

THE FUTURE STARTS TODAY!

Inspiring Initiatives from Young
European Research Universities

FOSTERING TALENT / CAREERS

University of Limerick

Research Grant for Returning Academic Carers > [link](#)

Available to academic staff across all faculties, this grant aims to support staff in re-establishing their independent research careers on return from extended leave (20 weeks or more) for reasons connected to caring, such as adoption, paternity, maternity, leave, or leave to care for a dependent. Returning Academic Carers are able to avail of 6 months protected research time or hire a research assistant on immediate return from Carers leave for the 6-month period to maintain their research.

Researchers Development Programme > [link](#)

Focused on researchers, the programme aims to provide skills to support their careers within and beyond academia. The programme enables researchers to develop a long-term career strategy, promote leadership skills, build a research community, develop communications skills and enhance research outputs.

Brunel University London

Career Development Support for doctoral students > [link](#)

At Brunel, researchers are encouraged to engage early with their professional and career development and participate in wide-ranging experiences, to develop their skills and to inform their career decision-making. This leads on to advice about effective job-hunting strategies, targeted applications and interview preparation for the varied roles open to researchers inside and outside academia.

Maastricht University

Recognition and Rewards Initiative (Room for Everyone's Talent) > [link](#)

This UM-led initiative aims to move toward more holistic evaluation practices in the Netherlands, where the focus is on academic career and research quality assessment. The initiative aims to realise a fundamental change in behaviours and leadership with regard to the recognition and rewards system for academia and academics, by promoting diversification and vitalisation of career paths, team performance, shift from quantitative to qualitative elements, open science and leadership in academia.

University of Essex

iTeam > [link](#)

iTeams is an eight-week programme that develops entrepreneurial skills in students who work in teams, acting as consultants to solve challenges set by local businesses. They learn critical thinking/application skills and the programme culminates in a pitch event back to the organisation that posed the initial problem. iTeams has seen a demonstrable number of participants using the skills developed during the course of the programme to further their own business ideas leading to new start-ups from the student community.

University of Eastern Finland

Shared doctoral student position system > [link](#)

With a view to strengthening the link between doctoral education and the world of work outside academia, this scheme allows doctoral students to have parallel contracts of employment with the University and with another employer (a company, an association, a research institute, a municipality, or some other public sector organisation).

Part-time employment scheme for grant-funded researchers > [link](#)

Starting from June 2021, grant-funded researchers will have the opportunity to conclude a part-time contract of employment with the university. This provides them with access to benefits that are normally associated with contractual employment and makes them an increasingly integral part of the academic community.

University of Konstanz

Academic careers with children > [link](#)

The programme provides specific advice services and flexible working conditions for parents. The university's measures include, for example, additional assistants who help teaching staff with preparing online teaching materials, solutions for childcare, a special category in the FAQs on limited university operations as well as guidance for the assessment of junior and tenure-track professors and civil servants and how to account for the coronavirus-related restrictions they have faced. Moreover, a website was created on the topics of equal opportunities and compatibility in academia during the pandemic.

University of Rijeka

UNIRI Foundation rewards significant achievements in the field of science and art > [link](#)

The mission of the Foundation is fundraising with the aim of continuous investment and development of scientific and research infrastructure, activities, quality of education and human resources. This mission is realized by encouraging and rewarding significant achievements in the field of science and art, and the promotion of the idea of knowledge society and active and inclusive citizenship.

University of Bremen

Data Train - training in Research data management and Data Science > [link](#)

The training is established to meet the great need – in science, economy, and society – for competences in data literacy, data management, and data science, a centralized training offer for doctoral candidates.

Tor Vergata University of Rome, University of Antwerp, University of Bremen, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, NOVA University Lisbon

Procurement: digital Tools and sustainable Goals (ProctoGo) > [link](#)

ProcToGo is an EU co-funded project aiming to explore innovative ideas in education as key elements for connecting higher education institutions and the labour market and, as a result, enhancing graduates' employability in the area of Sustainable Procurement, where the demand of professionals with digital skills is more and more increasing.

By integrating traditional academic learning paths with non-traditional approaches based on competency-learning, in particular using micro-credentials, the project contributes to tailor graduates to specific competencies and profiles required by the labour market in the area of Sustainable Procurement.

SUSTAINABILITY

University of Antwerp

SDG Transition chair > [link](#)

This chair formulates tailor-made SDGs for provinces and local authorities, with hands-on development of a set of indicators, while the SDG impact of provincial policy-making is also assessed. Two local authorities are involved in a pilot project to develop and monitor the set of SDG indicators.

