



UNISERVITATE

First call for Small Grants for Research Projects on Service-Learning (SL) in Catholic Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Uniservitate is a Programme for the promotion of service-learning (SL) in Catholic Higher Education. Its objective is to generate a systemic change in Catholic Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs) through the institutionalization of SL as a tool to achieve its mission of offering an integral education to the new generations and involving them in an active commitment to the challenges of our time.

Uniservitate is a global network that seeks to establish solid and constructive links between higher education institutions rooted in very diverse social and cultural contexts, to expand dialogue and enrich the perspective of higher education in the acknowledgment of the multiculturalism that characterizes the contemporary scenario.

Main objectives of the small research grants call

Aligning with its mission, *Uniservitate* is creating small research grants for implementation during 2023-2024. The *Uniservitate* Small Research Grant will distribute globally more than 70,000 euros. Each regional hub will allocate its funding among the applicants according to regional criteria. The objective of this small research grant (10.000 euros per each of the seven regional hubs) is to support studies that investigate the role of SL in CHEIs. Each hub will establish how to divide the 10.000 euros among the applicants.

Specifically, the grant seeks to fund research projects that focus on one or more of the following themes: the spiritual dimension of SL, SL's contribution to CHEIs mission and identity, SL institutionalization processes in the specific contexts of CHEIs, or evidence of SL impact towards an integral education.

The call is open to all researchers who meet the eligibility criteria and can provide proposals that align with these objectives. The Hubs will establish their timeline according to their preferred schedule.

Topics

1. The spiritual dimension of SL:

- To identify the methodologies, didactic approaches, resources, and activities in which SL can enhance students' spiritual development.
- To investigate the role of faith-based values in SL projects.
- To identify strategies, and best practices for institutionally integrating spirituality into SL projects, programmes, courses.

2. SL contribution to CHEIs mission and identity:

- To examine the ways in which SL can contribute to institutional goals such as social justice, community engagement, and ethical leadership aligned with CHEIs mission and identity.
- To develop and or analyze strategies for strengthening the connection between SL and the mission and identity of CHEIs.

3. SL institutionalization processes in the specific contexts of CHEIs:



- To study the factors that facilitate or hinder the institutionalization of SL in CHEIs.
- To identify effective models for integrating SL into institutional policies, structures, and practices.
- To develop SL evidence-based strategies (repositories of collaborative practices, networks, and resources) for institutional leaders and administrators on promoting the sustainability and scalability of SL programmes.

4. Evidence of SL impact towards an integral education:

- To evaluate the impact of SL on students' academic performance.
- To evaluate the impact of SL on the personal development of the members of the educational community.
- To evaluate the impact of SL on communities and their development.
- To identify indicators and methods for assessing the impact of SL on different stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty, community partners, and institutional leaders).

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR APPLICATIONS

1. Types of projects

Projects can be led by individual researchers (PhD and master level can apply) or groups. Research teams can include community partners, graduate researchers, or graduate and undergraduate students with the guidance of a professor or researcher. Both new and ongoing SL projects are welcome as long as they have not been published.

2. Timeline

Each region will define and announce its own timeline according to its academic calendar.

3. Applicants' requirements

Applicants must be affiliated with CHEIs supported by *Uniservitate* or to those who have applied to be members of it. A Letter of Endorsement from the supported or member institution is required.

4. Application Form

0. Country-Hub
1. Title.
2. Specific topic (chosen among the four topics mentioned above).
3. Name of the individual researcher or project leader. (University of affiliation, ORCID).
4. Name of the team members (if applicable, ORCID).
5. A bio for each of the member's briefing in one paragraph their previous experience in SL or community engagement. A list of a maximum of three bibliographical references on SL publications is recommended but not required.
6. Objectives.
7. Research questions or hypotheses.
8. Conceptual and/or Theoretical Framework.
9. Methodology.
10. Contribution, applicability, and dissemination of the results.
11. Schedule/timeline (it may include dissemination strategy and communication of results to stakeholders or community partners).



12. Budget (The allocated budget for this project strictly prohibits the inclusion of overhead costs).

13. Bibliography.

14. If applicable, approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the institution of origin may be included.

5. Presentation of projects

The projects will be submitted to *Uniservitate* regional hub within the opening and closing deadline of the Call for Proposals.

