

UNIC Thematic Lines Best Paper Awards 2027 - Entrepreneurial Learning, Arts and Creativity for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Futures

Deadline: 14 September 2026 (23:59 CEST)

The call is open exclusively to **academics and graduate students affiliated with the ten UNIC partner universities**.

The **UNIC Thematic Lines Best Paper Awards** recognise outstanding scholarly contributions that deepen our understanding of the conference themes Entrepreneurial Learning, Arts and Creativity. Two awards will be granted and formally presented and celebrated during the [UNIC Thematic Conference “Entrepreneurial Learning, Arts and Creativity for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Futures”](#) in Bochum in 2027.

As this year’s UNIC Best Paper Award is directly related to contributions to the conference programme, *Best Paper Award submissions can only be made through the conference submission form*. This means that papers submitted in the conference's “Individual Paper Presentation” category may also be optionally and additionally nominated for the Best Paper Award if the applicant is affiliated with one of the UNIC universities and the paper has already been published.

Eligibility

The award is open to:

- Academics, Master's students, and PhD students affiliated with a UNIC partner university
- Original scholarly work authored by the applicant and written in English
- Published scientific outputs (e.g. journal articles, book chapters, reports, working papers and other scientific publications including online publications)

Thematic Scope

All nominated papers must relate clearly to the themes of the 2027 conference.

Accepted Scholarly Formats

We welcome a wide range of scholarly approaches, including:

- Theoretical, empirical, and comparative research;
- Participatory, transdisciplinary, co-creative, and policy-engaged work;
- Scholarship on curriculum innovation, experiential learning, or urban pedagogy.

Selection Criteria

Submissions will be assessed on:

- Clear alignment with the conference themes;
- Contribution to scholarly knowledge;
- Innovation in theory, method, or empirical insight;
- Research quality, coherence, and conceptual clarity;

Collaborative work across UNIC universities and career stages is encouraged.

Award and Use of Funds

- **Two Best Paper Awards** will be granted.
- Each award includes **€750 in institutional support**, provided through the UNIC fund at the winner's home university.
- Funds will be transferred to the departmental budget of the winner and may typically be used for:
 - Conference participation;
 - Research materials or books;
 - Travel or fieldwork;
 - Digital equipment for research or teaching.

Use of funds follows local financial rules. For co-authored papers, the award is **issued to the applying author**.

Please consult the funding allocation rules of your home institution.

Timeline

- **14 September 2026** — Submission deadline
- **October-November 2026** — Peer review by academics from at least two UNIC universities
- **December 2026** — Final judging by a cross-institutional selection panel and announcement of results
- **February 2027** — Recognition of winners during the UNIC Thematic Conference at Ruhr University Bochum

Peer-Judging Process

- As the Best Paper Award is linked with the regular conference contributions as an additional option under the category Individual Paper Presentation, the regular abstracts of the conference submissions are reviewed at the first stage by reviewers nominated by WP5 Coordinators at their institutions, each submission being reviewed by two different universities.
- Reviews will include a short narrative assessment and a score based on the selection criteria above.
- A cross-institutional panel will then evaluate top-rated submissions, ensuring balance and representation across UNIC universities and Thematic Lines and choose 10 best reviewed contributions for the next review stage.
- The full papers of these top-rated conference contributions will then be reviewed by further reviewers nominated by WP5 Coordinators at their institutions, each submission being reviewed by two different universities.

How to Submit

Best Paper Award submissions can only be made through the conference submission form. See for more details: [Call for submissions - 3rd UNIC Thematic Conference: Entrepreneurial Learning, Arts and Creativity for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Futures. | forms.app](#)

To be considered for the UNIC Best Paper Award, the submitted paper must already have been published in another context and must comply, in terms of length and formatting, with the requirements of the publisher, journal, conference proceedings, or other specific output for which the paper was prepared. The paper must have exactly the same title as the submission in this form and be accompanied by a short cover letter explaining its relevance to the conference and/or the UNIC Alliance.

When filling in the submission form, choose the option “Best Paper Award” under the format category “Individual paper presentation”. Additionally, to be considered for the UNIC Best Paper Award, please submit your full paper to unic-conference-2027@ruhr-uni-bochum.de by the submission deadline.

For inquiries or additional information, please contact unic-conference-2027@ruhr-uni-bochum.de.

We look forward to receiving your submissions and celebrating innovative contributions!