SDG Youth Hub > [link](#)

A 'SDG Youth Hub' is co-created by and for higher education students across the three regions of Belgium. The Hub brings students together at the regional, national and international level to exchange best practices on SDG implementation and to initiate action on SDG-related challenges. Coaching is provided to students that are willing to contribute to the SDG transition of their higher education institution. Aspects addressed are education, research and valorisation.

University of Eastern Finland

UEF aims to become carbon neutral by 2025 > [link](#)

UEF has calculated its carbon footprint. Last year, the university set up several groups of experts to carry out the carbon footprint calculation and come up with ways to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality. The groups focused on facilities, procurements, travel, campus restaurants and laboratories. The university will now prepare concrete measures to reduce its carbon footprint. The work and measures are part of the university's sustainability and responsibility policy.

University of Konstanz

Student-led Green Office > [link](#)

This student-led office encourages sustainable development and promotes sustainability in all campus activities - whether these involve teaching, research or the nuts and bolts of everyday business and life at the University. It coordinates efforts to promote sustainability among the university's organisational units, its students and staff. UKonstanz also elected its first Vice Rector for Sustainability, Information and Communication Technology in April of 2021.

NOVA University Lisbon

Innovation district project > [link](#)

NOVA's Innovation District is a project aiming to create a new global city in Almada, that will combine a unique and sustainable lifestyle in a new geography of innovation and technological knowledge. Based on the "live-work-play" concept, the Innovation District will be a unique and plural city, designed to raise the quality of life of each of its inhabitants for whom all the various interest points will be within a short 15-minute distance.

Brunel University London

Partnership for Sustainable Food Future > [link](#)

Brunel joined this partnership, a new £5m doctoral research centre aimed at bolstering the resilience and sustainability of the UK's food systems. Backed by the UKRI, the centre will fund 62 doctoral students across seven universities to develop new research into how we make, transport and consume our food.

Maastricht University

Sustainable UM 2030 > [link](#)

The Sustainable UM2030 Taskforce will work on sustainability issues. It consists of researchers, teachers and UM policy makers and works with students via the Green Office, in line with the Sustainable UM 2030 Plan 2020-2025.

University of Bremen

The Climate University > [link](#)

UBremen offers the possibility to study the climate in numerous degree programs, in European exchange classes, and with digital learning resources. There are also offers for children and youths, such as the 'children's uni'. UBremen is also on the way to becoming a climate-neutral campus and has dedicated itself to systematic protection of the climate. University members are also voluntarily active: through the "Uni Bremen SOLAR" cooperative, staff produce solar power by means of solar panels on university buildings. Students additionally manage a nature conservation group that focuses on biodiversity on campus. The group's aim is to create more living space for plants and insects.

University of Limerick

SDG Steering Group for a Sustainable and Regenerative University > [link](#)

UL is committed to the development and implementation of a holistic approach to sustainable development. Working with regional partners, the University is empowering its students, graduates and staff as active citizens who contribute to the well-being and future of our planet. The SDGs Steering Group has been established to bring together expertise from multiple disciplines and functional areas to guide the University in contributing towards the SDGs and ultimately the journey towards becoming a Regenerative University.

University of Southern Denmark

Introductory course for new students on the SDGs > [link](#)

The course on sustainability is a research-based introduction to the SDGs and their relevance for academic studies. In addition to providing a basic introduction to the SDGs and their historical and political context, the course will also include various examples of specific problems associated with the goals and explore some of the dilemmas such as the work on achieving the goals. The course will provide the students with an interdisciplinary platform for working with the SDGs. The students will also gain experience in working critically and reflectively with the SDGs. This is one of many future SDG-related initiatives at SDU.

University of Essex

Climate Impact Dialogue > [link](#)

UESsex lead an 'Impact Dialogue', to build the understanding of the key social, behavioural and system challenges that prevent us from tackling the climate crisis, and to identify where research can be applied to bring solutions. The 'Impact Dialogue' brings together non-academic stakeholders (such as government, industry, NGOs, and any other interested organisations) with social science academics, to explore new opportunities for impactful collaboration.

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

New UC3M Agenda for compliance with the SDGs > [link](#)

UC3M's Agenda for compliance with the SDGs aims at proposing new lines of actions in all University institutional activities (teaching, research, administration and government, and social leadership) to convert the SDGs into one of UC3M's strategic pillars for development. UC3M commits to compliance with the diverse measures included in this plan by the end of 2023.

GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & STUDENT SUPPORT

Dublin City University

Centre of excellence for diversity and inclusion > [link](#)

The DCU Centre is a central hub for research, advice and knowledge exchange on diversity and inclusion. The Centre creates a bridge between DCU's talent, industry bodies and specialist groups, helping organisations build cultures of inclusion by providing access to the very latest in academic research, insights and tools on diversity and inclusion. It supports organisations in all aspects of their diversity and inclusion journeys.

Brunel University London

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy > [link](#)

To build a culture and community that is kind, committed to fairness, and open to change, Brunel University London launched a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. With this strategy, staff and students will be treated with dignity and respect, feel valued for who they are, and are supported to be the best they can be.

University of Rijeka

University of the Third Age > [link](#)

The university is open to all citizens from the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County over the age of 55, with prior secondary or tertiary education. The educational programmes offer an informal approach to learning that exposes older generations to fresh insights and relates all new information to their rich personal experience. The University of the Third Age aims to cultivate social inclusion, improve general levels of motivation and mental health, and foster the well-being of older generations.

Maastricht University

Diversity and Inclusivity Grants > [link](#)

UM Diversity and Inclusivity (D&I) Grants complement UM's broader institutional efforts in D&I policy; they encourage innovative, bottom-up initiatives promoting diversity, inclusion and equity. Every year, the Executive Board invites students, staff and alumni to translate ideas into activities, tools and small research projects or events that could produce a sustainable impact and help make UM an inclusive organisation.

Wellbeing Movement > [link](#)

This initiative promotes physical and mental well-being. It offers well-being information and training in many forms, such as relaxation, sports, study skills and other resources. Three main events are: The Wellbeing Week (yearly): a week full of workshops, talks and other activities centered around your wellbeing; The Wellbeing Wednesdays (year-round): one Wednesday each month; The Wellbeing Evenings (year-round): several evenings a month, social activities by students for students.

University of Konstanz

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy > [link](#)

The Konstanzia Programme, launched in 2020, includes various funding modules that were developed specifically for all career stages of female researchers. The main element is mentoring, but strategic networking is also addressed in every stage. All modules are open to researchers whose identity varies from traditional gender norms, e.g. transgender, transsexual or intersex.

Zukunftskolleg Konnect Fellowships > [link](#)

The Zukunftskolleg Konnect Fellowships support early career researchers from Africa, Asia and Latin America who are associated with one of the thirteen departments at the University of Konstanz. ZUKONnect Fellows have the opportunity to extend their research networks and to get to know the research environment at UKonstanz while keeping their roots and position at home.

University of Eastern Finland

Bridges Project support students' well-being > [link](#)

This two-year project, funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, aims to take action to strengthen the engagement and inclusion of students, and prevent exclusion. The project will realise the digitisation of student advice services, psychosocial support and peer tutoring by promoting collaboration between actors. The project supports the studying capacity and inclusion of students, and promotes well-being through peer activities, community support actions and activities.

NOVA University Lisbon

The Bridge - Student Wellbeing Platform
> [link](#)

This platform aims to promote and monitor the mental health of NOVA students. It includes the possibility to contact by chat and access to health technicians, with an emphasis on psychological support services. It has informative content, both in Portuguese and in English (for Erasmus and foreign students), about mental health, tips on relationships and how to lead a healthy lifestyle, giving the students the possibility of getting practical information from a reliable source.

University of Essex

Tackling Racism > [link](#)

In 2020, at the UEssex, a new approach was taken to tackling racism in all its forms across the university. Activities included a listening phase

during which students, staff and alumni were encouraged to share their lived experiences of racism and to suggest actions the University could take to address racism; that led to the formation of a Tackling Racism Working Group to provide leadership on the University response. An action plan, comprising three key themes, was developed using the feedback received (i) decolonising the curriculum (ii) underrepresentation of Black staff (iii) race-inclusive policies and processes.

Look after your mate > [link](#)

The Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS) at UEssex have received funding to train ten colleagues across the team to become accredited 'Look After Your Mate' trainers. The workshop aims to equip students with the confidence, tools, and skills to support a friend or peer who may be struggling with mental health difficulties, whilst also looking after their wellbeing. Workshop topics include (i) spotting the signs that a friend or peer might be struggling with their mental health (ii) starting a conversation (iii) looking after your own wellbeing, boundaries and self-care.

DIGITISATION / NEW FORMS OF TEACHING & LEARNING

University of Bremen

WiWiNow Uni app > [link](#)

WiWiNow is an app that offers exercise and quiz tasks, tools for self-organization, e.g. individual revision tracking, class overview, and a calendar export tool for important appointments with reminders. Game-like elements contribute to students' lasting motivation. Lectures and interactive surveys are also available within the app, which can also be used in face-to-face classes.

