

Intensive Graduate Activities at Venice International University

Call for Proposals 2026 (activities in 2027 and 2028).

Issued: January 21, 2026

Premise:



- The mission of VIU is to foster cooperation among VIU member institutions while facilitating the exchange of knowledge and ideas.
- VIU provides an international, interdisciplinary and Intercultural opportunity for learning, teaching and research cooperation.
- Through the Intensive Graduate Activities students and scholars can develop a forward-looking vision, experiment with interdisciplinary approaches, collaborate with peers from all over the world, tackle transversal topics, and undertake scientific challenges in innovative ways;
- Through the Intensive Graduate Activities VIU aims to build and strengthen networks of scholars on areas of shared interest within the consortium.

Categories of VIU Intensive Graduate Activities:

1. VIU PhD Academy

These interdisciplinary, intensive programs address major societal challenges while incorporating a parallel training component on transversal skills. They are designed to prepare advanced PhD candidates and junior researchers from VIU member institutions for careers in research, both within and beyond academia. Typically lasting 5 days, these programs are tailored for students in the advanced stages of their doctorate, postdoctoral fellows, and early-career researchers.

2. VIU Graduate Seminars

These thematic, intensive seminars focus on a specific topic explored through an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary lens. Their purpose is to support PhD students and junior researchers from VIU member institutions as they embark on their research, and to foster interdepartmental collaboration. Typically lasting 5 days, these seminars are designed for PhD students, junior researchers and may admit Master's students who intend pursuing doctoral studies.

3. VIU Summer/Winter Schools

Since 2012, VIU has developed of a series of Summer Schools, which are intensive taught programs that, when successful, are offered annually. Depending on the program's focus, these schools may be addressed to students and researchers at various levels, as well as professionals. The Schools are also open to applicants outside of the VIU membership.

4. Autonomous Activities of the Member Institutions

The Member Institutions may use the VIU facilities also for their own autonomous activities, such as: Academic and Scientific Conferences, Intensive seminars, Summer/Winter Schools, etc.

VIU Global Challenges Initiatives:

The Academic Council would welcome proposals for Intensive Graduate Activities that could be included in the Global Challenges Initiatives as a means to promote the visibility and recognition of VIU as an institution playing a key role in some specific topics of global relevance.

Coherence with the mission of the Initiatives is not a prerequisite for the approval of new academic programs, but it will be considered only as a criterion of preference.



The **VIU Global Challenges Initiatives** are a coordinated stream of activities, inspired by ambitions to contribute to the creation of knowledge, understanding, and skills, responding to current and future major societal challenges faced by humankind today: environmental, social, cultural and technological phenomena and their local impacts.

Knowledge creation across the disciplines - the humanities, social sciences, and the sciences - can play a fundamental role in coping with these challenges. Within an evolving and unconstrained ensemble of topics addressed by VIU member institutions, the Initiatives identify core interests of global and local relevance with the aim to make VIU an innovator.

Through these Initiatives VIU is committed to a critical exploration of what it means to envision a sustainable future. The Initiatives acknowledge the interconnected and intertwined relationships between human and natural systems and aim to be multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary.

The Initiatives are a series of activities with a common purpose. These activities have different forms and targets, including PhD Academies for students at an advanced stage of their research, graduate seminars, and programs for master's students and a broader community.

The Initiatives also include international workshops, forums, and conferences, with participants drawn from academia, business, public institutions, civil society, NGO, and the art worlds. By encouraging the interconnection of these activities, VIU will disseminate the outcomes and extend the discussion to a wider audience.

The VIU Global Challenges Initiatives take advantage of the multicultural context and the unique setting of Venice as a special laboratory, as a location that foregrounds the extraordinary culture of the past, the problems of the present, and the possibility of the future.



Submitting proposals for graduate activities:

- All university members, CNR and INAF are eligible to submit proposals for Intensive Graduate Activities to VIU.
- Each member institution may establish internal procedures for developing and selecting proposals to submit to VIU.
- Local selection processes based on merit would enhance the quality of VIU Graduate Activities.
- Proposing professors should have a clear understanding of which students within their own institution would benefit from the proposed program.
- The VIU Academic Council will evaluate and approve proposals according to principles of quality, the selection criteria, and the strategic priorities determined by the Board of Directors.
- The Academic Council particularly encourages proposals that adopt interdisciplinary approaches, that include contributive and collaborative teaching and participation, and that involve an international group of professors and students.
- All proposals should address the following questions:
Why now? Why at VIU? What is the added value for VIU and for the member institutions?

All proposals must adhere to the guidelines outlined in the annexed documents.

