for this while we had the majority in the Student Council, resulting in the parking fees being postponed for so long. Now, however, there

is another party that has the majority, who promised to prevent the parking fees entirely, which obviously didn't happen.

Anyways, the parking fees were always going to become reality, whether we like it or not. With the current arrangements, the hourly rate for short-term parking is 230 kr., but students and teachers at UI can subscribe to long-term parking, which costs 1.500 kr. per month. We can celebrate this to some extent; these are very low prices, but there's nothing that prevents them from increasing, and students don't get anything in return. There is nothing that makes it easier for students to use other modes of transportation, which is the purpose of the parking fees, and there are no countermeasures for students who have to go by car. The Student Council doesn't even fight for this anymore.

Another thing I want to discuss. I've noticed recently that the prices in Háma have increased quite a bit since last year. I've gotten the same sandwich for the last two years, and it's getting close to 1.000 kr. Of course, prices increase between years due to inflation and changing purchasing power, but I think this is interesting since Röskva was accused of closing Hámas and increasing prices in the last two elections since

Röskva had "a majority in the the board of the Icelandic Student Services (FS)", which manages Háma. However, there is now a new majority on the FS board, but nothing has changed.

Using the voice of reason, I need to point out that FS is a self-owned non-profit institution; it doesn't make any money. It is therefore not surprising that the prices don't suddenly decrease with a new majority and that the late Hámas, which were closed due to necessity because of reduced profit following Covid, have not opened again. I hope that they will someday and that the Hámas recover, but I'm not going to blame the individuals on the FS board.

It's not effective to make promises that are difficult, or even impossible, to keep. Let's remember who fought for realistic solutions to the parking fees, and who doesn't blame individuals on the board of a self-owned institution for the fact that sandwiches have become expensive, we live in Iceland.

Chat with Council representatives

Soffia Svanhvít Árnadóttir
Journalist at Röddin



Why Röskva?

Victoria
Röskva fights for the rights of international students, who, it seems, face even more struggles every year. I believe the university should reconsider its approach to supporting non-EU students with visa and work permit issues. [At present, the university takes the position "nothing can be done", which I find fundamentally inadequate.]

If you were the sole ruler of the university, what would you change?

María
Röskva is a social-democratic student group at the University of Iceland, and I think it's very important that social democracy leads the way within the university. There's a lot that needs to be done to ensure equal access to education, which is exactly Röskva's goal.

I would abolish the registration fees at the University of Iceland! Education should be accessible to everyone regardless of financial background.

Magnús
My brother first introduced me to Röskva. The more I learned about its causes and work, the more I wanted to get involved – and I definitely don't regret it.

I'd make Nocco energy drinks free at HÍ.

Katla
I believe that equal access to education fosters social justice and a more equal society overall. That's why I'm on the left and identify with Röskva's policies.

I would immediately declare an academic boycott of Israeli universities!

Helena
Röskva represents the real interests of students and has, through the years, put students first. It's vitally important to safeguard issues that matter to students, like transportation, housing, and access to education for all!

I would abolish parking fees and secure reasonably priced transport passes for UI students. Equal access to university education is crucial, and I believe this is a good way to ensure it.

Helga
Röskva is a substantial and fun movement that fights for the interests of all students! It's important that Röskva remains strong in the Student Council because it has delivered countless victories for students, moving us closer to equal access to education.

Guðlaug
I saw many things at the university that I wanted to change, like unequal rights to retake exams depending on your program. Psychology and Pharmaceutical sciences, for example, do not have the right to makeup exams – isn't that crazy?

I would increase the number of school psychologists so everyone at the university could see one whenever they wanted.

Röddin, Issue 1.
Fall 2025.

Printing: Landsprent
Print run: 1000 eintök
Pages: 24

Editorial Board:
Árni Steinn Norðfjörð
Hildur Agla Ottadóttir
Jóhann Haukur Sveinbjörnsson
Soffía Svanhvít Árnadóttir
Sóley Anna Jónsdóttir

Proofreading:
Magnús Orri
Aðalsteinsson

Editor:
Valeria Bulatova

Design:
Soffía Sól Andrésdóttir





VERKFRÆÐI- OG NÁTTÚRUVÍSINDASVIÐ

Verkfræði - Stærðfræði - Náttúru- og raunvísindi - Tækni

STEM í HÍ er framtíðin

