IUSS / DA IDAUP | 17 June 2026 | 10:00-12:00 CEST

International Doctorate in Architecture and Urban Planning

IDAUP Open Day 2026 | Call 42nd Cycle

Department of Architecture, University of Ferrara
Polis University, Tirana

Room A4, Ferrara | Blended via Google Meet

International Doctorate in Architecture and Urban Planning

IDAUP Open Day | 42nd Cycle

University of Ferrara - POLIS University
17 June 2026

Applications close
24 June 2026, 12:00 noon (Italian time)

Programme starts
1 November 2026

Today's aim
Help candidates prepare a strong application

Today’s focus

A 30-minute overview for prospective candidates

1

Programme identity and research vision

2

Training activities and doctoral experience

3

Call for applications: how to apply and what to prepare

4

What comes next in today’s Open Day

Key message

Because this Open Day takes place before the application deadline, the final section gives special attention to the call and to the practical steps for applying.

PROGRAMME

What is IDAUP?

A Double Joint PhD with a strong international profile

3	180	2	EN
years of training	total credits	doctoral degrees	working language

International Research Doctorate in Architecture and Urban Planning, established by the University of Ferrara and POLIS University Tirana.

Aims to train high-level researchers with interdisciplinary skills and an international research profile.

Combines academic research, applied experimentation, public and private stakeholders, and international mobility.

Partners and international network

A programme shaped by academic, institutional and applied collaborations

Partner institutions

University of Ferrara

POLIS University Tirana

Associated members

University of Minho

International cooperation networks

Industrial & spin-off partners

Focchi SpA

Levery s.r.l. Società Benefit

Inception s.r.l.

Stakeholders

Public bodies, professional institutions, international experts and research centres

Internationalization

The programme relies on a multilingual and international Academic Board, mobility periods abroad, co-tutelle opportunities, and research connections with universities, research centres, industries and public institutions.

Research vision

A doctoral project aligned with contemporary transitions

Sustainability

Environmental, economic and socio-cultural sustainability; Agenda 2030 and SDGs.

Digital & Green Transition

Digitalization, AI, robotics, smart environments and energy transition in the built environment.

Social impact

Inclusion, cohesion, accessibility, public policies, regeneration and quality of living.

IDAUP research should be innovative and methodologically robust.

Projects may be interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary.

Candidates should frame their proposal within the active curricula and a clear scientific perspective.

42nd cycle: four active curricula

Candidates orient their research proposal within one of these areas

Architecture

Design, construction, conservation, digital innovation and green transition.

Urban Planning

Public space, regeneration, landscape, mobility, climate adaptation and sustainable development.

Design

Product, communication and service design for innovation, accessibility and sustainable transitions.

Building Physics and Integrated Energy Systems

Energy and environmental processes, decarbonization, resilience and comfort.

Next in the Open Day

After this overview, colleagues will present the active curricula in more detail.

Curriculum 1 | Architecture

Research themes linking design, construction, heritage and innovation

Sustainable architectural design and construction methodologies.

Innovative materials and technologies for industry, architecture and structural design.

Restoration, conservation, adaptive reuse and maintenance of the built heritage, including life-cycle perspectives.

Cultural heritage, ICT processes, HBIM, digital transition and new models for the construction sector.

Green transition strategies and inclusive, sustainable urban environments.

Curriculum 2 | Urban Planning

Research on contemporary urban and territorial transformation

Public space, urban regeneration, quality of living and new social demands.

Built heritage, landscape and local sustainable development.

Territory, infrastructure, energy sources and climate change.

Land governance, planning tools, resource management and public policies.

Sustainable mobility, big data and technologies for more liveable urban environments.

Curriculum 3 | Design

Research for social, cultural, environmental and productive innovation

Inclusive design, Design for All, and universal accessibility for products, services, spaces and interfaces.

Product and service design for health, well-being, welfare, public administration and communities.

Product-service systems and design strategies for sustainable transitions.

Design for sustainable, accessible and inclusive cultural heritage experiences.

Visual communication, information and editorial design, including AI-related processes and ethics.

Sustainable fashion, innovative textiles, circularity and bio-based materials.

