

Circle U. Academic Chair Programme – Call for Applications for Academic Chairs

Circle U. is an inclusive, research-intensive and interdisciplinary European university alliance between Aarhus University (Denmark), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Germany), King’s College London (United Kingdom), Université de Paris (France), the University of Belgrade (Serbia), UCLouvain (Belgium) and the University of Oslo (Norway). Our mission is to empower our students and staff to mobilize knowledge for impact in order to make the world a better place.

We are seeking to recruit 35 Academic Chairs from our existing staff communities across Circle U. The Academic Chairs will establish the new Academic Chair Programme at the heart of Circle U.’s joint infrastructure, designed to ensure strong and sustainable connections across the alliance.

This is an exciting and unique opportunity. Academic Chairs will have the chance to test new and innovative ideas, to establish strong links to leading research environments at some of the most prestigious European universities, and to be at the forefront of new developments in socially-engaged research and education.

Terms of Reference for Academic Chairs

The Academic Chairs are at the beating heart of Circle-U. They will tie our seven universities together, connect Circle U. to society in innovative and meaningful ways. Chairs will dedicate 20% of their working time to the development of activities in Student-Led Sustainable Innovation, Knowledge Hubs, the Open School of Public Governance and the Think and Do Tank. Each university has committed to appoint 5 Chairs during the initial pilot phase of 2021-2023, bringing together 35 academics in total.

Academic Chairs will be located at their ‘home’ university, but will be expected also to spend time at other Circle U. partner universities and to attend meetings in order to facilitate collaboration, communication and dissemination.

The role of the Academic Chairs is to:

- Develop and lead challenge-based and inter-disciplinary projects across Circle U.
- Link education and research within and across disciplines.
- Engage students to take an active role in knowledge creation and socially-engaged research.
- Represent and champion Circle U. internally, nationally and internationally, as well as with external stakeholders.
- Stimulate new models of academic collaboration and partnership, and share these across Circle U.

The Academic Chairs will ensure strong and sustainable connections across our seven universities, between research and teaching, between students and staff, and between

universities and society. Chairs will have access to seed funding to support the development of innovative research-based education projects and will have access to funding to support travel.

How the Academic Chairs connect to the Work Packages in Circle U.

The Academic Chair Programme is a central feature of Circle U.'s joint infrastructure. Academic Chairs will work in partnership, and be supported by, the respective Work Package Leads and Working Groups, comprising an interdisciplinary and intersectoral team of academics, professional services and student representatives.

Each of the three Work Packages (4, 5 and 6) will have at its centre a network of Academic Chairs, as follows:

Student-led Sustainable Innovation (WP4)

- One network of 7 Chairs, one to represent each university.
- Chairs will either be academics or external stakeholders with expertise in innovation or interesting experiences to share with students.
- Chairs will be expected to empower students by adopting innovative pedagogical approaches and entrepreneurial learning, including developing new programmes on sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship.

Societally Engaged Education and Research (WP5)

- Three networks of 21 Chairs, three from each university.
- Chairs will be academics with expertise in one of the three priority areas (Climate, Democracy, Global Health).
- Chairs will be involved in the development of the three interdisciplinary Knowledge Hubs (Climate, Democracy, Global Health) and in the Open Circle U. School of Public Governance, work across disciplines to engage students in research and education to solve 'real-life' societal challenges, and contribute to the creation of interdisciplinary summer schools and participate in annual seminars for each thematic area.

Think and Do tank on the Future of Higher Education (WP6)

- One network of 7 Chairs, one from each university.
- Chairs will be involved in shaping the future of the European Education Area.
- Chairs will play a key role in the development of new approaches to teaching and learning, including the development of pilots that transform curricula and teaching methods at universities, especially involving digital solutions and multilingualism.

Please see p.5-8 for more detailed descriptions of the different Work Packages.

Recruitment process and timescale

Academic Chairs will be appointed from the academic, research and teaching staff of each of the partner universities, except in WP4, where external stakeholders may also be appointed. Each university will appoint 5 Chairs, one for WP4, 3 for WP5 (ideally, one per Knowledge Hub, and also contributing to the Open School of Public Governance) and one for WP6.

We are looking for people who can bring exciting and innovative ideas, an interdisciplinary profile, and a strong commitment to linking education and research to foster transformative impact on society.

Academic Chairs are expected to have excellent communication skills in English, both oral and written. Proficiency in other European languages used by the Circle U. partners will be an advantage.

