



RYSENSTEEN GYMNASIUM

– international profile school
Copenhagen

RYSEN
STEEN
gymnasium

RYSENSTEEN GYMNASIUM – a description

Rysensteen Gymnasium began as Laura Engelhardt's school for girls in 1881, but the school has been co-educational since 1958. Today approximately 1000 students attend the school and it employs around 100 people. The school offers an **UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME** corresponding to the students' 10th to 12th year in the Danish school system. The school offers a range of specialized study programmes within all faculties – science, humanities and social studies – as well as creative subjects such as music and drama. Rysensteen Gymnasium, like other Danish high schools, has a structure based on student cohorts of approximately 30 students that are together in almost all courses all through their 3 years of high school.

Rysensteen Gymnasium is situated in **DOWNTOWN COPENHAGEN** just a few minutes' walk from the Central Station. It is only 10 minutes' walk to Christiansborg, which houses the Danish Parliament, and to the National Museum and Copenhagen University.

The preferred means of transportation for the students of Rysensteen is **THE BIKE**. Around the school on any given day there are no fewer than 500 bikes in all colors and sizes.

Rysensteen Gymnasium is a **CAMPUS SCHOOL**. Apart from Rysensteen's main building from 1886, the school's existing building stock also includes classrooms and well-equipped science laboratories with plenty of space for practical experiments across the street in the Copenhagen Meatpacking District, whilst all physical education takes place in DGI-byen, a large sports center just opposite the main building.

Rysensteen has an international educational programme, called the **GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME**, that encompasses all students and all courses at the school. The aim of the programme is for our students to develop a sense of being responsible world citizens along with acquiring the abilities to tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities of the globalized world.

The school has, on the bases of the Global Citizenship Programme, been awarded an official status from the Ministry of Education as an **INTERNATIONAL PROFILE SCHOOL**, which means that we can enroll students based on their international and intercultural competences. Rysensteen is the only high school in Denmark that has received this status by the Ministry of Education.



PROFILE

Global Citizenship Programme

It is the purpose of the Danish educational system to create not only the basis for an effective workforce but also to form democratic-minded citizens. The Global Citizenship Programme is an international perspective on this purpose as it aims to form the students of Rysensteen into democratic-minded global citizens.

The Programme is based on a curriculum that defines a set of academic, intercultural and democratic aims. In the obligatory courses these aims are integrated with the goals of the national curricula by the teachers of Rysensteen to create a genuine global perspective on teaching at the school. The Global Citizenship Programme aims are also promoted through many crosscurricular collaborations, and extracurricular activities such as participation in Rysensteen's own Model United Nations, community work and the cooperation that all our student cohorts have with a partner school in another country. This cooperation takes place virtually for the first two years and ends with student exchange visits. Rysensteen's partner schools are located in Argentina, Canada, China, Egypt, Iceland, India, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Turkey and the USA.

High academic standards

Rysensteen Gymnasium is renowned for its high academic standards. This is not only due to the efforts that teachers and students, on a day-to-day basis, put into the obligatory courses of Rysensteen, but also through an extensive array of different talent programs for the specially motivated and gifted students.

The students of Rysensteen are motivated to be independent thinkers, curious for knowledge and to have a strong sense of personal responsibility in pursuing their academic aims.



VALUES

At Rysensteen, everything we do is rooted in a democratic culture implying that the students are very engaged in their school life – also outside school hours. Students, teachers and management shape the day-to-day life of the school through a lively democracy that sharpens the sense of responsibility and participation in decision-making.

NORA

In accordance with the democratic values of Rysensteen, we have agreed that the way we behave as individuals and interact with each other at the school should be guided by four words that collectively form the acronym, NORA.

N – is for the Danish *Nysgerrighed* – which translates into curiosity. At Rysensteen we expect everybody to be eager to acquire knowledge in academic learning and have an open-minded approach to the many meetings with people from other cultures.

O – is for the Danish *Ordentlighed* – which translates into decency or propriety. At Rysensteen we expect our work tasks to be done with attention to both quality and timeliness and our social and professional relations to be conducted with respect for other peoples opinions and abilities.

R – is for the Danish *Rummelighed* – which translates into latitude or tolerance. At Rysensteen we expect everybody to respect differences in opinions and beliefs as long as these are expressed with respect for fellow students and co-workers.