Dublin City University

DCU Micro-credentials observatory > [link](#)

This platform, developed in partnership with ECIU University, aims to provide a curated and regularly updated collection of major reports, policy initiatives and research-related publications on the growth of micro-credentials in higher education and lifelong learning more generally.

University of Konstanz

Advanced Data and Information Literacy Track (ADILT) > [link](#)

ADILT is a cross-disciplinary programme on data and information literacy for students of all subjects. It complements all study programmes with fundamentals of computer science, data processing methods and their legal foundations as well as a reflection on their relevance for society.

University of Limerick

Centre for Transformative Learning > [link](#)

The Centre encourages and facilitates excellence in teaching and learning within and beyond the University. It encourages scholarship and research in teaching and learning, to help ensure that effective teaching is valued, supported and developed, therefore fostering innovation in teaching and learning activities. The Centre incorporates learning centres to help students tackle challenges in mathematics, science, IT, writing and through peer supported learning.

University of Rijeka

E-laboratory for digital education > [link](#)

A project aiming to create sustainable partnerships of higher education institutions in the EU by strengthening the ability to introduce (e-) teaching and (e-) learning. The project will develop digital pedagogical competencies of teaching staff, finding innovative solutions to provide high quality and inclusive digital education and by developing and using quality digital content and modern (e-)tools.

Ulm University

Ulm University "Master nuggets" course on Instructional Design > [link](#)

Their School of Advanced Professional Studies (SAPS) offers a part-time MA programme in the field of education: "Instructional Design" addresses learning processes and teaching content, with a focus on online and continuing education. The modules are especially geared towards developers of online- and blended learning-formats. The programme combines skills from psychology, education, computer science and statistics.

Confia International, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Tor Vergata University of Rome, YERUN, Kiron

European Digital University Staff Competencies (EDUSC)

This project aims to support and accelerate digitalisation in higher education. By training staff members in digital competencies while utilising modern and digital teaching methodology, staff members are encouraged to become digital internationalisation stewards and join a community of ambassadors for digital transformation that benefits the whole sector.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER SECTORS

University of Antwerp

Antwerp.Smart Region Link (Antwerp.SRL)
> [link](#)

Antwerp.SRL is a partnership between UAntwerp and Antwerp's Chamber of Commerce, supported by the Province of Antwerp, that connects researchers with entrepreneurs in the region. The cooperation centres around themes related to the mainstays of the region, such as the port, the petrochemical sector and expertise in vaccination and infectious diseases. Everything is underpinned by an ambitious sustainability policy and continuous commitment to digitisation.

Maastricht University

Brightlands, a triple helix collaboration > [link](#)

Brightlands is an international open innovation community in Limburg, the Netherlands. Open environments where entrepreneurs, researchers and students innovate. Every day 29,000 entrepreneurs, researchers and students work on breakthroughs in the fields of sustainability, health and digitalization.

NOVA University Lisbon

Institute of Art and Technology > [link](#)

This is the first center in Portugal for research, teaching and artistic creation that combines art and technology. It is the result of a partnership between the NOVA University Lisbon and the Almada City Council. The former 'Presidio of Trafaria' will be transformed into a strategic platform for training, research, innovation and services to the community. An interdisciplinary space that looks at the interface between art and technology as a privileged means to intervene creatively in society, contributing with cutting-edge innovation for its sustainable development.

Sciencepreneur Hands-on Programme > [link](#)

The programme helps researchers with a technological or scientific breakthrough identifying the best path for its commercialisation. Selected candidates have dedicated support delivered by experts, including Venture Capitalists and science-based entrepreneurs, with large experience in knowledge transfer activities and business development, as well as regular meetings with assigned mentors, who will closely follow up the evolution of the candidate projects and facilitate networking opportunities.

Ulm University

'Klima Connect' reality lab > [link](#)

Researchers from Ulm University are working with business executives and employees to develop a concept to make the large industrial and business area in Ulm more climate-friendly.

University of Rijeka

Regional Innovation Matchmaking Platform > [link](#)

This regional digital innovation platform fosters knowledge transfer between academia and business with the aim of developing the innovation ecosystem in the region.

UNIRI Entrepreneurship Support Fund

The Entrepreneurship Support Fund facilitates the business collaborations between UNIRI researchers, students and the business sector. It aims to better connect the scientific community with businesses, to encourage entrepreneurial efforts at the University as well as to ease student employment.