Together, we support an inclusive culture and diversity for our staff and students. We are committed to encouraging further growth from diverse groups, and we are committed to ensuring that the Academic Chair Academy includes people of all abilities and under-represented groups. We are seeking Chairs at all career stages.

Potential candidates are invited to submit a 2-page CV and letter of intent, with an indicative (1-2 page) proposal for a new project that relates to the main aims and objectives of one of the Work Packages listed above. This should include:

- the main challenges and objectives addressed in the project.
- research and education activities involved in the implementation of the project and how these will involve non-academic partners and engage students.
- a plan for sharing and involvement of partner universities.

Deadline for applications: 31 May 2021.

Applications being handled internally by each partner university, Université de Paris applicants are invited to send their CV and letter of intent in PDF form to Esther Sulimovic: esther.sulimovic@u-paris.fr

Academic Chairs will be appointed in July 2021.

About Circle U.

Circle U. brings together 7 universities, more than 300,000 students, 50,000 staff, 79 faculties, and over 2,200 programmes of study in one vision: jointly to develop competencies and solutions for keeping Europe and our planet healthy, peaceful, democratic and prosperous.

Our seven universities are all comprehensive, research-intensive universities firmly built on academic freedom and integrity as fundamental values. Each plays important roles in shaping national and regional higher education and research systems. As role models, we share the awareness of our special responsibility to inclusiveness and to society at large. We share the same commitment to our students by continuously developing innovative and creative ways to teach and learn, focusing on research-based and interdisciplinary knowledge.

We are likeminded universities, enriching each other with our variety of cultures, histories and geographic locations. Regional diversity is important in our Alliance. We encompass universities from Erasmus+ programme countries outside the European Union, including differing relationships to the European Union. This knitting together of Europe brings the European Union closer together, and also contributes to the building of a broader European identity. We view this as a strength, as it sends a strong message to citizens in favour of diversity and inclusion.

Circle U., grounded in a dedication to ethical principles and a sustainable society, links together our missions in education, research, innovation and service to society, and paves the way for the universities of the future. Initiatives in key areas make these links stronger and concrete and focus efforts on sustainability. Our Alliance transforms our way of interacting with each other and with our external partners, and helps us to shape the future of the European Education and Research Areas to the benefit of our students, staff and society at large.

By 2023, Circle U. will create new learning activities connecting education and research on climate, democracy and global health. We will develop challenge-based innovation initiatives with real world impact, and open the walls of our classrooms for more virtual and physical mobility of students and staff. We will build structures for integrating the universities and strengthen our mutual trust. And we will be ready to scale up our cooperation to affect all areas of our universities in the next phase of our cooperation.

For more information, see: <https://www.circle-u.eu/>

Terms of Reference for Academic Chairs in Student Led Sustainable Innovation (WP4)

We need to educate the leaders, employers and innovators of the future, and we need to give them an entrepreneurial mind set to enable them to contribute with new approaches fostering new solutions. As stated in the Circle U. mission, we need to empower students and to engage with external stakeholders when preparing students to be important contributors to a more sustainable future. They will need entrepreneurial skills e.g. to develop health care systems that fit a future with a changed demography. The three building blocks in WP4 are Circle U. Challenge, Female Founder Network and online training on sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation.

The role of the Academic Chairs in WP4

Academic Chairs should be a combination of academics and external stakeholders that are experts in innovation or have interesting start-up experiences to share with students and to empower students by adopting innovative pedagogical approaches. They should be persons willing to pave the way beyond the already very ambitious European Universities project with all the risks and potential barriers that this implies. They can be professors, researchers, or entrepreneurs but also extra-academic experts, e.g., coming from Circle U. associated partners.

We are seeking a variety of profiles for Chairs in WP4. We want to create a network of highly qualified individuals, with a mix of diverse competencies, experience and disciplinary backgrounds. The profiles of the Chairs should be diverse in 3 ways:

- Diversity of disciplines
- Diversity of competences and interests (digitalisation, research-based education, multilingualism ...)
- Diversity of scope (some people more “micro” –e.g. methods of teaching but also more “macro”, “political” or “managerial” profiles).

