UNIC is a European Universities alliance, connecting ten European universities in cities encountering post-industrial transition. The partners work collaboratively on shared teaching and learning innovation, student and staff mobility, city engagement and more. The UNIC university partners are Erasmus University Rotterdam, Koç University Istanbul, University of Deusto in Bilbao, University of Liège, Ruhr University Bochum, University of Oulu, University of Zagreb, University of Lodz, Malmö University, and University College Cork.

UNIC HEI Award
Best practices for inclusive higher education

This award aims to reinforce teaching, research and dissemination of superdiversity and inclusion at UNIC universities by recognizing and rewarding courses that reflect these values.

1 Purpose of this call

UNIC invites applications for the UNIC HEI Award, which recognizes notable contributions to teaching, research, and dissemination of superdiversity and inclusion through specific courses offered by its partner universities. This award aims to honor an innovative and impactful course that sets a high standard for inclusive higher education and serves as a platform for sharing these achievements within the UNIC community and beyond.

As part of this initiative, a digital badge will be awarded annually to a course that demonstrates excellence in fostering superdiversity and inclusion. The digital badge provides formal recognition of exceptional work in creating inclusive learning environments and advancing research on topics of superdiversity, diversity and/or inclusion.

We invite educators, lecturers, and academic leaders to submit applications showcasing their courses and the way they contribute to the enhancement of inclusive education, the promotion of diversity, and the creation of equitable learning spaces. Through this recognition, the digital badge celebrates both individual and institutional excellence, supporting the ongoing development of best practices across UNIC universities.

By awarding an exemplary course, the UNIC HEI Award reinforces our collective commitment to building a more inclusive and equitable academic landscape, encouraging innovation in teaching and research, and advancing the understanding of superdiversity in higher education.

2 Formal conditions

To be eligible for the UNIC HEI Award for Best Practices in Inclusive Higher Education, the course must meet the following formal criteria:

1. The course must be offered within the UNIC network of universities by a UNIC university.
2. The course should be accessible for enrollment to students from at least one UNIC partner university apart from the university offering the course.
3. The course must be conducted in English.
4. It must have had been delivered at least once prior to applying for the UNIC HEI Award for Best Practices in Inclusive Higher Education and must be an ongoing course.
5. The formal course description or curriculum should address themes related to superdiversity, diversity, and/or inclusion.
6. A motivation letter in which applicants are encouraged to address the following questions: What motivates you to apply for this award? Why do you believe this course merits recognition as a leading teaching and research practice in the field of superdiversity and inclusion? The motivation letter will be considered in the selection process and should not exceed 3000 characters with spaces.

Who can apply?

The call is open to all staff members of all ten UNIC universities (part- and full-time professors, educators, lecturers etc.) teaching the course in question.

All faculties of UNIC universities and all topics and disciplines within the field of diversity and inclusion are welcome.

Please note that **courses that have already received a UNIC HEI Award in previous rounds are not eligible to apply again.**

3 Criteria of selection

Applicants are not required to meet all the criteria. Applications that meet more criteria or address them in greater detail will be prioritized. Criteria marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.

For example, a student recommendation letter is optional; however, if an applicant provides such supporting evidence to highlight their perspective of the course, it may be advantageous, as elements like this can contribute additional points to the application.

Continuity*

(applicants provide evidence that the course was delivered at least once prior to applying and is an ongoing course)
Learning objectives related to diversity/superdiversity *   *(applicants provide evidence that course objectives are related to diversity or superdiversity)*
Learning objectives related to inclusion*   *(applicants provide evidence that course objectives are related to inclusion)*
Developed and/or performed in UNIC partnership   *(applicants provide evidence that the course was developed or is performed in partnership of minimum 2 UNIC institutions)*
Inclusion of students from other UNIC partner institutions*   *(applicants provide evidence that a minimum of 1 student from other UNIC partner institutions completed the course since 2020.)*
Student feedback   *(applicants provide a letter of recommendation for the course written by a minimum 1 former course student or the results of student course evaluations)*
Course related research   *(applicants provide evidence of at least 1 research focused on superdiversity, diversity and/or inclusion conducted by at least 1 student mentored by the course teacher during or after the course)*   *E.g. BA/MA/PhD dissertation , research article, etc.*
Course-related dissemination   *(applicants provide evidence of at least 1 course dissemination activity related to superdiversity, diversity and/or inclusion)*
Inclusion of community   *(applicants elaborate and provide evidence that student activities during the course are done for the community, in the community, and with the community)*
A learning experience in line with learning objectives/themes of superdiversity, diversity and/or inclusion*   *(applicants elaborate and provide evidence that course design and execution provide students with learning experience in line with themes of superdiversity, diversity and/or inclusion – e.g. debates, filed work, critical papers, service-learning…)*
Motivation letter*   *(applicants elaborate their motivation for applying, the course's eligibility for the award, limited to a maximum of 3000 characters with spaces)*

4 Organisational information

The Call for Applications for the UNIC HEI Award is open annually for four consecutive years. Details regarding the submission deadline for the second round of applications can be found in *Section 4.1 Timeline*.

The selection process will be conducted by the awarding committee, which is composed of seven representatives from various working groups within the UNIC alliance. This committee includes two representatives from the UNIC Capacity Building Centre, one representative from the Diversity and Inclusion Expert Group, one representative from the UNIC Teaching and Learning Centre, one representative from the UNIC Centre for City

Futures, one representative from the UNIC Student Board, and one representative from the Superdiversity thematic line.

4.1 Timeline

Call opens: 1st September 2025

Deadline for Submission: 16th November 2025 (23:59 local time)

Decision and notification: December 2025

4.2 Reporting and Dissemination

Successful applicants will be interviewed about the course and the award to celebrate best practices in teaching, research and dissemination of superdiversity and inclusion within and beyond UNIC network. The interviews will be published on the official communication platforms of the UNIC alliance, as well as the communication channels of UNIC partner institutions.

5 Guidance and How to apply

Applications can be submitted via Application form for the UNIC HEI Award.

In case of any questions or difficulties, applicants should contact ksirotic@unizg.hr

Interested in the field of Diversity and Inclusion?

Join the **UNIC Superdiversity Community** – a network of diversity and inclusion experts from UNIC partner universities. Our shared commitment lies in promoting an integrated approach to diversity and inclusion in higher education.

Learn more about the Community on Superdiversity Community.

Follow the link to Superdiversity Community: registration form to exchange information and experience with UNIC's network, and to participate in our wide range of programming, trainings, events, and workshops!