

Access to firearms for polar bear protection in relation to studies or employment at UNIS (the University Centre in Svalbard)

UNIS is a state-owned limited company with five of Norway's universities represented on the board. We are located in a modern working environment in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, and offer courses in Arctic biology, geology, geophysics and technology. We have around 800 students pr. year and a permanent staff of around 110.

UNIS conducts fieldwork all over Svalbard throughout the entire year. Fieldwork in the Svalbard environment poses a probability for close encounters with polar bears. Polar bears are potentially very dangerous for humans, and students and staff are therefore trained in how to avoid meetings with polar bears and how to act if such meetings occur, in order to avoid injuries on humans or animals.

As part of the UNIS policy for polar bear protection students and staff are required to bring rifles and flare guns during fieldwork. UNIS provides the necessary training in how to handle both weapons and flare guns in a safe and efficient manner.

UNIS requires that students and staff who get access to rifles and flare guns through UNIS shall complete and pass our internal training, and follow our internal rules for handling and storage of weapons.

UNIS also requires that students and staff who get access to weapons at UNIS can present a valid weapons license from a police authority, or a certificate of good conduct from a police authority. The certificate of good conduct cannot be older than 6 months. The certificate, or a certified translation of it, must be in English or a Scandinavian language.

Access to weapons is not a requirement for study or employment at UNIS. If a student or member of staff does not pass the internal training or is not able to present a weapons license or a certificate of good conduct, the person will still be able to study at UNIS and to take part in fieldwork.



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