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The University  
of Salamanca's New  
Campus

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The school is being redeveloped into learning pods of four to six classrooms with a central multipurpose space, a shared teacher office, in-class wardrobes vented to the ceiling to replace cloakrooms, storage rooms and retreat rooms off classes.

“Classrooms are gutted of sinks and fixed furniture to enable greater teaching space and flexibility. New furniture caters for different learning and teaching styles,” said Principal Ian Poulter.

Other features of the new property modifications include acoustic ceiling panels, sound absorbent wall and wardrobe coverings, and skylights to increase natural light. Storage areas are maximised by mobile shelving.

The property modifications have had a positive impact on teaching and learning. According to Poulter, “Teachers in the two completed pods are thrilled with the teacher offices which encourage collegial support and team-wide planning. Personal teaching resources are easily accessible.”

The multipurpose spaces, subconscious learning features and thoughtful landscaping will ensure that learning is not simply confined to the classroom. The principal described the new outdoor areas: “Paths will have a row of bricks along them every five metres allowing students to quickly appreciate varying distances. With an increased enrolment it has been vital to fully utilise outside areas. Chess boards, sails, seats and gardens will provide an attractive environment for the school community. Two new adventure playgrounds will provide challenges for the students.”

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## **THE UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA'S NEW CAMPUS**

The University of Salamanca in Spain has planned a new campus rooted in the local culture, geography, architecture and academic tradition. It will be built in the adjacent municipality of Villamayor, along the bank of the river Tormes. The master plan defines the basic features for what is one of the most important university development projects in Europe.

This campus will be an extension of the university's existing buildings which date from 1218 and are located in the city of Salamanca, inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

*“Ours is a very old university, the fifth oldest in Europe. Since its creation in 1218, good architecture, in the widest sense, has been a companion of the University of Salamanca: good times, good architecture; bad times, bad architecture or none at all. You can find fine examples here of the Spanish Renaissance style – the so-called plateresco – and some of the best Baroque buildings and outdoor spaces.*

*“We seem to be in good shape now, so we are embarking on an ambitious project under the direction of Pablo Campos, the Villamayor campus. Villamayor is a small town near Salamanca whose quarries provided the distinctive sandstone of our historic buildings. With this project we wish to test a new concept in academic architecture.”*

– Enrique Battaner, Rector  
of the University of Salamanca

### **The “educational campus”**

The future university space was conceived as an “educational campus”, linking education, architecture and nature. It will encompass open spaces, the landscape and indigenous vegetation as active elements for learning.

The campus layout consists of three academic zones connected by a botanical park that runs along the river-side: the South Area for agricultural and environmental studies; the North Area for communications and the arts, and the East Area which will accommodate a science park. The campus will host 1 500 to 2 000 students (today the university counts 32 000 students).

*“The Villamayor campus will embody a new concept of educational campus which recognises students not as products of the learning process but as creators of their own academic activity.”*

– Santiago López, Vice-Rector of  
Strategic Planning, University of Salamanca

## Design

The campus design innovatively builds on traditional elements of the university and the city, like the cloister and the plaza, to provide small- to medium-scale areas which foster human contact.

The river, existing fields and local vegetation are integrated as spatial components in a unified scheme. The botanical park will offer two miles of indigenous trees and plants interacting with the university architecture and student life.

As the history of the town of Villamayor is linked to sandstone quarries, the campus design includes references to sandstone blocks and quarrying techniques.



Villamayor campus:  
South Area – Faculty of Agriculture and Environment

*“If this project designed by Pablo Campos, a specialist in university spaces, is respected in detail, the University of Salamanca will one day be able to boast the Villamayor campus as an distinctive example of the environmental, pedagogical and research values predominant at this stage of its long history.”*

– José María Hernández, Vice-Rector of Planning and Teaching Innovation, University of Salamanca

## Learning and social interaction

The Villamayor campus will be built on a human scale and respect the Bologna 2010 objective of 25 students per teacher. The layout will extend learning beyond the academic area’s boundaries.

The future campus will generate interaction between the academic and urban communities, fostering participation by their various members and thus transforming the area’s social, urban and economic dynamics. The science park, for example, will contribute to economic growth.

The principal means of circulation will be by foot, on bicycle and via the river. For commuting to and from Villamayor (about 1.5 km away) and Salamanca (about 3 km away), public transport will be encouraged.

## Sustainability and resources

The campus is conceived as a sustainable structure, taking into account bioclimatic principles, directional aspects and ecological values, to create a healthy environment for university life. The buildings will benefit from energy-saving technologies, and water from the Tormes River will be treated for campus use.

Local sandstone will be used in construction together with modern materials to produce a high quality architecture which respects tradition and testifies to 21<sup>st</sup> century techniques.

The campus will also promote the use of modern technologies for learning, such as a media laboratory and the science park.

This “educational campus” will offer a modern, academic space deeply rooted in tradition, assuring the future of this 800-year-old university for decades to come.

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