



Circle U.
European University Alliance

2026 Call for Flagship Initiatives

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

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The Circle U. European University Alliance is excited to announce the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I) 2026 Call for Flagship Initiatives. This funding opportunity invites students, administrative staff, and faculty members from Circle U. member institutions to develop innovative projects that advance equity, diversity, and inclusion within their academic environments.

Now in its third edition, the 2026 Call supports initiatives to be funded in 2027, with a maximum funding period of one year per project. The total funding available is €12,000 per call, with individual projects eligible to apply for up to €4,000.

Goals of the initiative

The ED&I Flagship Initiatives are based on [Circle U.'s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy](#) and are designed to:

- **Foster transformative action** by empowering individuals and teams to address key ED&I challenges within their institutions and across the Circle U. network.
- **Encourage collaboration** among Circle U. universities, leveraging shared knowledge and expertise to enhance the reach and impact of projects.
- **Promote awareness and engagement**, using creative and impactful methods to inspire positive change in university communities.
- **Support at least 3 diverse projects** each year that demonstrate a strong commitment to advancing Equity, diversity, and inclusion.

We welcome a wide variety of project proposals that introduce innovative approaches to ED&I challenges, with the potential for lasting impact. Whether focusing on education, advocacy, or structural change, this fund is here to help bring your ideas to life.

1 Thematic areas

Proposals can address a broad range of topics. Below are some suggested themes, though applicants are welcome to propose projects in other areas that align with the objectives of this call:

- **Raising Awareness on Inclusion**
Projects that organize events, campaigns, or workshops aimed at increasing understanding and visibility of diversity and inclusion within the academic community.
- **Building Stronger Networks**
Initiatives that aim to create or strengthen support networks for underrepresented or marginalized groups within the university setting.
- **Gender and Intersectionality**
Projects focused on tackling gender inequality and addressing the intersections of race, gender, class, disability, and other identities to foster a more inclusive environment.
- **Inclusive Curriculum Development**
Initiatives that work towards integrating ED&I principles into the curriculum, ensuring more diverse perspectives and inclusive teaching practices.
- **Mobility and Equal Opportunities**
Proposals that aim to make mobility programs more accessible to underrepresented students or staff, helping to overcome barriers related to disability, financial constraints, or other challenges.

- **Inclusive Leadership and Governance**
Projects that promote inclusive leadership and decision-making within university structures, encouraging greater participation from diverse voices in university governance.
- **Digital Inclusion and Accessibility**
Projects that address the digital divide, ensuring that digital learning environments and tools are accessible to all students and staff, particularly those with disabilities.

2 Eligibility

Who Can Apply: Students, administrative staff and faculty members from any Circle U. member university.¹ Please see eligibility for staff and students from King's College London below. Collaboration between multiple Circle U. institutions is highly encouraged. Preference will be given to projects that involve two or more Circle U. member universities.

Project Scope: The initiative must align with [Circle U.'s ED&I strategy](#) and present a clear, feasible plan for implementation.

Eligible Costs: Funding can be applied to project-related expenses and the running costs of the networking activities, such as materials, event organization, outreach activities, short-term mobility, costs for services and more. Please note that equipment, conference fees, overhead costs, remuneration of project partners and costs for staff, as well as the costs already or subsequently covered by other funds, are not considered as eligible costs.

Please note, that whilst **King's College London (KCL)** staff and students are welcome to take part in an ED&I project and application to this flagship initiatives' call, they are not eligible to be recipients of the funds. Exception: Individuals from KCL (as associate partners) could be funded for travel and accommodation in order to contribute to a project. Please contact the Circle U. team at KCL if you have any further questions: circle-u@kcl.ac.uk.

3 Evaluation criteria

Each proposal will be evaluated based on the following:

Relevance to ED&I: How well the project aligns with the ED&I objectives of the alliance (see [Circle U.'s ED&I strategy](#)) and contributes to advancing inclusion within the academic community.

Collaboration and Commitment: The engagement and commitment of students, staff and faculty to the initiative, particularly in multi-institutional partnerships.

Potential for Impact: The anticipated impact of the project on fostering a more inclusive and diverse academic environment, with a clear timeline for implementation.