Curriculum 4 | Building Physics and Integrated Energy Systems

Energy and environmental performance in buildings and cities

Energy retrofit of existing buildings and low-carbon technologies.

Renewable energy, energy storage and integrated systems for the built environment.

Indoor environmental quality, comfort and well-being through passive, active and adaptive strategies.

Energy-control systems for savings and optimization in buildings and districts.

Resilience of energy systems, critical infrastructures, heat-island mitigation and energy communities.

Digital twins for technologies, control systems, buildings and urban settlements.

TRAINING

The doctoral path at a glance

Three years, 180 credits, increasing research autonomy

Year 1

Mainly theoretical and methodological training.

60 credits: 40 disciplinary + 20 transversal.

Years 2-3

Progressive research development, scientific dissemination, international mobility and annual reporting.

By the end

180 credits, at least six months abroad, scientific publications, English C1 certification and thesis defense. **THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE MANDATORY!**

Annual monitoring

Each PhD student prepares an annual activity plan and a final report, evaluated by the Academic Board.

Each PhD student must present their research progress to the Academic Board twice a year. Participation in the Mid-Term Academic Board and the Final-Year Academic Board is mandatory

TRAINING

First-year training structure

The first year combines disciplinary and transversal activities

40 disciplinary credits

Workshops, seminars and lectures organized by the partner institutions.

Core experience: two international PhD workshops.

20 transversal credits

Courses and seminars offered by IUSS or Polis University to strengthen transferable research skills.

Training activities are delivered in English and are published in advance on institutional websites.

Presentation Days and collective discussions support peer exchange and methodological reflection.

TRAINING

Two international PhD workshops

The core disciplinary experience of the programme

Tirana International PhD Workshop

A project-based and territorial experience hosted by POLIS University, developed with local stakeholders and an international research community.

2 WEEKS IN ALBANIA, MANDATORY (IN PRESENCE) FOR ALL PHD STUDENTS!

Ferrara International PhD Workshop

A disciplinary and interdisciplinary training experience with seminars, presentations and dialogue with faculty and peers.

2 WEEKS IN FERRARA, MANDATORY (IN PRESENCE) FOR ALL PHD STUDENTS!

Why workshops matter

They help candidates test ideas, present research, receive feedback, and build interdisciplinary collaborations.

IUSS and POLIS transversal training

20 credits of transferable skills in the first year

Transversal training is MANDATORY and it is provided by IUSS Ferrara 1391 (for PhD students with Host Institution University of Ferrara) or by Polis University (for PhD students with Host Institution Polis University).

Courses support skills useful across all doctoral research fields.

Recommended areas include project management, communication, advanced digital competences, artificial intelligence and related tools.

Key message

IDAUP combines disciplinary research training with transversal skills. The aim is not only to write a thesis, but to become an autonomous and internationally oriented researcher.

Support and research environment

What candidates can expect during the programme

Supervision

Each candidate is assigned a supervisor and one or more co-supervisors.

External experts

Experts may be appointed for specific research needs and interdisciplinary support.

Research resources

Research budget, laboratories, libraries, software, workspaces and partner facilities.

Outputs

Publications, conferences, repository submission and dissemination channels.

Career paths

Universities, research institutes, public administrations, industrial R&D, spin-offs and start-ups.

Doctor Europeus

Where conditions are met, students may request the Doctor Europeus label.

Mobility and international experience

A mandatory part of the IDAUP doctoral path

6
minimum months abroad

50%
scholarship increase abroad
(only with Unife Home Institution)

12
months maximum increase

Where mobility can take place

Universities, research centres, industries and public institutions, according to the research aims and subject.

Mobility may be divided into more than one period.

Candidates can also access additional national and international mobility opportunities when available.

International exposure is central to the double-degree identity of IDAUP.

IDAUP institutional online resources

Three official gateways to navigate during the Open Day and to use before submitting your application.

EXPLORE IDAUP RESEARCH

University of Ferrara

Department of Architecture

Programme overview · PhD students · research topics · PhD archive · statistics · activities and news

architettura.unife.it/it/didattica/dottorati-di-r...

