

Student essay competition 2024

Following the success of the 2023 Student Essay Competition, the Magna Charta Observatory (MCO) is pleased to launch a new call for essays from university students worldwide. This year the MCO is inviting students to reflect on how access to education, with diversity and inclusivity anchored in principles of equity and fairness, can prevail. More specifically, the guiding question of the 2024 MCO Student Essay Competition is as follows:

“What would you change about your higher education^[1] experience or environment to make it more inclusive* for all who have the ability to benefit from it?”

The Magna Charta Universitatum, 2020, emphasises the critical role of universities in acknowledging that individuals and communities, often due to inequitable circumstances, have difficulty gaining access to higher education or influencing the modes and matter of academic study.

Through this essay competition the MCO wishes to increase and raise the profile of student involvement in universities. The MCO has representatives of students in the membership of its governing body and in its various activities. By including representatives of students in the membership of its governing body and in its various activities, it continues to recognise the importance of bridging the student voice from the institutional to the international levels.

There will be 5 prizes for winners to present their essays and participate in discussions with an international audience at the MCO Anniversary 2024, consisting of expenses paid (including travel and accommodation costs) or a prize of equivalent value, at the discretion of the organizers.

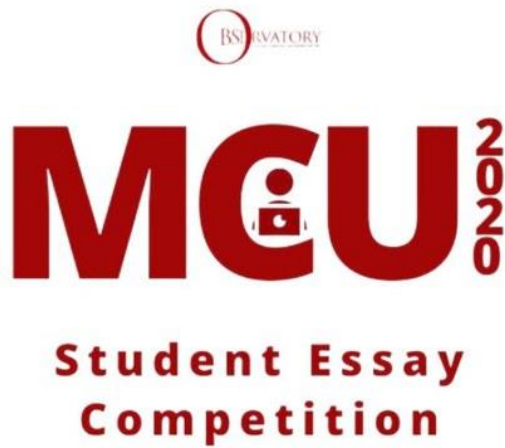
Details will be communicated at a later date.

The competition is open to students registered in any university in any country.

Entries are accepted starting from May 20th, 2024.

The closing date for the submission of essays is 5 July 2024.

The winners will be announced on 27 August 2024.



Student essay competition 2024

You *may* choose to reflect upon one or more of your student experiences and the surrounding environment in relation to higher education governance (including student movements), culture, teaching, learning and/or research could be more inclusive. Such methods may concern:

- Making access to education (1) opportunities/resources/facilities more equitable and fairer.
- Enhancing students' participation in and successful completion of their courses/programmes through more inclusive and diverse learning environments (E.g., through flexible and/or community-engaged learning, teaching and research opportunities)
- Widening university policies and capacity to put the freedom to study/ research/ engage/ pursue/ explore interests into practice.

Formal requirements:

To participate the student must be enrolled in a Higher Education Institution.

Only one entry per author is permitted.

Neither the author's name nor the name of his/her university or higher education establishment must be included in the essay or in the file name of the essay.

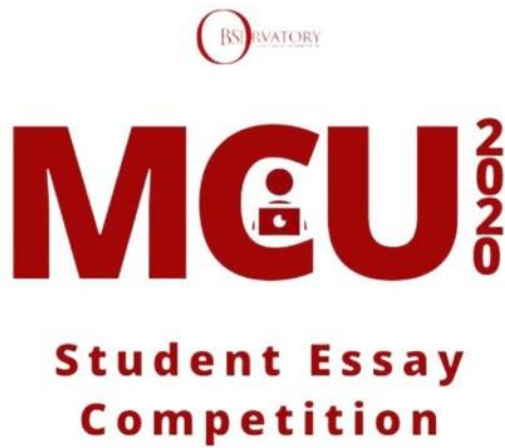
Essays must be solely the work of the author, who is allowed to quote from other works but such quotations must be acknowledged.

