

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

UNITA Best Thesis Award on Green Sustainability

Work Package 5 — Task 5.3 · Activity A5.3.3

First call — 2026

Common UNITA template — v6, 18 June 2026 (simplified prize structure)

Within the framework of the European University Alliance UNITA – Universitas Montium, the UNITA partner universities organise a competition to recognise outstanding master's theses on the theme of green sustainability.

The name UNITA evokes the commitment of the partner universities — Università degli Studi di Torino, Università degli Studi di Brescia, Universidad de Zaragoza, Universidad Pública de Navarra, Université Savoie Mont Blanc, Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara, Universitatea Transilvania din Brașov, Universidade da Beira Interior and Instituto Politécnico da Guarda — together with their associated partners, to a closer integration of their academic activities. The Latin subtitle *Universitas Montium* emphasises what the UNITA universities share: the Romance languages and a commitment to linguistic diversity, and their proximity to mountain and cross-border territories.

This call and the awarding of its prizes are governed by the rules set out below.

1. Objective

The objective of the UNITA Best Thesis Award on Green Sustainability is to recognise and promote outstanding master-level research that contributes to ecological transition and sustainability across the UNITA territories. The competition aims to:

- Highlight innovative, context-relevant academic work aligned with the UNITA Alliance mission;
- Foster dialogue between research, innovation and territory-specific sustainability challenges;
- Support the emergence of young researchers whose work reinforces the UNITA ecosystem of values and impact.

2. Organization of the competition

A common competition is organized across the UNITA alliance on the basis of these shared guidelines. Each UNITA partner university organizes its own competition: it publishes the call, evaluates the applications received through its own jury, and awards the prizes to its own students, in line with its internal regulations and applicable national legislation.

Students apply at the university where they defended their master's thesis. **Each applicant may apply only once and only at one university.**

3. Eligibility

3.1 Academic level

The competition is open to master's-level theses only, in line with Activity A5.3.3 of the UNITA application form. Bachelor-level and doctoral-level work is not eligible.

3.2 Eligible candidates and time window

For the first call, students of a master's programme at a UNITA partner university who defended their master's thesis between **1 September 2024 and 31 August 2026** are eligible. This covers the academic years 2024–2025 and 2025–2026.

For the second call, students who defended their master's thesis between **1 September 2026 and 20 July 2027** will be eligible (governed by the updated 2027 version of this call).

Candidates who have already graduated within the eligibility window remain eligible, provided the thesis was defended at a UNITA partner university during the respective eligibility period.

Only master's theses with a defence date falling within the eligibility window of a given call are eligible for that call.

Each university may apply a more restrictive eligibility window (e.g. a shorter period contained within the dates above) in its localised call, in line with its administrative or academic calendar. The window may not be extended beyond the common dates.

4. Themes

Submitted theses must address at least one aspect of green sustainability, broadly interpreted. The following themes guide evaluation; the corresponding UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are indicated for reference:

- Climate action (SDG 13);
- Renewable energy (SDG 7, SDG 13);
- Circular economy and resource management (SDG 12, SDG 9);
- Sustainable mobility (SDG 11, SDG 13);
- Ecosystem restoration (SDG 15, SDG 14 where applicable);
- Sustainable food systems (SDG 2, SDG 12);
- Mental health and well-being on campus (SDG 3, SDG 4);
- Green procurement and infrastructure (SDG 12, SDG 9, SDG 11).

Theses connected to the UNITA R&I Hubs (in particular Circular Economy & Environment and Renewable Energies), to the UNITA common territories (mountain, cross-border and rural areas), or to regional smart-specialisation strategies are especially welcome.

5. Application file

Applications are submitted in PDF format through the UNITA Office of the candidate's home university, which carries out an initial verification before forwarding the application to the jury. The application file contains:

1. The master's thesis (or equivalent final master project, depending on each university regulation accounting for the equivalent of a final dissertation), in any Romance language spoken in the UNITA alliance (French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian or Spanish) or in English;
2. A one-page summary in English including (a) the thesis abstract and (b) a short justification of the relevance of the work to the themes of the call (Section 4). The one-page format is shared across UNITA partners to allow transnational comparison;

3. Proof that the thesis has been submitted and defended at the home UNITA university. The UNITA Office will conduct an automatic verification through the University's internal academic system; no additional supporting document is required from the applicant.
4. The application form (attachment 1.) completed in all its parts and signed by the candidate (privacy statement and authorisation - see Section 10)

Submission window for the first call: 15 October – 20 November 2026. Applications received after the deadline, or that are incomplete, will not be considered.

