

Universidad Católica del Norte



Overview

Located in Northern Chile, at the interface of the Atacama Desert, Andean territories and the Pacific coast, the Universidad Católica del Norte (UCN) offers a distinctive research environment shaped by extreme geographies, cultural depth and pressing global challenges. Founded in 1956, UCN combines a strong public mission with growing international projection, positioning itself as a strategic partner for research and postgraduate collaboration with institutions in the United States.

Inspired by the principles of Christian Humanism and a commitment to the common good, UCN integrates knowledge creation, advanced training and societal impact. Its academic model emphasizes interdisciplinary research, territorial engagement and sustainability, allowing global questions—such as climate change, resource governance, energy transition, health, social cohesion and cultural heritage—to be explored from one of the most singular regions on the planet.



Research

UCN conducts fundamental and applied research across a broad range of disciplines, with particular strength in areas where territory, science, and society intersect. Its postgraduate ecosystem includes doctoral, master's, and medical specialty programs open to international cooperation in:

- Basic Sciences and Technology, with applications in materials, energy, mining, and environmental systems
- Agro-environmental and Health Sciences, addressing sustainability, food systems, public health, and wellbeing
- Social Sciences, Education, Law and Governance, focused on democratic coexistence, social transformation, and territorial development

This diversity allows UCN to host interdisciplinary research projects, enabling Fulbright scholars and U.S. partners to work across scientific, technological, and social dimensions rather than within isolated disciplinary silos.



Flagship Research Assets: IIAM and MAINI®

A distinctive element of UCN's profile is the coexistence of advanced scientific infrastructure and field-based research excellence.

In the humanities and social sciences, the **Institute of Archaeological Research and Museum (IIAM)**—based in San Pedro de Atacama—offers a world-class setting for research on long-term human–environment interactions, Andean societies, cultural heritage and contemporary social processes. IIAM integrates doctoral training, specialized laboratories, internationally recognized

scientific publishing, and deep engagement with local communities, making it a unique platform for Fulbright scholars interested in Latin American studies, anthropology, archaeology and environmental humanities.

In science and engineering, UCN is strengthened by the **Unidad de Equipamiento Científico MAINI®**, a centralized advanced infrastructure unit under the Vice-Rectorate for Research and Technological Development. MAINI® provides high-level analytical and characterization capabilities in materials science, mineralogy, energy systems, environmental analysis and applied technologies. This infrastructure enables UCN to support cutting-edge laboratory research, complementing field-based studies conducted in extreme and real-world conditions.



Fieldwork, Infrastructure, and International Collaboration

UCN offers an exceptional combination of laboratory access and fieldwork opportunities, allowing research to move seamlessly from controlled analysis to real territorial contexts. Visiting scholars and students may engage in research conducted in deserts, Andean landscapes, coastal zones, and culturally significant territories, supported by laboratories, documentation centers, and academic units.

For visiting U.S. professors, researchers, and students, UCN can offer:

- Access to advanced laboratories and research infrastructure
- Collaboration in fundamental and applied research projects
- Participation in postgraduate courses, seminars and academic activities
- Logistical and administrative support, and facilities for fieldwork, subject to program and project characteristics

UCN's value lies not only in its infrastructure or academic programs, but in its ability to offer research experiences that cannot be replicated elsewhere. By combining extreme environments, interdisciplinary expertise, advanced infrastructure, and a strong ethical commitment to society, the Universidad Católica del Norte provides an ideal setting for Fulbright scholars and U.S. partners seeking research that is scientifically rigorous, socially relevant, and globally meaningful.



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