To do this, you must complete and send:

- The Project Presentation Form.
- The Model Letter of Endorsement from the *Uniservitate* supported/member CHIE.

All the documentation required to complete an application will be posted online and will be available for the hubs.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

1. Alignment with goals of the grant

- The proposed research focuses on issues pertaining to SL in CHEIs, according to [Uniservitate Collection](#) and [Uniservitate Repository](#).
- The proposed research addresses one or more of the four overarching priorities of the grant (i.e., the relationship between SL and spirituality; institutionalizing SL in Catholic higher education; impacts of SL on students or communities).

2. Clarity of purpose

- The focus and goals of the proposed SL research are clearly stated and aligned with the institutional mission.
- A set of research questions and a theoretical framework are clearly stated.
- The research questions are of sufficient scale and scope given the timeline, budget, and overall design of the project.

3. Significance of the research

- The research builds on prior research and existing knowledge in the SL field.
- The research investigates an issue or set of issues that are new (i.e., have not already been well-studied) to the field of SL and/or SL in CHEIs.
- The research will advance important issues in the study and/or practice of SL in CHEIs.
- A relevant conceptual framework or theoretical model or theory of change, or hypothesis that presents a rationale for the proposed study is welcomed.
- The proposed research may reflect important contextual needs, factors, and nuances of the community in which the study is situated.



4. Quality of research design and logical chain of reasoning

- The design of the study is appropriate for the proposed research questions.
- The extent to which the proposed research methods are aligned with the research question and objectives. The proposed research methods may include qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approaches, depending on the nature of the research.
- The research may be designed from various epistemological perspectives, including but not limited to participatory and interpretive research. The epistemological perspective(s) of the proposed research should be described.
- The proposal describes clearly-presented data collection and analysis procedures that demonstrate a well-developed, systematic inquiry process.
- The nature and number of participants and/or sites to be included in the study are clear.
- The instruments and approaches for collecting data are clearly described.
- The approaches the researcher(s) will use to organize and analyze the collected data are clear.
- The timeline for completing the study is appropriate.
- Issues pertaining to human subjects reviews, ethics, and participant accommodations have been considered.

5. Impact and dissemination strategy

- The potential of the research to be socialized throughout the *Uniservitate* global network (e.g. V Global Symposium, November 2024) and eventually be published in academic journals to reach a wider audience.
- The relevance and usefulness of the research findings for various stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty, institutional leaders, and community partners).
- A clear, well-articulated and robust plan for disseminating the research findings is presented, including the community and other stakeholders.

6. Preparation/Readiness of researcher or research team

- The members of the research team are prepared and have the background or support they need to successfully carry out the research project.
- Additional support, training, or funding that the researchers might need has been considered.

7. Appropriateness of budget

- The proposed budget is sufficient to carry out the research project
- Budgeted items are appropriate for and related to the research project.

8. Ethics

- Selected projects will be required to comply with the necessary requirements for result communication, privacy protection, and safeguarding vulnerable individuals.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:





- CLAYSS Documents:
 - <https://clayss.org/en/resources>
 - <https://seminario.clayss.org/en>
- *Uniservitate* Resources
 - The Collection: <https://www.uniservitate.org/publications/>
- The Repository: <https://repository.uniservitate.org>
- IFCU: http://www.fiuc.org/index_en.html
- Global Compact on Education: <https://www.educationglobalcompact.org/en/>
- Congregational documents.
- *Uniservitate* hubs documents, IARSLCE and other SL networks.

GLOSSARY

SL: Service Learning is understood here to mean experiences, projects, practices, courses, or institutional plans of engagement with the community, actively led by students, and intentionally articulated with the academic contents and the research programs. It is a pedagogical proposal that generates meaningful learning, and encourages knowledge based on real problems, with the objective of offering concrete solutions and fostering an integral education.

CHEIs: Catholic Higher Education Institutions

IFCU: International Federation of Catholic University

IARSLCE: International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement

JIAS: Researchers' Conference on Service-Learning

GCE: Global Compact on Education

RIDAS: Ibero-American Journal of Service-Learning