- Proposals must involve representatives from at least three VIU member institutions.
- Proposals must be submitted via email by the coordinator of the activity to the VIU Dean and Chair of the Academic Council, Prof. Carmelo Marabello (dean@univiu.org) and to the representative of the Academic Council of the home institution of each of the leading institutions.
(<http://www.univiu.org/about-viu/governance/academic-council>)
- The professors submitting proposals are encouraged to engage with their representative on the Academic Council before submitting a proposal (both coordinating professors and participating professors).

Selection Criteria for Intensive Graduate Activities in order of priority

1. Balance of disciplines across all VIU activities: ie. natural sciences/life sciences/social sciences/humanities
2. Balance of representation of member institutions across all VIU activities
3. New proposal: ie. topic not previously addressed in Intensive Graduate Activities, or if previously addressed engages a new team of scholars in scientific coordination
4. Degree of interdisciplinarity of the proposed activity
5. Calendar/Scheduling: logistical feasibility of activity eg. Availability of accommodation in low season
6. Balance of representation of member institutions across PhD Academies and Graduate Seminars
7. Geographic balance of representation of members in the proposed activity

Bonus: Global Challenges Initiatives (see page 2)



Approval of proposals:

Preliminary proposals will be discussed and evaluated at the meetings of the Academic Council.

- Summer Schools (or Autumn, Winter or Spring schools) to take place in **2027**.

Deadline: **March 15, 2026**.

Based on the decisions of the Academic Council, successful preliminary proposals should be developed and the advanced program must be submitted for review and final approval of the Academic Council by **September 15, 2026**. The advanced program must include a budget prepared in cooperation with VIU Staff in compliance with VIU guidelines.

- PhD Academies and Graduate Seminars to take place in 2028 (four slots available).

Deadline: **September 15, 2026**.

Based on the decisions of the Academic Council, successful preliminary proposals should be developed and the advanced program must be submitted for review and final approval of the Academic Council by **July 15, 2027** for activities approved for 2028 (earlier if program in Jan/April). The advanced program must include a budget prepared in cooperation with VIU coordinator in compliance with VIU guidelines.

VIU support for building institutional-scientific partnerships for proposals:

When submitting proposals to the Academic Council, the scientific engagement from the minimum number of 3 member institutions required must already be secured. In the development phase, before submission and upon request, VIU can offer support and guidance regarding the feasibility of a proposal, and can assist in identifying suitable partners among the member institutions. To this purpose, expressions of interest should be sent via email at the earliest opportunity, and no later than one month before the deadline.

Funding of VIU Graduate Activities:

Each year, the Board of Directors will allocate consortium funds to support the organization of PhD Academies and Graduate Seminars, with a budget of €25,000 assigned to each activity. These funds may be used for travel and subsistence costs of participants, (including both students and professors: international train or air travel and transport to and from airport, national intercity travel; city travel tickets; accommodation for participants on campus, or in equivalent accommodations in the city of Venice; catering services. VIU will provide classroom and office facilities and staff for organizational and administrative support in-kind).

Summer Schools must be self-sustained and participants pay fees. VIU can support applications and/or administrative procedures to obtain and manage funding from other sources proposed by the coordinator. These may include, for example, departmental funds, research funds, foundations, public bodies, or private enterprise.

Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes:

Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) is a funding category of the Erasmus+ Programme that awards organizational support funding (€6,000-€8,000) to institutions engaged in the development of short intensive programs that employ innovative teaching methods, such as online collaboration and challenge-based learning, involving transnational and transdisciplinary teams. Any approved VIU Intensive Graduate Activity that meets the

criteria for the Erasmus+ BIPs will be considered for an Erasmus+ application for funding Erasmus+ Mobility Consortium. (Refer to Annex 6).

Virtual tools for engagement, collaboration, and team-building:

The Academic Council encourages applicants to explore innovative pedagogical approaches by incorporating blended (hybrid) solutions. This may include utilizing available technologies for preparatory work, group tasks, and team collaboration over an extended period before and/or after the one-week activity at VIU.



If applicants choose to include blended (hybrid) learning activities, the proposal should clearly explain the rationale behind their inclusion, describe how these activities will be integrated into the program, and outline the specific learning outcomes for participants.

For further guidance on models of blended activities and integrating a virtual component, please refer to Annexes 5 and 6 in the guidelines. The integration of blended (hybrid) learning activities is not a prerequisite for application.

Annexes:

Annex 1: VIU PhD Academy: Guidelines for Proposals

Annex 2: VIU Graduate Seminars: Guidelines for Proposals

Annex 3: VIU Summer Schools: Guidelines for Proposals

Annex 4: Autonomous Activities of the Member Institutions: Guidelines for proposals

Annex 5: Introducing a Virtual Component in the Intensive Graduate Activities

Annex 6: Erasmus+: Blended Intensive Programmes

For further information contact:

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