

CIRCLE U. ACADEMIC CHAIR PROGRAMME

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 2024

Final version

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1 CIRCLE U., OUR EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE

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 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 next phase and through a new EU funded project in the coming four years, 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.

For additional information on Circle U., please visit our website: www.circle-u.eu.

2 THE ACADEMIC CHAIR PROGRAMME

Since the launch of Circle U., the **Academic Chair Programme has been the backbone of our alliance's ecosystem**, ensuring strong, sustainable and concrete connections between academics, researchers, students, and associated and global partners. The Academic Chair Programme ensures strong and sustainable connections across our universities, between education, research and service, between students and staff, and between our universities and the society.

The academic chairs are the enablers of our vision and mission. They **drive bottom-up initiatives and collaborations across the alliance** to ensure that the alliance reaches its full potential, as well as helping embed Circle U. in our communities and involving other stakeholders. Through the programme, the academic chairs have the opportunity to test new and innovative ideas, to establish strong links to leading education and research environments at the most prestigious European universities, and to be at the forefront of new developments in socially engaged education and research and education.

The academic chairs also **contribute to the realisation of the EU-funded projects and the corresponding work programme by developing activities linked to specific deliverables and milestones**. In this perspective, the academic chairs will work in partnership – and be supported by – the respective Work Package coordinators and leads, comprising an interdisciplinary and intersectoral team of academics, administrative staff and student representatives.

The academic chairs **dedicate 20% of their time to the development of activities and are located at their home university**. But they are expected to spend time at other Circle U. partner universities and to attend meetings to facilitate collaboration, communication, and dissemination. The modalities for compensation and any other possible support are decided by each partner university.

For additional information on the modalities, please contact your home university: Nikola Savic at nikola.savic@rect.bg.ac.rs, Milos Bojicic at milos.bojicic@rect.bg.ac.rs and Vladimir Markovic at markov@rect.bg.ac.rs

3 ESTABLISHING AN AI KNOWLEDGE HUB AND APPOINTING AI ACADEMIC CHAIRS

A formal decision has been made to establish a fourth **Knowledge Hub focusing on Artificial Intelligence**. The decision was supported by a desktop analysis which indicated that all universities hold strong research competences within Artificial Intelligence. **The Knowledge Hub will be led by an Academic Director and Deputy Director**. In addition, all universities will appoint one or more Academic Chairs. The Academic Chairs are appointed for a two-year term, with the potential for a further extension of up to two years. Each university will accommodate its own internal procedures in the appointment process.

The profile of the AI Knowledge Hub will be developed through a bottom-up process led by the Academic Director and Deputy Director with a strong involvement of all universities, their faculties, research institutes, etc.

4 MANAGEMENT OF THE AI HUB

The AI Knowledge Hub will be led by an Academic Director and Deputy Director.

The shared management of the AI knowledge hub, between the **University of Pisa and the University of Belgrade**, will be obtained by splitting the project period into two equal periods with one university having the post as director and thereby being in charge of the management of the knowledge hub during the first part of the remaining project period and the other university having the post as director and thereby being in charge of the management of the AI knowledge hub during the second part of the remaining project period.

In the first project period, the University of Pisa will have Academic Director of the Hub, while **Belgrade will appoint Deputy Director**. In the second part of the project period, University of Belgrade will appoint Academic Director and University of Pisa – Deputy Director.

5 ROLE, MISSIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE ACADEMIC DIRECTOR/DEPUTY DIRECTOR

The academic chairs are at the heart of our transformational cooperation process. They tie our nine universities together, develop joint initiatives in line with project goals, co-create new opportunities for students, researchers, academics, staff and partners, and connect Circle U. to society in innovative and meaningful ways. They **will be led by the Academic Director and Deputy Director**.