The Author is not allowed to use generative AI in the planning or writing of the essay. If the use of AI is suspected the judges will exclude the essay from further consideration.

At the judges' discretion, the writer of short-listed essays may be invited for a short online discussion before their decision is finalised.

Essays must not exceed 1000 words.

Essays must be in the English language.



Student essay competition 2024

Essays must be uploaded here <https://mcostudents.platformeacademique.com/> and not be sent by email or with a different tool.

Failure to comply with the formal requirements will result in exclusion from the competition.

The decision of the judges will be final.

Essays will be judged on the following criteria (all four criteria will have equal weighting):

1. Relevance to the theme:

- Does the essay propose concepts or methodologies to make their higher education experience or environment more inclusive to those who have the ability to benefit from it?
- Does the essay substantiate these concepts or methodologies with evidence from literature/ empirical or anecdotal evidence/ personal experience?

2. Awareness of the factors involved:

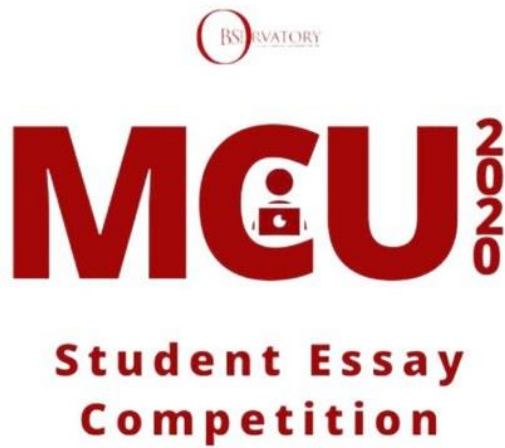
- Does the essay give context to how their higher education experience or environment is/ is not inclusive?
- Does the essay consider the possible risks to implementing their changes from either institutional/ teacher/ learner/ researcher perspective?

3. Uniqueness of the approach proposed

- Does the essay consider what is uniquely valuable about the concept or methodology they are proposing?

4. Potential impact for the university and beyond

- Does the essay reflect on the outcomes that could result from such changes to their higher education experience or environment?



Student essay competition 2024

An independently chaired and gender balanced international judging panel comprising current and former student representatives and senior academics and leaders in universities will review entries and their decisions will be final.

Members of the judging panel for 2024:

- Peter Kwasi Kodjie, Secretary General, All-Africa Students Union (AASU), Ghana and Member of the Governing Council of the Magna Charta Observatory.
- Catherine Stimpson, Professor and Dean Emerita of the Graduate School of Arts and Science, New York University, USA and Member of the Governing Council of the Magna Charta Observatory.
- Tamires Gomes Sampaio, former vice president of the National Students Union of Brazil (2015/2017). Member of the drafting group of the Magna Charta Universitatum 2020.
- June Pym, Emeritus Associate Professor, University of Cape Town; Director: Higher Education Development Programme (HEDP), The Saville Foundation.
- Tahirih Danesh, Human Rights Law Advocate, holding a PhD in Socioeconomic rights. Former Editor-in-Chief of Iran Human Rights Review at the UK Foreign Policy Centre as well as Honorary Researcher and Visiting Lecturer at Roehampton University.

Five prizes (one for each winner) of expenses paid participation in the in the MCO Anniversary 2024 will be awarded. In addition, the judging panel may award certificates of merit. All entrants will receive a certificate of participation.

The MCO is pleased to be working with the Global Students Forum and the European Students' Union in the organisation of this competition.

By participating in the contest, the author confirms his/her authorization to processing the data.



MCU 2020

**Student Essay
Competition**

*Student essay
competition 2024*

The data will be processed pursuant to d.lgs. N.196 of 2003 (code regarding the protection of personal data) and its amendments and additions, as well as EU Regulation no. 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR)

[1] Higher Education includes in this case, university level education, as well as any other tertiary level education offered by vocational education and training institutions, further education centres, or alternative non-formal or informal learning providers