¹

4 How to apply

Interested applicants are invited to submit a detailed project proposal, including a clear budget, timeline, and expected outcomes, through the online application system at <https://umfrage.hu-berlin.de/index.php/933163?lang=en>. The application deadline is **15.09.2026**.

5 Info session

The Circle U. Team will host an info session for all interested applicants on **11.09.2026** at 1pm CET. The info session will be online and we hope to answer all questions regarding funding eligibility and our application process. **Please register at diversity@circle-u.eu**, if you want to attend the info session.

6 Selection and notification

The selection process will be overseen by a selection committee comprising academics and professionals with expertise and experience related to ED&I. Successful applicants will be notified by **15.10.2026**. Projects will **commence in November 2026** and will have a **maximum duration of 12 months**.

7 Contact

For any questions regarding this call or the application process, please contact the Circle U. ED&I Team: diversity@circle-u.eu.

8 Annexes

9.1 About Circle U.

Aarhus Universitet (Denmark), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Germany), King's College London (United Kingdom), Università di Pisa (Italy), Universität Wien (Austria), Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium), Université Paris Cité (France), Universitetet i Oslo (Norway) and Univerzitet u Beogradu (Serbia) are Circle U.: an inclusive, research-intensive, and interdisciplinary European University alliance working to provide outstanding education, research, and innovation to contribute to more sustainable, democratic, and healthier societies. In 2020, we have joined forces to develop a new model of cooperation where education, research, innovation and service to society are better connected. During the pilot project (from November 2020 to October 2023) funded through the Erasmus+ programme, we have worked closely with students, academics, researchers, staff and external stakeholders to test and identify new challenge-based educational formats and ways of working together to make Circle U. an international, inclusive, innovative and agile joint ecosystem.

In the current phase and through a new EU funded project up to the end of 2027, whilst continuously testing out new concepts in higher education and research cooperation, we will also scale up and offer a range of flexible learning opportunities, intensify our collaborations in all three missions and maximize our impacts through our joint ecosystem.

To fulfil our vision and mission, we have been developing a joint ecosystem offering a shared infrastructure as foundation for sustainable, impactful and ambitious collaborations across our universities. In the next phase, with the support of the academic chairs, we will consolidate and further develop this joint ecosystem and its core platforms to drive our vision towards a truly European University:

- The **Open Campus** serves as the entry point for all educational opportunities in Circle U. This integrated digital learning platform is at the heart of Circle U., linking together the various other platforms, including services to support mobility and facilitate the administrative and technical implementation.
- Launched in the pilot phase, the **Knowledge Hubs** are shared physical and virtual spaces where academics, researchers, students, staff and partners are developing research-based, trans- and interdisciplinary educational and research activities to tackle big societal challenges linked to our four priority themes: climate, democracy, global health, and artificial intelligence.
- The **Circle U. Teaching Innovation Lab** (CU.til) supports the development of innovative and creative teaching and learning formats that focus on research-based, trans- and interdisciplinary knowledge and societal engagement. The CU.til connects teaching and learning support units across our universities and encourages research in education.
- The **Circle U. Multilingualism, Interculturality and Language Lab** (CU.mil) supports the development of a multilingual, plurilingual and intercultural environment within the alliance and beyond, by sharing experiences and existing offers, developing joint courses and other language and intercultural learning experiences (including for less frequently used languages) and developing a language policy for the alliance.
- The **InCU.bator** offers a structured space and concrete support opportunities for students in developing innovative projects with a societal impact. It thus puts students at the centre of societal innovation and, with the support of external partners, fosters an entrepreneurial mindset in the broad sense.
- The **Community of Practice for Early-Career Researchers** (CU.ecr) provides early-career researchers with opportunities for networking, exchanges, competence building, mobility as well as developing and maturing their research interests in close collaboration with colleagues from Circle U. The activities are characterised by co-creative modes of cooperation.

9.2 Application form template

Preliminary information

Please read this information carefully before completing the application form.

The application form should be completed by the lead applicant in English and should be agreed by all project partners. The application can only be submitted online.

The ED&I 2026 Call for Flagship Initiatives, including the application link, can be found on the [Circle U. website](#).

