

Context Design Applied to the Cultural and Natural Heritage of Humanity – UNESCO. Designing the Cultural Heritage of Food

ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Programme call for applications

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The University of Parma (Italy), jointly with the University of Extremadura (Spain), the University of Évora (Portugal), the Atlantic Technological University (Ireland)

offer the EU GREEN students the opportunity to participate in a ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Program (BIPs). The Blended Intensive Program is officially approved by the EU in the framework of the ERASMUS+ 2021/2027 and is developed in the framework of the EU GREEN Network.

BIPs are one of the new and innovative formats of student mobility introduced by the new Erasmus+ 2021-2027 Program. These programs, jointly developed by multiple higher education institutions, feature advanced and innovative pedagogical approaches that combine short-term face-to-face (physical) mobilities with portions of virtual learning.

BIPs are inherently transnational and transdisciplinary, as curricula are developed and taught together by partner institutions in different countries. The combination of in-person and virtual learning spaces allows students and professors to experience and exchange highly collaborative, challenge-based, and research- steeped methods of teaching and learning.

Through the required virtual part of the program, students and professors alike have the opportunity to develop and hone their digital knowledge and skills, reflecting the European Commission's priority to harness the potential of digital technologies for teaching and learning and to develop digital skills for all.

Total number of participants per institution:

The Blended Intensive Program is open to a limited number of participants from each EU GREEN partner institution, and to an overall number of students. The number of participants agreed is 20.

BIP calendar (both virtual and physical periods)

Physical programme starts on June 3rd and ends on June 10th, 2026.

The virtual programme is structured in two phases:

- Phase 1 begins on May 25th, 2026 and includes an introduction to the EU GREEN BIP objectives, key themes related to cultural heritage and food systems, as well as team-building activities.
- Phase 2 runs approximately from June 20th to July 30th, 2026. During this six-week period, students will engage in weekly design sprints and team mentoring sessions (involving all partners), culminating in a final online presentation at the end of the programme.

The BIP calendar is structured in three phases:

- a first virtual programme running from May 25th to May 29th, 2026, dedicated to introductory lectures and team-building activities;
- a physical programme taking place from June 3rd to June 10th, 2026;
- and a final online phase of design sprints, weekly reviews, and team mentoring, running from June 20th to July 30th, 2026, and culminating in the final presentation.

ECTS credits (with credit equivalents for non-ECTS partners)

The successful completion of the program, both in its physical and virtual parts, awards 6 ECTS.

Teaching methodologies

The programme combines: design-based learning and teamwork on real-world case studies, face-to-face lectures and guided visits to heritage sites, museums, and food production facilities, on-field class, case-studies presentations, self-learning. Workshops and design sprints led by UNIPR and partner universities. Blended format: a mix of online preparatory work, in-person workshop week, and remote follow-up.

Venue for the physical period of attendance

The physical part of the BIP will take place at the University of Parma (Italy). The address is as follows:

University of Parma

Department of Engineering and Architecture

Scientific Engineering

Headquarters – Pavillon 10

*Parco Area delle Scienze 181/a (Sciences
and Technology Campus) - 43124 PARMA*

The call for applicants

Description of the program

The EU GREEN Blended Intensive Programme “Context Design Applied to the Cultural and Natural Heritage of Humanity – UNESCO. Designing the Cultural Heritage of Food” invites students from design, architecture, and communication fields to explore how urban windows and shop displays can become active media for communicating cultural heritage and local sustainability.

Building upon the previous edition held in Mérida (Spain), centred on Roman Heritage, this new programme focuses on Parma, a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, as a living laboratory where food culture, craftsmanship, and design innovation intersect, highlighting food heritage as a form of cultural expression.

Participants will investigate how shop windows, food displays, and local exhibitions can act as micro-museums of taste, narrating stories of identity, tradition, and innovation. The project promotes transdisciplinary collaboration among the partner universities — the University of Parma, the University of Évora, the University of Extremadura, Atlantic Technological University — merging their expertise in product design, visual communication, and spatial design with architecture and heritage studies to co-create sustainable narratives for urban communities.

Students will co-create design proposals that reinterpret the Italian culture of gastronomy for contemporary audiences.

Through a combination of virtual cooperation and on-site visits and activities, students will design and prototype window installations that reinterpret local heritage — from gastronomy to crafts — as catalysts for cultural regeneration and green transition.

The outcomes will include co-designed prototypes, visual narratives, and an urban exhibition in the city centre of Parma, contributing to the dissemination goals of the EU GREEN Alliance and supporting its vision of sustainable, inclusive, and connected European communities.

Topics

- Food as cultural heritage: tangible and intangible dimensions
- Display, exhibit and retail design for food heritage
- Visual communication, lettering and signage in local foodscapes
- Product and packaging design for local excellence
- Sustainable materials and local production systems
- Food heritage and tourism: design for narrative experiences

Motivation at the basis of the BIP

The BIP is born with the idea of sharing competences and skills present in the four Universities that participate in this initiative and share them with students coming from different regions in Europe so that they will take home and possibly adapt to their reality what they will learn in Parma.