Open website

POLIS GATEWAY

POLIS University

Doctoral Programs

International Double-Degree PhD · POLIS as partner institution · doctoral programmes · applicants' information

universitetipolis.edu.al/en/doctoral-programs/

Open website

OFFICIAL CALL & ADMIN

IUSS Ferrara 1391

PhD calls and training

Official call · application procedure · deadlines · forms · regulations · transversal training activities

iuss.unife.it/it/iscriversi/bandi/bando-42

Open website

Use the University of Ferrara and Polis pages to understand the research community and the partner perspective, and IUSS for the official call and application procedure.

Call for applications: why this matters today

The Open Day is scheduled before the deadline to support prospective candidates

Deadline

Applications must be submitted online by 24 June 2026, 12:00 noon, Italian time.

No late integrations

Applications incomplete at 12:01, or missing mandatory attachments, are excluded. No additions are accepted after the deadline.

Start of the programme

The 42nd cycle starts on 1 November 2026 and lasts three years.

Official channel

Candidates should regularly monitor the official IUSS call webpage for calendars, results and updates.

https://iuss.unife.it/en/admissions/calls/cycle-42-call?set_language=en

CALL

Positions available for the 42nd cycle

Financial support and Home Institution choices

13
total positions

5
scholarships

6
research contracts

2
reserved positions

Important

There are no positions without financial support.

Positions are allocated according to the ranking and **the mandatory choice** of Home Institution.

The course sheet includes positions made available by the University of Ferrara and POLIS University Tirana.

Some positions are linked to specific funded research topics.

Who can apply and what to check first

Eligibility requirements and early decisions

Academic requirement

A valid second-cycle degree, or foreign equivalent, allowing access to doctoral studies.

Graduating candidates

Candidates may be admitted conditionally if they obtain the required degree by 1 November 2026.

English language

The programme and the selection interview are in English.

Early decision

Before applying, candidates should identify the most appropriate curriculum, decide the Home Institution, and check whether they wish to compete for topic-bound positions.

Required documents at a glance

Prepare the application in English and in advance

Academic CV

University career, grades, degree mark if available, research, mobility, certificates and seminars.

Thesis material

English abstract, 3-6 pages. Graduated candidates also upload the thesis copy.

Research proposal

Minimum 4 pages: topic, methodology, structure, objectives and bibliography.

Other titles

Publications, certificates and language qualifications.

Two reference letters

Mandatory and in English. They must be uploaded **directly by referees through the platform**.

Application fee

20 euro, paid through pagoPA by 24 June 2026, 12:00 noon, Italian time.

Attention

If the two reference letters are missing in the platform, the candidate is **automatically excluded** from the selection.

The research proposal

A central element of the selection process

Choose one active curriculum and connect the proposal to its research themes.

State the research problem and explain why it matters.

Define aims, research questions and expected contribution.

Describe methodology, sources, data, case studies and possible structure.

Include a focused basic bibliography.

For topic-bound positions

The proposal must be coherent with the specific funded topic. Otherwise, it cannot be evaluated for that position.

In the event of non-eligibility and/or award of specific topic scholarship, the application remains valid for the ordinary positions with unrestricted scholarship.

Practical advice

The proposal is not normally binding for the final thesis, but it must demonstrate maturity, feasibility and alignment with IDAUP.

Online application: key steps

What candidates should do before submitting

1. Use the PICA online procedure

Applications are submitted only through the official platform.

2. Select the Home Institution

Ferrara or POLIS. The choice is **mandatory and binding**.

3. Select specific positions if relevant

Choose topic-bound positions and upload a coherent proposal.

4. Upload PDF/A files

Maximum 30 MB per file; follow naming instructions.

5. Trigger reference requests early

Referees upload letters directly **by 28 June 2026, 23:59**.

6. Pay the application fee

20 euro through pagoPA by 24 June 2026, 12:00 noon.

Home Institution and topic-bound positions

Decisions that affect the application and ranking

Home Institution

Candidates must choose one Home Institution: University of Ferrara or POLIS University Tirana. The choice is binding for the allocation of positions.