A – is for the Danish *Ansvarlighed* – which translates to responsibility. At Rysensteen we expect that the freedom and the right to influence decisions, that is part of the democratic culture of the school, goes hand in hand with responsible behavior and responsible consideration for the social, educational and physical context that we are all part of at Rysensteen.



THE RYSENSTEEN APPROACH TO HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

Background

In 2007 Rysensteen set out to translate the ministerial formulated framework for the purpose of high school education into our own Rysensteen approach. In accordance with the democratic profile of the school all the groups that represent Rysensteen; teachers, students, management and the school board, were involved in the process. We all agreed upon the following four points:

Knowledge

Rysensteen strives to be among the very best in all academic disciplines. Moreover, we want our students to acquire not only academic abilities but also intercultural competences and motivation in order to work and study in international settings.

Learning

Rysensteen wishes to create the future in a stimulating and creative learning environment that embraces change. We make demands. We stay on our toes. Everybody learns.

Democracy

Rysensteen strives to mould citizens and world citizens who share a sense of responsibility for the common challenges that face us all in the globalized world.

Community

Rysensteen wishes to uphold and further develop a warm sense of community that is built on security, originality and tolerance, so everybody has the space to form his or her own individuality in interaction with others – in an inspiring atmosphere that makes it exciting to learn.



- You shape Rysensteen • Rysensteen shapes you • Together we shape the future



KNOWLEDGE

Year after year Rysensteen's students generate some of the very best grade point averages in Denmark. This is because we at Rysensteen demand the very best of ourselves as teachers and management, and we expect the same of our students.

We are proud that the culture at Rysensteen is one of ambition and hard work. We are especially proud of this culture, because it doesn't exist at the expense of neither the students' nor the employees' tolerance and latitude towards each other.

It is exactly these two qualities – the strive for academic excellence and the respect that we treat each other with – that are the foundation of the Global Citizenship Programme.

Global Citizenship Programme – knowledge with global ambitions

The Global Citizenship Programme encompasses all teachers, management and students at Rysensteen. It is an integrated part of most aspects of the school's pedagogical and academic practices.

Toning of courses

As part of the Global Citizenship Programme we tone the different courses in accordance with the area in which the specific student cohort's partner school is situated. For example the C-cohorts that are collaborating with our Egyptian partner school have worked extensively with the consequences of the revolts in the Arab world in history, social sciences and religion. The A-cohorts that are connected to our partner school in New York have, among other things, studied American literature in English class. And our D-cohorts, that are working with our Chinese partner school, have been focused on the rising economic and political global influence of China.

Global challenges

Our students also work both within and across the specific courses with the global challenges that we all share as world citizens, such as world hunger, environmental challenges or the recent financial crisis. This work not only requires solid knowledge and analytical thinking of the students but also inspires them to take responsibility as world citizens.

Virtual meetings

Another integrated part of the Global Citizenship Programme is the virtual meetings like video conferencing, blogs and exchanges of ideas through social media that our students have with the students from their partner schools. This provides a platform where the students are taken out of his or her role as receiver of knowledge and instead becomes a producer of knowledge. Furthermore, this dialogue is an equal exchange of knowledge between students in different countries that is not checked or corrected by the teacher, but is qualified through dialogue, questioning and inquiry.

Exchange trips

In the beginning of their 3rd and last year, our students visit their partner schools and enjoy home stay with the partner school students. Likewise, our students also host visits from our partner schools. These trips are the climax of the Global Citizenship Programme. Our students get to experience the countries they have studied first hand, which enhances their intercultural understanding and competences immensely.

"The exchange trip is supposed to prepare us to study at university level, inspire our curiosity and create an awareness of the challenges and responsibilities we share across the Globe. These goals were certainly fulfilled by the trip to Singapore. I think all the students of 3.w got a feeling of "Global Citizenship"."

Asker 3.w

Networks

In Denmark and many other countries there is a growing demand for well educated young people with intercultural competences and international mindsets. At Rysensteen we believe that not only high academic standards, but also the exposure to

intercultural meetings and internationally anchored businesses and educational institutions is fundamental to prepare our students for the challenges and possibilities of the global work-market. Therefore we collaborate closely with different partners in the internationally oriented business society and the internationally oriented educational community in both Denmark and our partner school countries. Amongst these collaboration partners are the ToRS institute for Cross Cultural studies at Copenhagen University, the Danish shipping company, Maersk, the genetic research company, DeCode, that is situated in Iceland, the Danish Math Professor at MIT, Tobias Colding, the Danish professor of South East-Asian studies, Jørgen Ørstrom, who lives in Singapore, the South Korean journalist and author, Mr. Yeon Ho, who is the CEO of OhMynews and many others.