The call will close on September 15th 2026, 23:59 CET. You may still edit your submission until this deadline. To do so, you must click on "resume later" in the upper right corner once you started filling out your application and follow the instructions. In order to return use the [survey link](#) and click on "load unfinished survey".

Once you have submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation. If you want a copy of your application, if you experience any problem with this form or have any additional questions please contact the Circle U. coordinating team at diversity@circle-u.eu.

Privacy terms and conditions

Circle U. AISBL is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy by maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of your personal data, in accordance with the GDPR and other applicable legislation. We collect, process and store your data for the sole purpose of evaluating your application. If your project is selected, we will use the identification data of your project for communication and dissemination purposes. For any question or request, please contact office@circle-u.eu.

☐ I agree with those terms and conditions

Lead applicant details

* Project lead

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Are you currently (or have you been) a Circle U. Academic Chair?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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*** Number of Circle U. member universities that will participate in the project apart from your university**

- ☐ 0
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ 6
☐ 7
☐ 8

Circle U. project partners details

Project partner 1 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Are you currently (or have you been) a Circle U. Academic Chair?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 2 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Are you currently (or have you been) a Circle U. Academic Chair?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 3 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Are you currently (or have you been) a Circle U. Academic Chair?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 4 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Are you currently (or have you been) a Circle U. Academic Chair?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 5 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Are you currently (or have you been) a Circle U. Academic Chair?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 6 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Are you currently (or have you been) a Circle U. Academic Chair?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 7 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Are you currently (or have you been) a Circle U. Academic Chair?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 8 (if any)

First name	
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Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Are you currently (or have you been) a Circle U. Academic Chair?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Involvement of external partners in your project

Are there any external partners involved in the project (by “external partners”, we mean [associated partners](#) that have been formally identified by the member universities, and other stakeholders that are committed to playing an active role in various Circle U. activities, thus contributing to the vision and mission of the alliance)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please indicate the details of the external partners involved:

--

Project description

01. Title of your project:

02. Acronym of your project (this is meant to facilitate the communication of your project if it was selected):

03. Wich thematic areas does your project adress? (select all that apply)

Wich thematic areas does your project adress? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Raising Awareness on Inclusion
- ☐ Building Stronger Alliances
- ☐ Gender and Intersectionality
- ☐ Inclusive Curriculum Development
- ☐ Mobility and Equal Opportunities

- ☐ Inclusive Leadership and Governance
- ☐ Digital Inclusion and Accessibility
- ☐ Other (please specify):

04. Describe your project and elaborate more specifically on the objectives, the planned activities, the timeline, the contribution and share of responsibilities between project partners, the expected outputs and outcomes (max. 500 words):

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05. Describe the target group(s) of your project and the change within your university/universities that you would like to see from the proposed initiative?

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Project budget

*** Please upload a provisional budget of your project (PFD or DOC), based on the template that you will find below. The budget should clearly indicate the type of costs, the corresponding amounts, the source of funding, the distribution among project partners.**

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*** Please indicate the total funding budget you are applying for. As indicated in the call for applications the budget allocated is up to EUR 4.000 per project.**

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* Certification

☐ I hereby certify that the information provided in this application is correct and complete. I confirm that I, as lead applicant, and my project partners have read the call for applications and will abide by the terms and conditions specified in the call if they are selected. Any provision of inaccurate or false information or omission of information will render this application invalid and, if an application is selected on the basis of such information, the applicants can be required to withdraw from the award. I confirm that I am in capacity to manage the grant independently and supervise funding and expenditures.

☐ I hereby confirm that the authorities of my department/faculty/institute are informed about this application and are supportive of the initiative.

*** Identification of my department/faculty/institute authorities:**

First name	
Last name	
Position	

9.3 Provisional budget template

Title of your project:

Project lead info:

First name	
Last name	
Home university	

Provisional project budget:

Cost description	Amount (in EUR)	Comment
See eligible costs in the call	<i>If costs are not in EUR, please use the reference rate published by the European Central Bank.</i>	
Total costs of your project	€ -	
Total amount you are requesting through Circle U. ED&I Call	€ -	