Topic-bound positions

Candidates interested in topic-bound positions must select them and submit a coherent research proposal.

Requesting a topic-bound position does not prevent inclusion in the general ranking for ordinary positions.

If a topic-bound position is awarded, the funded research topic becomes binding.

Candidates should read the course sheet carefully before making their selection.

Selection process and thresholds

Titles evaluation plus oral interview in English

50
points for titles

30
points for interview

38
minimum titles score

60
minimum final score

Interview

Remote, in English, with audio and video identification.

The interview focuses on motivation, the research proposal, language competence, preparation and research aptitude.

The evaluation of titles and the oral exam will take place by 15 September 2026.

The calendar and results are published on the official call webpage and serve as formal notice.

Before 24 June: candidate checklist

A practical sequence for prospective applicants

1. Read the official call and the course sheet carefully
2. Choose your Home Institution and identify the relevant curriculum or topic-bound position
3. Prepare the English research proposal
4. Prepare all mandatory attachments
5. Contact referees immediately and make sure they can upload letters by 28 June
6. Pay the application fee
7. complete the PICA submission before noon Italian time
8. Monitor the official IUSS call webpage for calendar, results and updates

Remember

Deadline: 24 June 2026, 12:00 noon, Italian time.

CLOSING

What comes next today

From programme overview to curricula and doctoral experience

1. Prof. Besnik Aliaj

Rector of POLIS University and Deputy Coordinator of the doctoral programme, will continue the institutional presentation.

2. Active curricula

Colleagues will present the research areas and opportunities connected to the active curricula of the 42nd cycle.

3. Doctoral experience

A PhD graduate will share their experience and discuss the impact of the IDAUP path.

Thank you

Thank you for your attention. I now give the floor to Prof. Besnik Aliaj.

Curriculum 1 | Architecture

Research themes linking design, construction, heritage and innovation

This curriculum focuses on identifying and deepening strategies capable of creating synergies among the rationales of design, process, and production, encompassing technologies based on the use of innovative materials, industrial design, and applications in restoration and upgrading of existing buildings. It pays special attention to themes such as green policies (design and supply chain in the construction sector), digital innovation, energy efficiency in buildings, components, and industrial production cycles.

1.1) Design theories and methods and sustainable constructions;

1.2) Innovative technologies and materials for industrial, building and structural design;

1.3) Materials and techniques for the conservation of historical heritage, building maintenance and Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) considerations;

1.4) Cultural heritages. Innovations and ICT processes for cultural heritages use and conservation;

1.5) Building envelope for the digital era. Strategies and innovative solutions (product and process) for multifunctional prefabricated façade in digital construction.

1.6) Digital transition: product, process and business models in the digital age for the construction industry and built environment;

1.7) Green Transition strategies for increasing sustainable practices in the construction industry, within the built environment;

1.8) Architectural and urban design methodologies, adaptive reuse tools, and strategies for art and culture in inclusive cities and sustainable environments;

1.9) Architectural Heritage in historical context: new perspectives and strategies for sustainable conservation.

Curriculum 2 | Urban Planning

Research on contemporary urban and territorial transformation

This curriculum addresses contemporary issues of public space, focusing on the evolution and transformation of the socio-economic and environmental context. It explores the role of research as a critical tool for analyzing, interpreting, and designing urban and territorial transformations from a sustainable development perspective, adopting an interdisciplinary approach with an international outlook.

2.1) The city of today and tomorrow: balancing environmental protection with the regeneration of the existing urban fabric. Public space, transformation needs, and new social demands for quality living and urban livability.

2.2) The role of the historical and cultural heritage of the built environment and landscape in urban development in a post-industrial economy, with particular reference to sustainable local development policies.

2.3) Territory, landscape, and the regeneration of the built environment, between infrastructural interventions, new energy sources, and climate change.

2.4) Territorial / city governance and targeted development policies through land management, economic and financial tools.

2.5) Climate change, new socio-demographic configurations, and health determinants: cities facing the challenges of adaptation and the fight against inequalities.

2.6) Settlement models, sustainable mobility, big data, and new technologies in support of policies, programs, and projects for greater urban quality and livability.

