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## UNIVERSITY OF ALCALA

Although there had been a Studium Generale approved by King Sancho IV in Alcalá since 1293, the University of Alcalá was founded in 1499 as a completely new educational project by Cardinal Cisneros, the Regent of Spain. It combined the best models of the traditions of that era - Paris and Salamanca - with other more innovative models such as the universities of Bologna and Louvain. Cardinal Cisneros wanted this University, which was born at the same time as the modern age as the Spanish vanguard of the Renaissance and humanist thought in Europe, to be the crucible for the training of the regular and secular clergy able to undertake ecclesiastical reform, as well as of the new competent government officials that the kingdoms of Spain required. The success of this undertaking made Alcalá into the seat of a university aristocracy that made Spain's Golden Age possible.



In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the University of Alcalá became the major centre of academic excellence: great masters such as Nebrija, Tomás de Villanueva, Ginés de Sepúlveda, Ignacio de Loyola, Domingo de Soto, Ambrosio de Morales, Arias Montano, Juan de Mariana, Francisco Valles de Covarrubias, Juan de la Cruz, Lope de Vega and Quevedo taught and studied in its classrooms. The prestige of its courses and of its teachers, and its founding constitutions, provided the model for the establishment of the new universities in America.

The eighteenth century, and its latter years in particular, was an especially critical period for university studies in Spain, as they underwent far-reaching reforms in their teaching methods. However, it was during this period when Melchor de Jovellanos arrived at our University and conferred the Doctorate of Philosophy on the first woman to receive it in Spain - María Isidra de Guzmán y de la Cerda.

After the University was moved to Madrid in the mid-nineteenth century as a result of the expropriation of Church lands, the ambition to restore the University of Alcalá was kept alive by the Condueños Society. The spirit of Alcalá's residents, the prestige of its past, the recovery of its historical memory and the fresh impetus that education received during Spain's transition to democracy in 1977 made it possible for the University of Alcalá to

reopen its classrooms. Since then, the collective effort and determination of its administrators have led to the recovery of its intellectual, cultural and architectural heritage. The university's unique model, its historical contribution to literature and science, and the beauty and richness of its buildings led UNESCO to declare the University of Alcalá a World Heritage Site on 2 December 1998.



Today, the University of Alcalá is a medium-sized modern institution, and acknowledged as a model to be imitated in Europe and America. In addition to classical humanistic studies and the social sciences, the University of Alcalá has incorporated the most modern qualifications in all scientific fields, such as Health Sciences and the various engineering sciences spread across its campuses, which with the Science and Technology Park are a decisive factor in its international profile and a boost to business in our region.

Its more than 29,000 students, 1,627 teachers and researchers and 762 administrative and service staff members are engaged in more than 38 official degree courses, and a wide range of postgraduate and continuing education courses. The recognised quality of

its studies, the development of important research lines, its international relations, the artistic-historical interest of its iconic buildings, its new and modern facilities and its complete adaptation to the demands of today's labour market place at to the forefront of public universities.