MUN and MEP

While the Global Citizenship Programme encompasses all students, Rysensteen also offers participation in programmes for the specially motivated and talented. Amongst those are the so-called MUN and MEP.

The Model United Nations (MUN) is a simulation of the actual United Nations. Participants discuss current political issues, write resolutions and vote on these in the General Assembly. Many MUN events are held all over the world and all communication is in English. The other forum that Rysensteen participates in is the Model European Parliament (MEP), where several hundred young delegates from 27 countries meet for a week twice a year to form their own youth parliament.

In both projects, students from the age of 16 to 19 from many different countries participate, and there is a lively debate on current issues of relevance for the UN and the EU respectively.

Furthermore, we also host our own RYSMUN for all our 2nd year students as part of the Global Citizenship Programme. Last year 7 of our partner schools participated with a total of 35 foreign students giving the event a genuine international atmosphere.



MUN in Stuttgart

"At a high school a little outside Stuttgart in the south of Germany Emma and I and five other students from another Danish high school had the opportunity to be Chinese. Or rather, we had the opportunity to represent Chinese opinions for a week. We were at a Model United Nations Conference in the company of many other youths from around the world. At this Conference we were asked to represent a certain country – not our own – in debates using formal English and the correct form of argumentation."

"It was a really fun week and we learned a lot. We trained our rhetorical skills, our spoken and written English and became more knowledgeable about international politics and the structure of the UN."

"Really, when we got back home we just wanted to go again."

Kristine 2.e

Talented youths and academic competitions

Another talent programme that Rysensteen participates in is the Academy for Talented Youths, which is a nationwide offer for gifted and motivated students who want extra academic challenges besides those they experience in the obligatory courses. At the moment 30 students from Rysensteen are engaged in the Academy.

Rysensteen also takes part in different academic competitions within all faculties. Among those is the prestigious Georg Mohr Competition for mathematically gifted students. In the same field is also the Olympics, which we have taken part in for several years. Within the humanities Rysensteen also regularly takes part in different competitions, such as the national history competition for high school students, that Rysensteen won two years ago.



LEARNING

Rysensteen's learning environment is based on an open and respectful dialogue and an approach to teaching that is characterized by a curiosity for new didactic perspectives on teaching and a strong emphasis on creativity. We call this the learning laboratory.

Didactics and IT

The school offers courses of study in all faculties – science, humanities, social studies and creative subjects like music and drama. The teaching is largely based on 1:1 learning. This means that all students have their own laptops as their most important learning tool. Alongside the use of IT-based learning strategies, the teachers at Rysensteen employ many different creative didactic approaches to their subjects in order to stimulate the students' learning, for example, by using Cooperative Learning or by focusing on competency development.

Individual learning and communication

The teachers strive to take account of the individual learning needs of each student and therefore work extensively with differentiated learning strategies. The dialogue between the students and the teachers at Rysensteen is based on equality, and stems from a common interest in academic excellence. It is important that the atmosphere in lessons is characterized by

a sense of common endeavor and respect for the individual. In this way each student is able to develop him- or herself further according to his or her own academic starting point. At Rysensteen we stress the importance of maintaining an open-minded dialogue, which fosters an open and egalitarian relationship between everyone, and which is the basis of the good academic and social environment at the school.

Extramural activities

As a natural element in their education at the school, Rysensteen's students visit museums, cinemas and art exhibitions; they meet the business community by visiting companies and cooperating with them on projects.

Moreover, we collaborate intensively with different universities – for example the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) and Copenhagen University. Most formalized and intensive is our collaboration with the department of Cross Cultural Studies at Copenhagen University. This collaboration is especially fruitful for the Global Citizenship Programme as it involves both experts on many of our partner school countries and experts on the field of interculturality.

The strong links we have with the universities is of great importance for us as it helps to uphold the high academic level at Rysensteen and furthermore inspires many of our students to pursue university education.



