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## STUDY IN YAKUTIA

*The North-Eastern Federal University, in Siberia, focuses on innovation and fully supports its students, from entry to graduation and beyond*

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Tucked away on the Siberian permafrost in Yakutsk, the capital of the Sakha Republic, lies a seat of academic excellence. Known as the Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University (NEFU) it is one of nine leading universities established by the Russian Federation's government as 'an innovative, scientific, educational and cultural centre, located in a major and strategically important area of economic development'.

### A COMPELLING MOTTO

NEFU was established in 2010 on the site of the former 75-year-old Yakutsk State University as a thoroughly modern, federal university with a wide range of educational programmes and a compelling motto: 'The quest for excellence is the way to success.'

Today, over 23,000 graduates and postgraduates attend from Russia – there are students from 27 different Russian regions – and 16 foreign countries. But numbers are not what it is about, as the university's Rector, Evgeniya Mikhaylova, explains: 'Numbers are not our main goal. Our principal aim is to admit the number of students that we can provide with a high standard of education.'

The university conducts scientific research in 17 fields and fulfils the five priorities in the federal science and technology strategy: ecology and proper environmental management; natural resources and energy; human health and biotechnologies; information and communication technologies; and the preservation and development of the languages and cultures of the peoples of the circumpolar world. Education takes place at 15 separate institutes, nine faculties and three different branches.

Indeed, as well as its motto, NEFU has a decidedly lofty mission statement. It is to educate competitive professionals to conduct research and to develop innovative programmes 'for the creation of an economically solid and socially advanced circumpolar region'. It also aims to provide the necessary conditions for 'high living standards and preserving the cultures of the peoples of north-eastern Russia'. As such, NEFU is a veritable nucleus of innovation.

The university's Arctic Innovation Center, for instance, turns students' ideas into practical, commercial products, and even creates Small



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Innovative Enterprises (SIEs) and new highly skilled jobs for people in the north, as well as helping the community. One SIE built three two-storey, energy-efficient residential homes for residents of a small village in the region. Through another SIE, scientists at NEFU's Institute of Engineering and Technology pioneered the use of a kind of concrete made out of local mineral resources, in the construction of walls in apartment blocks in Yakutsk.

### OPTIMISM AND GOODWILL

In addition to this focus on innovation, NEFU has a reputation for being extremely student-friendly and highly supportive of student organisations and initiatives – something that has boosted its popularity among potential entrants. It acts as a social and cultural centre to encourage 'an ethical and healthy generation of youth', says Evgeniya.

'The university is filled with respect and love, trust and patience, optimism and goodwill. We are sure that such an environment is vital for today's young people, who strive to be educated and cultured,' she adds.

NEFU even guarantees full employment for its graduates, as well as offering travel benefits and financial help with accommodation, and it runs mentorship programmes within the university and within the organisations that ultimately provide employment. The local population supports this new university mission.

Indeed, the university doesn't abandon its students once they leave. 'We do not forget about our students after graduation because we are responsible for them, their knowledge and behaviour,' says Evgeniya. 'Possibilities open in front of them like an ocean, but we do not leave them alone on this ocean. Students prepare themselves for real life as they gain theoretical and practical knowledge for their future professions at this university.'