The **main role and missions** of the academic director/deputy director are to:

- Develop and lead challenge-based as well as trans- and interdisciplinary teaching, learning and research initiatives;
- Link education and research within and across disciplines;
- Engage students to take an active role in knowledge creation and socially engaged research and innovation;
- Stimulate new models of academic and research collaboration and partnership, and share them across the alliance;
- Contribute to the realisation of the EU-funded projects and the corresponding work programme;
- Represent and champion Circle U. internally, nationally, and internationally, as well as with external stakeholders.
- Organize seminars, events and meetings in the AI Hub
- Moderate the whole AI processes inside our nine universities

NB: please have in mind that the academic director/deputy director will not be in charge of the research

6 PROFILE OF THE ACADEMIC DIRECTOR/DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Beyond the strong academic and scientific profile, expertise and experience in fields directly related to the AI, 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 impacts on society.**

The academic director/deputy director is expected to have a **strong team spirit**. They are also 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.

We are looking for an innovative and results-driven professional with a **strong background in artificial intelligence**, seeking opportunities to leverage skills and experience to contribute to cutting-edge AI projects and advancements.

7 WHAT WE OFFER

The academic director/deputy director will **receive financial and organizational support from the university's rectorate to plan and execute various events such as summer schools, meetings, seminars, and other similar activities.** This support typically involves funding allocation, logistical assistance, and possibly administrative help to ensure these events are successfully organized and conducted. This type of support is crucial for universities to facilitate academic and professional development opportunities for our community.

In addition, the academic director/deputy director will have **financial compensation for its work**. This compensation acknowledges the effort and time invested by the academic director/deputy director in managing these responsibilities and contributing to the academic and professional development of the university community.

In coordination with the rectorate of the University, **travel within the CU Alliance will be organized and covered.** This support ensures that the academic director/deputy director can participate in and facilitate various collaborative activities and events across the CU Alliance without incurring personal travel expenses.

8 THE 2024 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

If the Academic Chair Programme is at the heart of our alliance, it is crucial to ensure the necessary flexibility in its implementation so that the programme aligns with internal regulations, specificities and available resources. If the management of this call of interests may vary, the core elements of this call have been agreed by the Management Board of Circle U.

8.1 RECRUITMENT

The academic director/deputy director are recruited from academic, research and teaching staff under permanent or longer-term temporary contract in one of the partner universities. We are seeking academic director/deputy director at all career stages.

8.2 TERMS

The Deputy Director will be appointed for a **one-year term**, with the possibility of an extension.

8.3 SELECTION PROCESS

An internal Committee, comprised of three full time professors of the University of Belgrade, including two Vice-Rectors and a CU Management Board member will organize an interview with the short-listed candidates and make the final decision.

Please send all required documents, which includes CV, general plan and endorsement letter by September 22nd to Nikola Savic at nikola.savic@rect.bg.ac.rs

8.4 TIMESCALE

The appointment of the academic director/deputy director should be finalised – and thus endorsed by the Management Board – by October 2024 at the latest. Considering the flexibility in managing this call, the timescale may vary at each university. At University of Belgrade, the timescale will be the following:

CALL OPENS	CALL CLOSES	FINAL RESULTS ANNOUNCED
19/07/2024	22/09/2024	12/10/2024

If you have any additional question, please do not hesitate to contact: Nikola Savic at nikola.savic@rect.bg.ac.rs, Milos Bojicic at milos.bojicic@rect.bg.ac.rs or Vladimir Markovic at markov@rect.bg.ac.rs

ANNEX

APPLICATION FORM

1 ABOUT YOURSELF

First name		Last name	
Job title		Department/School	
Faculty		Email address	

2 GENERAL PLAN

Please provide a short overview of the planned activities (max 500 words)

3 ENDORSEMENT

Please seek the endorsement from your Dean with their signature. (If Head of Department is yourself, please seek endorsement from a senior academic of the Faculty, such as Vice Deans of the Faculty.)

Dear selection panel member for the Circle U Academic Chair Programme - AI Hub,

With this statement, I would like to express my support for **(academic's name)** to apply to the Circle U Academic Chair Programme - Academic Director/Deputy Director of the AI Hub. I have read the Terms of Reference for the Academic Chair; I am aware that the Academic Chair will be expected to dedicate approximately 20% of their time on Circle U activities. Our Faculty will provide the necessary support for **(academic's name)** to make suitable arrangements to help them to achieve their objectives for Circle U.

(Please add any further comments if applicable).

(Please print your full name here)

Dean, **(Department/School name)**

(Date and Signature)

4 CV

Please attach a short CV, with special emphases on the AI, to this application form.