Terms of Reference for Academic Chairs in Socially-Engaged Education and Research (WP5)

To make significant contributions to Agenda 2030 with its accompanying 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to the EU Green Deal, we need to work together across disciplines, sectors and borders. The aim of this work package is to create a structure, which will enable us to do just that as part of our commitment to expand and deepen our interactions with society. In consultation with academic staff and students, we have identified three thematic areas where we can pool our existing strengths within education, research, and innovation, to make substantial impact.

The objectives of this work package are to:

- Develop thriving structures where researchers and students co-create knowledge and solutions with external stakeholders and engage in policy development.
- Co-develop and implement challenge-based courses and programmes across universities and disciplines.

The two building blocks in this work package are **Knowledge Hubs and Open School of Public Governance**.

- We will develop **three interdisciplinary Knowledge Hubs on Climate, Democracy and Global Health**. Students will actively contribute to and shape activities in the hubs, and through this interdisciplinary and multi stakeholder engagement, they will acquire and develop transferable skills.
- Drawing on activities in the Knowledge Hubs, we will build an interdisciplinary **Open School of Public Governance**. The Open School of Public Governance will use Circle U. architecture and common scientific agenda to reinvent democracy and to educate future leaders and professionals with different disciplinary and cultural backgrounds. The School will cut across disciplines and integrate public governance with Circle U's interdisciplinary research on climate change, global health, and democracy.

The role of the Academic Chairs in WP5

Twenty-one Circle U. Academic Chairs will be appointed to be the driving forces in realising the activities in this work package. The main tasks are:

- Setting up three thematic Knowledge Hubs
- A gap analysis will be conducted to identify need for new courses
- Planning and implementing thematic seminars and events
- Planning and implementing Summer Schools within thematic areas: Climate, Democracy, Global Health
- Co-developing teaching and learning activities
- Contributing to the development of the Circle U. Open School of Public Governance and its joint PhD and Masters programmes in Public Governance.

Chairs should have expertise in one or more of the thematic areas of the Knowledge Hubs (Climate, Democracy, Global Health) and be equipped to contribute to the development of the Open School of Public Governance.

Terms of Reference for Academic Chairs in The Think and Do Tank (WP6)

The Think and Do Tank is a multi-stakeholder networking platform mandated to engage in critical reflection on the role of higher education in creating a sustainable world, and on how to contribute to transforming curricula and teaching methods towards sustainable education practices. Amongst its priorities, the Think and Do Tank will tackle challenges and solutions for the European Union's ambition to have all Europeans speaking two foreign languages as well as overcoming challenges related to the IT skill gap or the future of digital education.

The Think and Do Tank will present frontline white papers and engage in debates with politicians from European and national parliaments, students, university leaders and academics, and other stakeholders from the private, public and civil sectors.

The role of the Academic Chairs in WP6

The Academic Chairs will be the driving forces of the Think and Do Tank on the future of Higher Education. Their role will be to:

- organize and engage in widespread discussions with students, professors, researchers, and external stakeholders in order to think, co-create and build projects fostering sustainable education.
- analyse innovative learning activities within Circle U.
- build reflective and issue structured recommendations on how to strengthen multilingualism among our students and in Europe.
- disseminate the ideas that have emerged through conferences (for example the Week for Higher Education), articles and policy papers.
- build close relationships with the other Chairs so that Circle U. can capitalise on the innovative learning activities undertaken in the other networks. They will be kept informed of the learning and teaching activities undertaken by their Circle U. colleagues, notably during the annual Chair Academy meeting.
- feed in their own reflection on the future of European Higher Education and on how to facilitate synergies between the European Education Area and the European Research Area, as well as engage with policy makers to shape the European Education Area.
- engage with their colleagues at their home university, to solicit their participation in Circle U.

Chairs should be in a position effectively to promote the Circle U. vision for the future of Higher Education and to base their proposals and activities on interdisciplinarity. They are 'connected people' and in capacity to call on colleagues. They should be aware of the challenges of digitalization and not only be linked to the education and research levels of the universities, but also be able to act at the policy level.

Chairs will be active co-creators in the European Education Area. They will be persons willing to pave the way beyond the already very ambitious European Universities project with all the risks and potential barriers that this implies.

We are seeking a variety of profiles for Chairs in WP6. We want to create a network of highly qualified individuals, with a mix of diverse competencies, experience and disciplinary backgrounds. The profiles of the Chairs should be diverse in 3 ways:

- Diversity of disciplines
- Diversity of competences and interests (digitalisation, research-based education, multilingualism ...)

Diversity of scope (some people more “micro” –e.g. methods of teaching but also more “macro