



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

## Living Values Project Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna Ambassador Prof. Ella Ritchie

### Premise: Higher Education in Italy

The main principles that lay the foundations for the Italian education system, and in particular higher education, are set down in the Italian Constitution that was adopted in 1947. Article 33 of the constitution states that "... art and science are free and the teaching thereof shall be free". In defence of academic freedom, the article also states that all higher education institutions "have the right to establish their own regulations autonomously, within the limits set by national legislation".

Furthermore, Article 34 of the constitution establishes the principle of the right of individual citizens to higher education: "All those who can prove the necessary competency and commitment have a right to pursue the highest levels of education, regardless of their financial means."

As defined by law, the main purpose of higher education, is twofold - to promote scientific progress of the nation and to provide all citizens with education and training that will lead to employment.

The following types of institution offer higher education in Italy:

- universities (polytechnics included)
- Higher Education in Art and Music (Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale - AFAM)
- Higher technical institutes (ITS)

Universities are autonomous bodies; they adopt their own statutes, establishing their own governing bodies (such as the rector, senate, and board of management) as well as their teaching and research structures. Universities issue the following qualifications, corresponding to the Bologna Process structure (cycles).

The Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) is responsible for general administration at national level. The MIUR has several bodies and agencies operating at national level with representative, consultative, monitoring and evaluative functions for schools and for universities and institutes of Higher Education in Art and Music (AFAM).

The Minister is in charge of determining the policies with the help of a deputy minister, undersecretaries and with the direct collaboration offices including the Minister's Cabinet, which coordinates the activities of the special advisers' offices, the legislative office, the administrative office of the Ministry, the technical office and the press office. The MIUR is organised into three Departments. The 'Department for the Education and Training System' is responsible for the general organisation of the school system, for defining educational and training objectives and the legal and economic status of school staff. The 'Department for the Planning and Management of Human, Financial and Capital Resources' is responsible for financial policy, procurement, administrative human resources in schools, and managing information systems.

The 'Department for Higher Education and Research' is responsible for higher education, specifically the guidance, general regulation and funding of universities; monitoring and evaluating universities and institutes of Higher Education in Art and Music (AFAM); student status; implementation of EU and international legislation; support, planning and coordination of research activities at national, international and EU level.

Universities have also to deal with other ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Finance, Anvur - Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research System, ANAC - Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority

These premises to say that the practical application of some of the MCU values need to be adapted to fulfil national rules. For example, MC failed in balancing institutional autonomy bound to external environment that cannot be absolute as it was recently underlined by the EUA assessment. On the other hand, Integrity is a value that can be measured and can be considered absolute. Academic freedom largely depends on academic autonomy even though it refers to individuals.

### The Academic values in our institution: first considerations

Our first considerations on the originally signed Magna Charta Universitatum led us to the conclusion that a new version open to a changing world. should be released to reflect a global perspective.

Between 2016 and 2017, UNIBO started a preliminary internal discussion about the of the actual role of academic values and the external structural contexts that may shape them. UNIBO agreed that the revised version of the Magna Charta should not only reflect the leadership perspective instead it should reflect the whole academic community perspective. Furthermore, values should not be only declared but they should be practised. Furthermore it should include the concept of embracing plural diversities, responsibility toward society, the concept of university citizenship.

Taking the chance of the Living values project, an internal discussion on our own identity values was also undertaken to identify the most important ones that guide our strategies and make us a community.

### How we have approached the Living Values project in practice.

Due to the complexity and size of the University of Bologna, we developed the Living Values Project into three steps:

1. To raise awareness on University, last 10 April 2018, the newly-appointed Directors of 32 Departments attended a meeting focused on Institutional Autonomy and Research integrity in the presence of our Ambassador Ella Ritchie
2. Directors were then asked to appoint at least three representing professors/researches, a students and administrative staff were appointed in their department to be involved in the living values discussion. A group of 70 people, from different scientific areas, was gathered on 9 May 2018. A warm up on academic freedom was carried out with the means of a world café. Participants were also invited to poll on identity values considering five dimensions: individuals, education, research, third mission and organisation.

3. The discussion on HE core values and UNIBO identity values was finally concluded within the governance. Results of the preliminary discussions were shown and again participants were invited to poll on identity values, considering five dimensions: individuals, education, research, third mission and organisation.
4. A comparison between the identity values identified by the community and the leadership of UNIBO was carried out to finally find a consensus between the community and the leadership perspectives. The most relevant identity values are the followings:

1. Critical Thinking
2. Integrity
3. Engagement
4. Cooperation
5. Responsibility
6. Collegiality and continuous improvement (three-way tie)
7. Creativity and Dignity (three-way tie)
8. Sustainability
9. Trust
10. Inclusion



The word cloud represents a visual depiction of the obtained results

### Challenges encountered:

- Complexity and size of the University of Bologna and work across several campuses.
- Raising awareness on the importance to engage all members of staff and students in a discussion about values.
- Working in small groups on a specific agenda to prepare wider discussion sessions.
- We considered not advisable to involve a larger number of people by the means of a survey that can be sent to all university members of staff. Since a high number of surveys have been recently submitted to our university members of staff, a low-response rate. Other alternatives might be worth considering.

### Results obtained:

For the new version of Magna Charta Universitatum UNIBO suggests to include the concepts of sustainability, social responsibility promoting Global Citizenship education. The importance of embracing diversity (gender, culture, religion, diverse perspectives and tasks).

Regarding the identified Identity values of University of Bologna these will guide and inspire our next strategic plan 2019-2021.

### Contacts:

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