Applications for Università degli Studi di Brescia must be sent to: unita.office@unibs.it

6. Evaluation criteria

Each university jury evaluates the eligible applications using the following common evaluation grid. Each criterion is scored from 0 to 100; the weighted total determines the ranking. The weights are designed to give equal overall importance to academic merit (45%) and to topic relevance (45%), with a 10% share for the quality of communication.

Evaluation criterion	Weight	Score (0–100)
Scientific and analytical quality (rigour, method, use of sources)	25%	
Originality and innovative value of the research	20%	
Relevance to green sustainability and to the call themes	20%	
Relevance to UNITA priorities (R&I Hubs, common territories)	15%	
Applicability in the UNITA territories	10%	
Quality of communication (structure, clarity, quality of the one-page summary)	10%	
TOTAL	100%	

If the jury considers that the submitted works do not meet the minimum quality requirements, or do not maintain the expected relationship with the themes of the call, the prize may not be awarded. The jury's decisions are final.

7. Jury

Each university appoints its own jury. To keep the workload proportionate while ensuring thematic and academic expertise, the jury is organized in three layers:

- **Core jury:** the T5.3 representative of the university, who reviews all applications received at that university;
- **Hub representative(s):** academic members of the UNITA R&I Hubs, added on the recommendation of the core jury member and matched to the thematic content of the applications received;
- **Expert(s):** invited on a voluntary basis where a thesis topic calls for specialist evaluation.

Each jury comprises at least three members from different fields of study. In the event of a conflict of interest, the member concerned is replaced. The composition of the jury is published as an annex to the localised call.

8. Prizes and recognition

Each UNITA partner university awards monetary prizes to its own students.

8.1 Budget envelope

Each university has a budget envelope of **€500** for this competition from the UNITA project divided between first (300 euros) and second prize (200 euros). All the amounts are inclusive of taxes. .

8.2 Recognition for all winners

In addition to the prize, every winner receives:

- A **certificate of excellence** in digital format, bearing a digital signature. Where the university's systems support it, a digital badge may also be issued; this is optional and does not replace the certificate;
- **Dissemination** of their work on the official UNITA and partner channels (websites, social media, newsletters);
- An **invitation to present their work**.

9. Indicative timeline

Date / period	Milestone
15 October – 20 November 2026	Submission window for the first call.
November 2026	Evaluation by each university jury (first call).
By 20 December 2026	First-call winners announced; prizes awarded.

10. Use of works and data protection

The works awarded in this call are made available to UNITA, which may use them for information and awareness-raising purposes and to support the objectives of the project, always crediting the author by name.

By applying, candidates confirm that the submitted thesis is their own original work and consent to the processing of their personal data for the purposes of organising the competition, evaluating applications and disseminating the results, in accordance with the applicable data-protection legislation. A signed privacy statement and authorisation form is included in the application file. Any equivalent form for a signed privacy statement corresponding to the internal university regulations is acceptable.

By applying, candidates also consent to UNITA using their thesis (selected text and/or images relevant to the scope of the call), their one-page summary and any further information provided in the application form for dissemination purposes connected to this competition, including potential inclusion in a printed or digital publication (book or booklet) gathering applicants and/or winners of one or both calls of the UNITA Best Thesis Award on Green Sustainability.

11. Contact

For questions regarding this call at **Università degli Studi di Brescia**, please contact:

- UNITA OFFICE: unita.office@unibs.it

General information about the UNITA alliance is available on the UNITA website.

Annex — Jury composition

Name	Role in the jury	Field / affiliation
Pietta Antonella Dosolina	Core jury member (T5.3 representative)	DEM
Bettoni Laura	Core jury member (T5.3 representative)	Sustainable Development Office
Giustina Irene Italia	Hub representative	DICATAM
Lo Cigno Renato Antonio	Hub representative	DII
Placidi Donatella	Hub representative	DSMC
Pozzolo Susanna	Hub representative	DIGI
Zavanella Lucio	Hub representative	DIMI
Other experts	invited on a voluntary basis where a thesis topic calls for specialist evaluation	