2.7) Design, history, and theories of urban form: the sustainability of settlements across centuries.

Curriculum 3 | Design

Research for social, cultural, environmental and productive innovation

RESEARCH AIMS

The curriculum fosters the **development of advanced research activities in Product, Communication and Service Design.**

The aim is to propose **innovation in cultural, social, environmental and productive systems**, understood as complex ecosystems of actors, practices, and material and immaterial devices.

RESEARCH CHALLENGES

The curriculum programme critically **engages with the challenges of contemporary society**, identifying transition path towards sustainability, inclusion, accessibility, and collaboration among public and private actors.

RESEARCH TOPICS

The curriculum proposes **7 main research topics** (complementary and interconnected areas of investigation). A common thread, across all topics, is the **focus on people and life** in a broader sense, according to a **life-centred design approach**. The curriculum therefore places particular emphasis on **social, environmental, and economic sustainability**, as well as on **inclusion, accessibility,** and the capacity of design **to generate positive impacts for individuals, communities, and ecosystems**.

Curriculum 3 | Design

Research for social, cultural, environmental and productive innovation

TOPIC 3.1)

Inclusive design, **Design for all** and Universal accessibility **for products, services, spaces, and interfaces**.

TOPIC 3.2)

Product and service design for health, welfare, public **administration, and communities**: co-design, implementation, impact assessment, prevention, care, rehabilitation, eHealth and care systems.

TOPIC 3.3)

Product–service systems for sustainable transitions: models, governance, scalability.

TOPIC 3.4)

Design of products and services for the sustainable, accessible, visualization and inclusive fruition of cultural heritage, integrating conservation, user experience, and social impact.

TOPIC 3.5)

Visual communication, Information and Editorial design: processes, tools, and AI for quality, ethics, and content readability.

TOPIC 3.6)

Sustainable fashion and Innovative textiles: new consumption models, transparent supply chains, traceability, circular fashion and bio-based materials, smart textiles, comfort and performance for the person.

TOPIC 3.7)

Design for sustainability, circular economy and LCA/LCC for products and services: metrics, trade-offs, design decisions-simulation, computational design.

Curriculum 4 | Building Physics and Integrated Energy Systems

Energy and environmental performance in buildings and cities

A curriculum dedicated to the analysis and modelling of energy and environmental processes in the built environment, integrating foundational scientific principles with advanced methods for the ecological and digital transition. The programme addresses thermo-physical, environmental, and performance phenomena in buildings and urban systems through simulation, experimentation, and sustainability assessment, with specific attention to decarbonisation, climate resilience, and human well-being.

4.1) Retrofit of existing buildings and revamping of their energy systems through responsible and sustainable innovation, based on low-carbon technologies, innovative materials, renewable energy sources, and novel energy storage systems;

4.2) Indoor environmental quality, comfort, and well-being through passive, active, and adaptive environmental control strategies, with regard to emerging energy technologies for the built environment, and industry;

4.3) Innovative energy control systems and methods for energy saving and optimisation in buildings and districts;

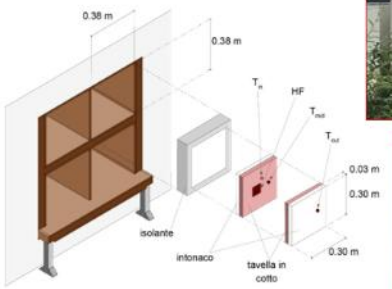
4.4) Resilience of energy systems in the built environment, including critical infrastructure, risk management, climate adaptation, urban heat island mitigation, smart grids, energy communities and policies;

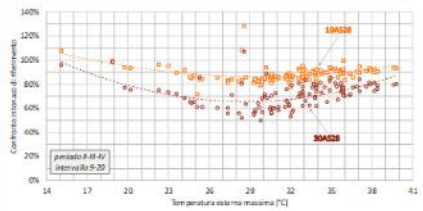
4.5) Digital twins of technologies, control systems, buildings and urban settlements to enhance their energy saving and management through numerical advanced simulation.

