

# Case Study: Roskilde Technical College:

## Preparing students for the real world of zoological information management

**Who:** Roskilde Technical College

**Where:** Roskilde, Denmark

**Case Study:** Using ZIMS to teach zookeeping skills

**Summary:** 2014 Roskilde Technical College offers a rigorous three and a half year program that trains an elite group of students in advanced animal-keeping. Course subjects include animal behavior, welfare, nutrition, wildlife conservation, environmental education, training and enrichment, and now record-keeping—subjects relevant to professional animal care. Students are 20-50 years old, many have had international experience, and are committed, hard-working, and eager to learn. Many have had previous education in other fields.

Highly sought-after apprenticeships and internships are as integral to the program as classroom activities. Students alternate between school and on-the-job training. In fall 2014 Roskilde offered both its first ZIMS certification class for college students and its first five-day ZIMS professional development course for those already working in the zoo and aquarium industry.

How ZIMS has been integrated into the Roskilde curriculum:

Roskilde teaches its students how to use ZIMS in day-to-day record-keeping, including animal accessions, weights, enclosures, life support and environmental data, to training and enrichment



schedules—all ZIMS functions that can make the daily work of zookeeping easier and increase the welfare of the animals.

Malene Friis Hansen, a biologist and instructor at Roskilde, says, “LearnZIMS is a playground. Students can enter any data they want and there’s no fear of making mistakes. They had so much fun with it.” Students created their own institutions, added animals, daily records and enclosure specifications. “All of a sudden they had their own zoo that they had to take care of,” says Malene. “It was quite amazing.”

#### **What the students think:**

Malene says, “We use tasks and assignments to teach the program. Does it work? Students have gone back to their apprenticeships and explained ZIMS to their managers.”

#### **What employers think:**

Roskilde just started issuing ZIMS certificates to students who complete the course. Both students and professional zookeepers can present them when they apply for jobs. One Roskilde student’s ZIMS certification has already led directly to a job.

#### **What the college thinks:**

Malene spends a lot of time talking to professionals in the zoo and aquarium industry to hear what they think students need. “A lot of the job ads for trained keepers expect them to know ZIMS. We try to have them ready.”

For more information about LearnZIMS, contact [ISIS Training Manager Josh Courteau](#).