Homework café

Several times a week there is a homework café after school. Students receive help from subject teachers to do their assignments. At the same time, the homework café is a concentrated environment where students also help each other to do their homework and complete their assignments. This mutual help bolsters the students' sense of independence and their understanding of learning as a common project where every student has both weaknesses and strengths.

Innovation

We focus on implementing innovative methods and innovative ways of thinking in subjects and projects because we believe that this provides our students with the best opportunities with regards to participating actively in an evolving world during and after their high school years. Coming up with innovative solutions to universal problems enhances the students' global understanding because they need to acquire specific knowledge about the country in which target group of the innovative solution is based.

DEMOCRACY

One of the fundamental values in Rysensteen's vision is the sharpening of democratic consciousness. At the core of this consciousness lies an understanding of the relationship between influence and responsibility.

Rysensteen Gymnasium strives to be a democratic laboratory. This means that great importance is placed on the formal democratic decision-making processes being transparent. It also means that different forms of governance and decision-making can be experimented with, so that all students develop an understanding of, and skills for, democratic participation.

Fortunately many of our students are also active in political work in and outside school through involvement in youth organizations or voluntary work.

COMMUNITY

High school years are important both socially and academically. It is here we lay the foundations for our further educational development, and where we become adults. This characterizes all post-16 education – and it can be felt at Rysensteen too. Living and working as part of a community is highly demanding for the individual, amongst other things there is an expectation that the students come prepared for lessons and that they participate actively in them.

Every two weeks there is a large morning assembly for students and teachers. It is important to attend in order to receive messages about what is happening at the school, and also to experience the rush of the whole school singing in unison. Also, student cohorts take turns to perform sketches and sing for each other.

Student committees and societies

There is a distinct tradition at Rysensteen to join groups and get involved in activities which you are interested in. Lots of extra-curricular activities take place during breaks and after school and they take place within self-appointed student societies and committees that are involved in making both fun and serious things happen; one student society makes lunch once a week, another plays board games and yet others play in bands.

Sports activities

Rysensteen is the neighbour of Copenhagen's largest indoor sports center, DGI-byen. It contains large halls, a swimming pool, badminton courts, climbing walls and many other facilities. The school takes the students' health and well-being seriously. Alongside the timetabled physical education lessons, students are able to train during the school day, and lots of students do.



Music

Rysensteen has a rich music life with several bands and a choir. The students organize most of the musical performances themselves. This culminates in the annual student-produced musical, which involves actors, dancers, musicians, singers, directors, set designers and writers – and all the other skills that are necessary for large theatrical performances. More than 100 students are involved in this intensive project that takes place in January.

Friendships

The overriding tone at the school is one of respect for the individual and respect for the school community. Many strong and abiding friendships are established within and across student cohorts, and in March, when we hold our annual “old students’ evening”, it is revealed just how many of our former students have strong bonds with their old high school friends.



General Upper Secondary Education

There are four academically oriented general upper secondary programmes in Denmark:

- The 3-year Upper Secondary School Leaving Examination (stx)
- The 3-year Higher Commercial Examination (hhx)
- The 3-year Higher Technical Examination (htx)
- The 2-year Higher Preparatory Examination (hf)

Rysensteen – a Gymnasium (stx)

Even though all four of the upper secondary education programmes come under the category “gymnasium”, it is primarily the stx qualification that is strictly speaking a “gymnasium” qualification. What sometimes causes confusion is that the gymnasium is both the institution and the education. This means that a student typically goes to a certain gymnasium in the country, however also attends the gymnasium – meaning the stx education programme.

Of all four upper secondary school programmes, student intake into general upper secondary education is the highest for the stx programme. In 2013, 48 per cent of the pupils leaving grade 9 and 10 applied to the stx programme. And the programme is a success. The completion rate is high and the programme is the primary provider of academically proficient students to the higher education programmes.

The focus in the stx is on general education and general preparation for higher education. The academic standard is closely linked to aspects of the academic subjects, and the aim is for the





students to achieve general education and study competences in the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences with a view to completion of higher education. Students should, in the course of their academic progression, develop insight and study skills. They must become familiar with the application of various approaches and working methods and acquire the ability to function in a school environment that demands independence, cooperation and a keen sense of seeking out knowledge.

