

COMPETITION FOR TWO GRANTS
MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION RESEARCH GRANT – 2nd edition
Year 2026

1 Program Overview

UniCredit Foundation announces the **competition for a set of grants — between two and five in total — supporting supporting Multidisciplinary Education research programs on education** supporting rigorous, intellectually ambitious, and technically sound research projects that advance educational attainment **across any country within the UniCredit Group perimeter**¹.

This is a **field-initiated program**, meaning that applicants are not required to respond to predefined research themes, disciplines, methodologies, or geographic parameters. Applicants have full freedom to identify and propose the educational questions, challenges, or opportunities they consider most significant and worthy of investigation.

The initiative aims to foster **foundational knowledge with lasting impact** on education, including—among others—human capital formation, socialization, personality building, competence assessment and formation, evaluation of educational processes, institutional design, school management, and university autonomy.

The competition is open to **researchers and professionals of any nationality** affiliated with universities, research institutions, or organizations worldwide

2 Regulations and Terms

2.1 General conditions

- The program supports **original research projects** in education that contribute with likely lasting impact on educational themes in countries where UniCredit operates.
- We welcome:
 - **Multidisciplinary** research drawing on any relevant discipline or field;
 - **Methodological diversity**, including quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, and design-based research;
 - Projects that may use **data from multiple and varied sources**, spanning sufficient timeframes to achieve depth of understanding, and/or involve close collaboration with **practitioners or communities** over the life of the project;
 - Proposals submitted by **diverse teams** (e.g., by age and gender) and promoting collaboration across disciplines;
 - Clear plans for **diffusion and uptake** of findings by practitioners, policy makers, and the broader public.

2.2 Value of Grant

- A total budget of **€500,000** (before tax) is available for this Call.
- Each individual grant can range from a **minimum of €100,000 to a maximum of €250,000 for the entire 2/3 year period**.
- Applicants should request an amount consistent with the actual needs of their project; grants **are not automatically awarded at the maximum level**.
- Based on the quality of proposals and budget requested, the Evaluation Commission may allocate the €500,000 budget across multiple grants, **up to a maximum of five grants**.

2.3 Eligibility Criteria

Proposals must:

1. **Target education improvement.**
2. Focus in at least one **UniCredit perimeter country**.

1. Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia.
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3. **Preferably** address **young people aged 11–19** (lower and upper secondary), with priority topics including:
 - Tackling school dropout;
 - Assessing the effects of early tracking;
 - Defining the scope for remedial education and evaluating tutoring programs for disadvantaged students;
 - Identifying effective orientation programs for school-to-work and academic pathways.
 4. Be **research-only** projects (professional development programs, curriculum design, creation of training materials, pure program evaluations without significant research components, capital projects, scholarships, and software development **are not eligible** unless they are firmly embedded within a rigorous research design).
 5. Have **Principal Investigator** (PI) and any **Co-PI(s)** holding a **PhD** in their field(s) of competence.
 6. Be **submitted in English**.
 7. **Declare** any funds already received from other sources (projects **already fully funded** are **not eligible**).
 8. Have a **duration of up to 3 years**, with project start no later than October 2026.
- Nationality of the applicants does not constitute an eligibility requirement.

2.4 Incompatibility Clause

- Proposals that are **not research** (e.g., training-only, curriculum design, capital expenditure) are not eligible.
- Projects **outside education** or **outside the UniCredit perimeter** are not eligible.
- Proposals with a PI or Co-PI who does **not hold a PhD** are not eligible.
- Projects **fully funded** from other sources are not eligible.
- Projects **exceeding 3 years** duration are not eligible

3 Application Process

3.1 How to Apply

Applications may only apply online using the application available on UniCredit Foundation's website at <https://www.unicreditfoundation.org>.

The application must include the following information:

- **Personal and affiliation details** of PI and Co-PI(s).
- **University Department/Research center/Organization description.**
- **Project team description** (partners from different institutions and disciplines; collaborations with schools, municipalities, NGOs, and community organizations are welcome where appropriate).
- **A short description of the research project.**
- Declaration that the research project is **original** and has not been fully funded by other sources.
- **Declaration of no criminal convictions** or pending criminal proceedings.
- Declaration that authorizes Unicredit Foundation to **process their personal data**, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016.

All accompanying documentation must be uploaded online in **PDF format** and **written in English**. Failure to provide the required documents may result in exclusion from the competition.

Required documents:

1. **University Department/Research center/Organization description.**
2. **ID scan** for PI and Co-PI(s);
3. **Curriculum Vitae** and **publication list** for PI and Co-PI(s);
4. **Project Team Description** (roles, responsibilities, and knowledge base of PI, Co-PI(s), and any research staff; team working plan; specific contributions of each member).
5. **Research Project Information** (title, estimated duration, itemized budget, central research question(s), and project summary) - **max 4 pages**.

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6. **Full Research Project Proposal** including contribution, state of the art, methodology, implementation plan (including data, sample, instruments), and expected outputs/outcomes - **max 7 pages**.
7. Any **additional documents** deemed relevant by the applicant to support the Evaluation Committee in their assessment.

3.2 Application Deadline

Complete applications, including all required documents, must be submitted **no later than 30 April 2026**, following the procedure outlined on the website.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

Applicants will receive an email confirmation upon successful submission.

4 Evaluation and Awarding

4.1 Evaluation Commission

An ad-hoc Commission of multidisciplinary academic experts in education will conduct the selection. The Commission will evaluate:

- Team's academic and research track record;
- Research strength, feasibility, and potential impact;
- Centrality of education and relevance to the UniCredit perimeter;
- Importance and clarity of the research question(s) and direction of inquiry;
- Adequacy of budget and timeline;
- Plans for dissemination and uptake by professionals, policy makers, and the public.

Candidates may be invited to **interviews** if deemed necessary.

The **Commission's decision is final** and not subject to appeal.

4.2 Award Notification

Awards will be **communicated no later than 20 July 2026**, based on the final decision expressed by the Evaluation Commission, as provided for under Article 4.1.

4.3 Required Documents After Award

After the award announcement, grantees will be asked to provide:

- A passport-style photo for communication purposes (PNG, JPG, JPEG format);
- A signed consent form authorizing UniCredit Foundation to use the photo for promotional, communication, and publication activities, in compliance with data protection regulations.

5 Requirements for receipt of the grant

Grant holders commit to:

- Submit **annual progress reports**;
- **Share main findings** with UniCredit Foundation throughout the research period (e.g., briefs, presentations);
- Provide a **Final Report** and presentation of **the main research results**;
- **Present the main research findings** to UniCredit Foundation's Evaluation Commission and Board of Directors, upon request.

6 Method of payment

- The grant will be disbursed according to the project's duration.
- Payment details (number of installments, recipient) will be agreed with the PI to align with project needs and the regulations of the university/organization.
- Second year and subsequent installments will be paid only upon approval by the Evaluation Commission of the progress reports documenting project development.

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- UniCredit Foundation reserves the right to withhold further installments if the project is interrupted or if reporting requirements are not met.

7 Acceptance of all the conditions of the regulations

Participation in the competition implies unconditional acceptance of the entire contents of the clauses of the present call.

Furthermore, UniCredit Foundation reserves the right to publicly disclose the names of research grant recipients, as well as excerpts and information related to the awarded research projects, through institutional communication channels—such as press releases, the Foundation’s website, or other media—in compliance with data protection regulations, including Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR).

Milan, February 12, 2026