'The Responsive and Responsible University'

MCO Research Project

2023

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the 'Responsive and Responsible University' research project about?**

    It is an initiative created in 2022 by the Magna Charta Observatory to initiate academic research looking into the role of universities in the context of the 21st century, taking into account the principles contained in the Magna Charta Universitatum 1988, and 2020.

    The idea is that this initiative can contribute to reinforcing and supporting these principles, mainly the responsibility of higher education institutions toward society. The project, therefore, will look at how activities developed inside them might best "engage with and respond to the aspirations and challenges of the world and to the communities they serve, to benefit humanity and contribute to sustainability". (MCO, 2020: 1).

    To launch this research, we are inviting universities to develop studies looking into their own realities on how they are engaging with society, be it locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally, and reflect on the idea of responsiveness and responsibility.

2. **What is the goal of this research project?**

    The goal of this research project is to reflect on and learn from the successes and failures of universities with a view to universities improving what they do and helping other signatories of the Magna Charta adapt and reform their practices where necessary. Moreover, we aim to encourage other universities to engage with the topic, exchanging knowledge, experiences, and expertise. Ultimately, we hope to contribute to the higher education system to become more inclusive and aligned with the interests and necessities of the society.

3. **What are the benefits of participating in the research project?**

    By participating in the research project, universities have the opportunity to reflect on their practices and potentially improve upon them while exchanging with other participants. Additionally, participating universities will also be able to contribute to the overall understanding and improvement of universities globally. Finally, it constitutes a great opportunity to connect with different universities and work collaboratively.

4. **What will be the outcome of the research project?**

    The outcome of the research project will be reports which reflect on the individual cases of each participant university, including the process of implementation, the outcomes, the stakeholders connected, and the successes and failures, among others. These will be included in webinars

and other activities – all designed to assist universities to implement effectively the principles and values set out in MCU 2020.

5. Will the results of the research project be made public?

Yes, the results of the research project will be made public by the Magna Charta Observatory on our website. Due regard will be given to any matters that are deemed to be sensitive or confidential.

6. Will there be any support provided to universities participating in the research project?

The Magna Charta Observatory will provide guidance to selected universities throughout the research project. It will facilitate universities engaged in the project sharing and working together. Where a university does not have the resources to fund this themselves an application may be made for funding from a support fund.

7. How will the research project be conducted?

The research project will involve reflexive research, in which universities will examine their own practices, policies, decisions, etc. The specifics of the research methods will be determined by the participants and the research team. Further details will be discussed later with the selected participants.

8. How can universities apply for the research project?

The application to participate in the project must be submitted online by filling out a form and including a document (PDF or Word) containing more information about the project. The form can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdZbtaWT7vEBiXf8gubEt2AFY1ki8CNX9po8CEFGUclcv5sUg/viewform

9. What should be included in the application?

The application should information about the project, including:
- ✓ Initial Abstract
- ✓ Significance of the Project
- ✓ What would you like to find out
- ✓ Participants

The document should ideally be between 2 and 5 pages (A4) but universities are free to submit the amount of information that they feel may enable the research committee to make a decision as to whether the ae to be included.

10. What is the deadline to apply to participate?

The first deadline for proposing a project is the 15th of February. We appreciate that your application might not be complete by then, but sufficient information to enable the Committee to take a view would be appreciated. If you have a specific problem or a technical issue, please send an email to mco.research@unibo.it

11. **Who can apply to participate in the research project?**

The research project is open to universities that are signatories of the Magna Charta Observatory. If you are not a signatory university, but wish to apply, please send us an email explaining your interest to mco.research@unibo.it Specific cases will be discussed by the research committee. Applications can be made by any authorised representative of the university. If the project is selected for inclusion the formal agreement of the university will be sought.

12. **Is there a schedule or timeline for the project?**

No, not yet. This will be collaboratively agreed upon with the selected participants. We recognize that all of the expressions of interest will be different and want the pace of each to be appropriate for the hosting university. We hope that those universities undertaking research projects will come together in the second semester of 2023 when they can share their progress, methods, and findings - so as to become a supportive research community. The MCO wants to be responsive to the situations of each of the universities that participate.

13. **What kind of projects are you looking for?**

We are looking for the are related to the topic of university responsiveness and responsibility. This can include but is not limited to projects related to: sustainability, socioeconomic development, Inclusion and diversity, decolonization, migration, social justice, democracy. It is important to keep in mind that these are examples, and the research project is open to other related topics.

14. **How will universities be selected to participate in the research project?**

Universities will be selected by the Magna Charta Observatory based on the quality and relevance of their submitted projects. We will also consider diversity to make our final decision. The projects will be assessed by the research committee and the final decision will also take into consideration the diversity of projects and universities, in order to guarantee that the main objective of the project is achieved. We are anticipating that decisions on the first round of project will be made by early April and we will communicate with universities as soon as possible thereafter.

15. **Who can I contact if I have any questions about the research project or the application process?**

Please reach out to the Magna Charta Observatory on our email (mco.research@unibo.it) for any questions or inquiries regarding the research project or the application process.