Curriculum 4 | Building Physics and Integrated Energy Systems

Ricerca finanziata da

FASSA BORTOLO





https://www.fassabortolo.it

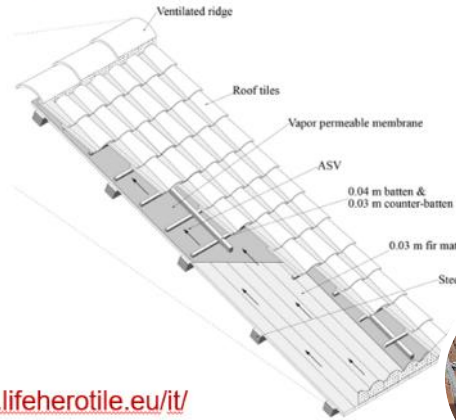
lifeHEROTILE

HEROTILE (LIFE CCA)

High Energy savings in building cooling by ROof TILEs shape optimization

Total EU contribution: k€ 1.440

Industrie Cotto Possagno · ACER · ANDIL · BMI · TERREAL



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IDEAS

IDEAS (HORIZON 2020)

Novel building Integration Designs for increased Efficiencies in Advanced climatically tunable renewable energy Systems

Total EU contribution: k€ 4.000

EU contribution to UNIFE: k€ 650

Trinity College Dublin · Ulster University · MP Mihailo Pupin · Università degli Studi di Cagliari · PCM · ECI · LEITAT managing technologies · APESF · Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo Mayo County Council

https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/815271

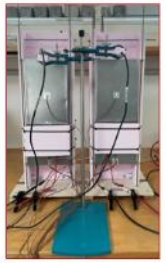
ALLIANCE
Positive Energy Building

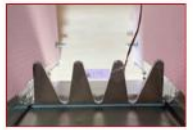
ALLIANCE (ERDF ROP)

Active-passive pLug&pLay IntegrAted techNologies for faCades of pEbs

Total EU contribution: k€ 690

EU contribution to UNIFE: k€ 150





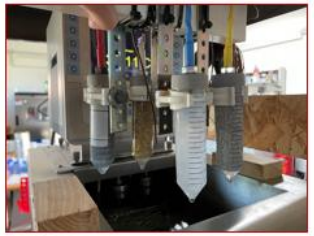
CIRI EDILIZIA E COSTRUZIONI · CICCREI · certimac · Galletti · SMARTOMOTICS · ALEVA · LOBER · ama COMPOSITES

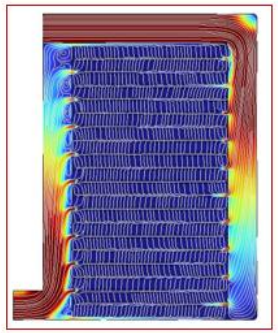
https://alliance.certimac.it

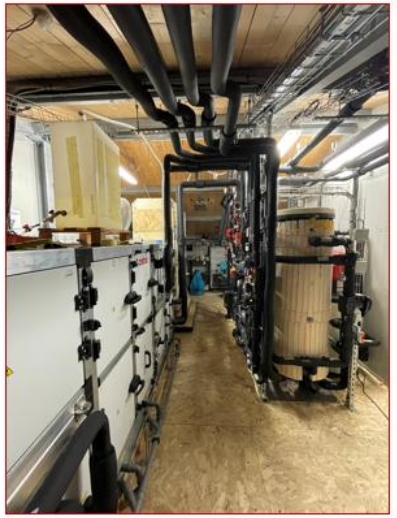
Curriculum 4 | Building Physics and Integrated Energy Systems

ECHO
EFFICIENT COMPACT MODULAR THERMAL ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM

ECHO (HORIZON EUROPE)
Efficient Compact Modular Thermal Energy Storage Systems
Total EU contribution: k€ 6.000
EU contribution to UNIFE: k€ 800





https://echo-euproject.eu

1	Cofounded by Department of Architecture and University of Ferrara	ECHO (101096368 — HORIZON-CL5-2022-D3-01) focused on numerical and experimental study of thermochemical materials and phase change materials for thermal energy storage, and in particular for the automation and control of their use in HVAC system for space heating & cooling

Curriculum 4 | Building Physics and Integrated Energy Systems