University of Konstanz

University of Konstanz Innovation Centre (UKIC) > [link](#)

The UKIC is the central support service for knowledge and technology transfer at the University of Konstanz. It assists researchers in establishing research collaborations with non-academic partners, with exploiting and disseminating research results and with founding start-ups.

University of Limerick

Industry Residences as part of Immersive Software Engineering (ISE) Programme > [link](#)

Teaming up with a host of leading international technology companies, UL seeks to redefine computer science education through a new integrated undergraduate and Masters degree programme. In partnership with over a dozen leading the companies from around the world (e.g. Stripe, Analog Devices, Zalando, intercom, Shopify, Manna Aero, etc.) the programme will bring the concept of 'residencies' which are more common to medical degrees as a key feature for computer science education, ported learning.

UL@Work > [link](#)

UL@Work enables upskilling and reskilling through lifelong learning, by allowing students to get ready for the future world of work in the digital age. UL and employers have created UL@Work, which will offer industry relevant training in areas such as ICT, Artificial Intelligence, data analytics, industry 4.0, robotics, digital leadership, global trade, law and technology and future studies. The programmes are for undergraduate, postgraduate, and work-based learners, and are designed to be flexible to the needs of students and employers.

University of Essex

Space2Grow / angels@essex > [link](#)

UEssex nurtures and supports creative digital businesses through a structured programme designed to accelerate their progress and help them make their investment ready to angel investors, VCs and private equity funds. Businesses can upload their opportunity to the angels@essex platform, where a network of investors can invest in that company. Recognising that access to finance is a key barrier for high-growth potential businesses, Space2Grow and angels@essex platform complement existing programmes at UEssex that support student and graduate entrepreneurs.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT / IMPACT

University of Rijeka

Policy tool to identify and measure community engagement > [link](#)

The Erasmus+ project Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education (TEFCE) aims to increase the engagement of European universities in addressing societal issues at the local and regional level. The project will develop innovative and feasible policy tools at the university and European level for supporting, monitoring, and assessing the community engagement of universities.

Maastricht University

Studio Europa Maastricht > [link](#)

A collaboration between the Province of Limburg, the Municipality of Maastricht and Maastricht University, "Studio Europa" aims to position Maastricht as a meeting place for citizen dialogue and debate.

Platform for Community-Engaged Research (MPCER) > [link](#)

MPCER aims to function as a multidisciplinary platform for researchers at Maastricht University who are involved or interested in doing community-engaged research.

University of Bremen

Students Support Bremen's Retail Sector in digitalization > [link](#)

In this pilot project, master's students in the area of Marketing and Entrepreneurship have supported Bremen's retail sector in digitalization. In close cooperation with each company, they have created ideas for online shops, produced social media posts, as well as optimized websites for search engines.

University of Antwerp

CLAIRE 'Clean AIR for Everyone' citizen science project > [link](#)

This project is part of the European Interreg project Nature Smart Cities. It features a doll (Claire) equipped with measuring apparatus. When Claire is in her buggy, it takes measurements of traffic-related pollution, such as soot and particulates, every ten seconds. In order to collect as much data as possible, dedicated volunteers take toddler Claire – and little brother Gilbair – out on fixed routes throughout the Antwerp region.'

CurieuzeNeuzen in de Tuin (CuriousNoses in the Garden) > [link](#)

This is the biggest ever citizen science project on heat and drought. An initiative of UAntwerp and national newspaper De Standaard, the project aims to explore how we can deal with the effects of increasingly hot and dry summers better. CurieuzeNeuzen is appealing to 5000 citizen scientists to place smart sensor measuring points in their gardens, school playgrounds, parks or private grounds. These smart sensors will transmit their data to UAntwerp's database using the Internet of Things, making the data available to scientists in real time.

University of Konstanz

U Konstanz: Fab Lab > [link](#)

Fab Lab (Fabrication Laboratory) will enable students, teachers, researchers, cooperation partners and the general public to fabricate prototypes, test ideas and spark creativity. It will provide a range of machines and equipment, such as 3D printers, laser cutters, and other prototyping tools, that will enable users to fabricate (almost) anything.

University of Essex

Centre for public and policy engagement > [link](#)

The Centre promotes a programme of events, interventions and research with the aim of establishing Essex as a national centre for expertise in methods, capacity-building and leadership in public engagement. The centre is also looking to develop the concepts of public engagement around epistemic learning communities, contemplative learning and behaviour change, ethically-driven actions, and the fostering of novel social capital platforms for co-creation of knowledge that leads to transformative actions.

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