Program learning objectives

Intended Learning Outcome	Competence Type
1. Analyse and interpret cultural heritage as a design context. Identify tangible and intangible dimensions of local heritage (food, crafts, architecture, identity) and their potential for visual and spatial communication.	Knowledge
2. Apply sustainable and transdisciplinary design methods. Integrate product, graphic, and spatial design approaches to develop environmentally and socially responsible solutions.	Skills
3. Co-create cross-cultural design projects within international teams. Work collaboratively in intercultural and multidisciplinary groups, managing communication and coordination in blended (online + on-site) settings.	Skills / Attitudes
4. Design and prototype heritage-based communication artefacts. Create physical or digital window displays using sustainable materials and fabrication processes.	Skills
5. Develop narrative and visual communication strategies for community engagement. Translate research insights into design stories that enhance awareness, participation, and inclusion.	Skills / Attitudes
6. Critically evaluate the role of design in the green transition of cultural heritage. Reflect on design as a driver for sustainable innovation and cultural regeneration.	Knowledge / Attitudes
7. Curate and disseminate design results. Plan and organize an exhibition and digital catalogue, demonstrating communication, teamwork, and dissemination competences.	Skills / Attitudes

Language of teaching

All the modules and courses are taught in ENGLISH language (B1 minimum level required).

Program content, detailing physical and virtual components

Physical module

The programme will consist of an intensive week of activities in physical presence at the University of Parma, including lectures, guided urban explorations, collaborative design sessions and mentoring activities. Students and faculty from the partner institutions will work together in international teams to investigate the relationship between design, cultural heritage and food culture.

The physical module combines theoretical inputs with observation-based learning and project-based activities. Through lectures, workshops and guided explorations of the city, participants will analyse how food culture is represented and communicated in the urban environment, with particular attention to Parma as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy.

Activities will include:

- keynote lectures and thematic seminars by visiting professors
- guided city walk-tours aimed at observing how food is displayed and narrated within the urban landscape, including shop windows, retail spaces and gastronomic venues
- analysis of food as a cultural exhibit, exploring the role of products, packaging, visual merchandising and spatial storytelling in commercial environments
- collaborative design workshops and international teamwork
- mentoring sessions with faculty from partner universities
- intermediate and final presentations of design proposals

The programme will include the following lectures and activities:

- Marketing strategies and product positioning in cultural heritage
- Systemic innovation design for cultural heritage
- Methods for territorial design: concept and development
- Digital and artificial tools for food product communication
- Typographic and editorial narratives for food and cultural heritage
- Digital prototyping: concept and development
- 3D scanning and modelling for biomimetic design methodologies
- Prototyping for service design at the local level
- Design & AI: from innovating practices to alternative imaginations

Urban explorations will function as context analysis activities, allowing students to observe how food, identity and cultural heritage are communicated through everyday spaces of the city, and to translate these insights into design strategies developed during the workshop.

Virtual period

The virtual component of the programme is structured in two phases.

Phase 1 (25–29 May 2026) will introduce students to the objectives and themes of the BIP. During this period participants will attend online introductory lectures on Context Design, cultural heritage and food systems, and will take part in team-building activities aimed at forming international student groups.

Phase 2 (20 June – 30 July 2026) will consist of online mentoring sessions and design sprints in which the international teams will further develop their project proposals. Faculty members from the partner institutions will provide feedback and support during regular online meetings.

This final phase will culminate in a final online presentation and discussion of the projects, allowing students to consolidate the outcomes of the workshop and reflect on the design strategies developed during the programme.

Eligibility and participation criteria

To apply for this program, students must be regularly enrolled at one of the participating universities ([EU GREEN partner universities](#)). Applicants must be enrolled in a Bachelor's, Master's or PhD level degree.

At the time of the application submission, applicants must demonstrate proof of English language competence at the B1 level (CEFR). This can be certified by the University of origin (see application procedures below. Level B2 will be a preferential criterion.

Participation to the program is open to students of the following disciplines and/or degree programmes: Students from the final year of Bachelor's (3rd or 4th year) or Master's degree, PhD in Design, Architecture, Communication, or related disciplines.

Applicants should expect to hear back about the result of their application by 10 May 2026.

Selected students must communicate their acceptance or withdrawal within 10 days from the publication of the selection results by contacting their university program coordinator (see below).

Selected students will be contacted with further instructions upon completion of the selection procedures

How to apply

Students interested in participating should fill out the [application form](#) by **20th April 2026**.

The application form must contain the following attachments:

- Copy of valid ID or passport;
- Transcript of Records (A certificate of enrolment at the home University with a list of passed exams and grades);
- Language certificate (If not already present as an exam in the Transcript of Records);
- Motivation letter (containing, if applicable, previous experiences abroad);
- Other documents and certificates (optional).

Selection criteria and procedures

An appointed Committee formed by Prof. Eleonora Fiore, Prof. Sandra Mikolajewska, Prof. Cristina Marino, Prof. Cayetano José Cruz García and Prof. Alonso Sánchez Ríos, will carry out the selection procedures. Selection is based on the following criteria:

- Academic performance
- Motivation
- English language competence
- Evaluation of further qualifications and skills

Students should expect to hear back about the result of their application by May 10th, 2026. Selected students must communicate their acceptance or withdrawal within 10 days from the publication of the selection results by contacting their university program coordinator (see below). Selected students will be contacted with further instructions upon completion of the selection procedures.

Financial support

As a part of the ERASMUS+ Program, financial support may be guaranteed by the selected student's home University. Each partner university is responsible for the management of the financial aspects of the mobilities in accordance with the provisions of the competent ERASMUS+ National Agency.

No financial support is available for students from the University hosting the physical part of the Programme (University of Parma), as they will not be travelling for purposes of participation in this program (non-mobility participants).

Available services at the University of Parma (in-presence period)

Services available to students during the in-person part of the program (examples might include):

- Administrative Support
- Accommodation Support
- Social events
- University services (Wi-Fi, library access, lab access, etc.)
- Visa Support, if needed

Contacts

University of Parma (Coordinator)

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[Prof. Paolo Tamborrini](#)

University of Évora

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