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Minister Garmendia sponsors the first batch of biotechnology graduates from the UdL

■ Around twenty Lleida-based companies offer internships for students

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The minister of Science and innovation, Cristina Garmendia, will sponsor the first batch of biotechnology graduates from the University of Lleida. The graduation ceremony will take place on 26 October next at 5 p.m. in the Conference Hall in the Rectorate. The UdL students chose the minister in acknowledgement of the major role played by the biotechnology industry. Garmendia founded the Genetrix Group of biotechnology companies in 2000 and before taking on her responsibilities in the Spanish government she chaired the Spanish Association of Bioenterprises.



Minister Garmendia giving her speech

UdL's biotechnology coordinator, Joan Fibla, highlighted that minister Garmendia "exemplified the added value of these graduates for Spanish society through her attendance at the graduation ceremony. According to Fibla, this sector had "one of the brightest futures on a worldwide level" and that it could play a key role in overcoming the current economic crisis.

Around twenty businesses in the Lleida region offer internships to biotechnology students at the UdL. They are mainly firms in the agri-food sector, and pharmaceutical and clinical trial laboratories. Their technological training primarily consists of the use of live organisms or organic compounds taken from them in order to obtain products that are of value to humans such as drugs or bacteria for purifying water. The students' internships supplement their multidisciplinary training that takes in fields such as biology, molecular genetics and applied informatics to the sciences.

In the first graduation year of the [UdL's degree in biotechnology](http://www.biotechnologia.udl.cat/index.html) [<http://www.biotechnologia.udl.cat/index.html>], there were 26 graduates: 17 male and 9 female. Of these, 40% are from outside Lleida. This UdL degree has

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attracted students from the rest of Catalonia, Aragon, the Basque Country, Andalusia and Castile. The University of Lleida is unique in that it offers specialised training on the agri-food sector in addition to the usual fields of biomedicine and pharmaceutical science. This opens the field of research into improved food products, in addition to plant and animal production. In fact, in just four years biotechnology has become one of the most popular degrees at

the University of Lleida. The degree currently offers around forty places to first year biotechnology students, but there are around one hundred applications each year.

Taking advantage of her visit to Lleida to sponsor the UdL's first batch of biotechnology graduates, the minister of Science and innovation will also open the refurbished H-shaped buildings in the [Agri-Food Science and Technology Park](http://www.pcital.com) [http://www.pcital.com], in addition to the main square and the new access to the facility from the Mariola district.

Photo Gallery

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