Specialised study programmes at gymnasiums

Since the reform of the gymnasium in 2005, the stx-programme has provided a wide variety of options allowing applicants to decide what direction to choose. This means that the education is tailored to the interests and wishes of the individual student. Each student goes through a basic programme (1/2 year) with a number of compulsory subjects and levels. After this the student must choose a direction, which combines two or three subjects within natural sciences, social sciences or humanities, including artistic subjects.

Compulsory subjects and levels

- Danish A • English B • 2nd foreign language B or A
- History A • Classical studies C • Physics C
- Physical education (PE) C • An artistic subject C
- Mathematics C • Religion C • Social science C

Specialised study programme

As a minimum, the student must choose 4 A level subjects, 3 B level subjects and 7 C level subjects. The student always has the option of choosing more A and B level subjects, but may not choose fewer subjects.

In addition, at least two of the following subjects must be chosen: biology, chemistry and geography at C level. Most students must also complete mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry or geography at A and B level. The compulsory artistic subject is chosen from visual arts, drama, media studies or music.

The most popular choice of 2nd foreign language is: French continued level B and A, German continued level B and A, French beginner language A, Italian A, Russian A, Spanish A or German beginner language A, Chinese A, with possibilities for other languages in some schools.

Some of the instruction is in the form of multi-subject courses within the framework of general study preparation, general language understanding and a natural science basic programme.

Following this, the student must choose a specialisation or direction, which combines two or three subjects within natural sciences, social sciences or humanities and includes artistic subjects.

This broad variety of directions in the stx programme gives students the opportunity to adjust their upper secondary education to their envisaged future study course or job. This choice of a specialised study programme and electives takes place in parallel with the compulsory subjects, and each student writes a specialised study project in the third year within two or three subjects of their choice and selects a number of elective subjects. The number varies according to the study field subjects taken by the student.

[www.rektorforeningen.dk/files/analyser/engelsk_pjiece_til_web.pdf]

The Danish school year and school organization

Autumn semester

Mid August: First school day

Mid October: Autumn break

Late December (weeks 51-52):

Christmas break

Spring semester

Early January: First school day

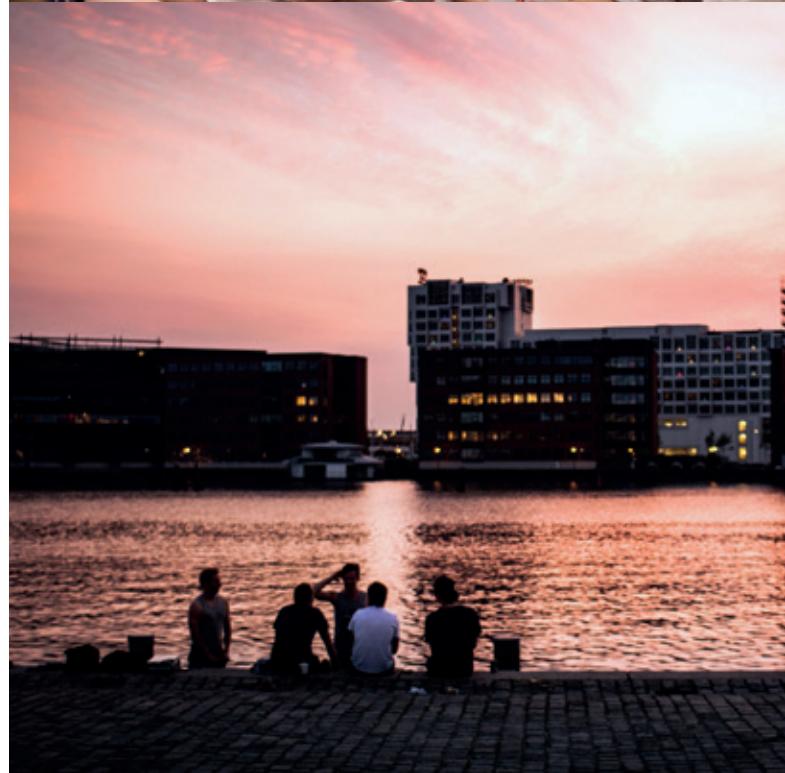
Mid February (week 7): Winter break

March or April (one week): Easter break

Late May: semester ends

May and June: Exam period

Late June: Graduation for 3rd year students





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