



First-Level University Master's Programme in Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Start-up Management (E-ELAB)

a.y. 2026/27

Call for Applications

Introduction

Applications are now open for the first edition of the **First-Level University Master's Programme¹ in Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Startup Management (E-ELAB)** for the **2026/2027 academic year**. The programme has been **co-designed and will be jointly delivered by the EUNICE European University Alliance** within the framework of **Work Package 4 -Research-Driven Bridges among University, Business & Society**, coordinated by the **University of Catania (UNICT)**, particularly through Task 4.2 – EUNICE Entrepreneurship Lab (E-ELAB).

This is a flagship educational initiative of the Alliance, aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial skills, promoting innovation, and encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration among students from the EUNICE partner universities.

The maximum number of participants is **50 graduates**, according to a merit-based ranking. The Master's programme will be activated upon reaching the minimum number of **10 participants**.

1.Objectives

The Master's programme aims to qualify professionals capable of understanding and managing the processes that support the generation, development, and validation of innovative ideas, providing tools and methodologies useful for their transformation into structured entrepreneurial initiatives.

The educational pathway is aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship, with particular attention to the analysis of customer needs, the definition and validation of proposed solutions, and the assessment of market opportunities.

Based on a *learning-by-doing* methodology, participants will work in multidisciplinary and multicultural teams, addressing real innovation challenges proposed by companies, start-ups, research organizations, and innovation ecosystems associated with the EUNICE Alliance.

Throughout the programme, participants will benefit from the experience of university professors, entrepreneurs, innovation professionals, and mentors from the industrial sector of the ten partner universities.

¹ The term "Master" refers to a postgraduate university programme offered and regulated by the University of Catania in accordance with the Italian higher education system.

The Master's programme is structured to develop skills related to the application of the Lean Methodology, aimed at validating business hypotheses against customer needs, assessing the suitability of the identified solutions, conducting market research, verifying product-market fit, and planning growth.

The programme will also provide participants, with the tools necessary to develop a Business Model Canvas, understand the structure and contents of a business plan, and gain knowledge of the main forms of financing that support the development of entrepreneurial initiatives.

Particular attention will be devoted to the development of the communication and interpersonal skills required to operate effectively within multicultural teams, as well as to the acquisition of public speaking techniques, also in view of the strongly international dimension of the programme.

The Master's programme involves the participation of companies and mentors from the ten countries of EUNICE Alliance and will be supported by an International Technical-Scientific Committee (TSC), composed of one expert from each of the ten partner universities. The Committee will be chaired by the University of Catania, which will ensure its scientific coordination.

2. Employment opportunities

The curriculum addresses the main dimensions of entrepreneurship and innovation management, including innovation management, sustainability, intercultural communication, business model design, Lean Start-up methodologies, intellectual property, data science, entrepreneurial finance, digital transformation, and the economics of entrepreneurship.

Particular attention will be devoted to the development of an entrepreneurial mindset, leadership, teamwork skills, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and communication skills in an international context.

The professional profiles that the Master's programme aims to develop are cross-functional profiles with multidisciplinary and integrated competences, capable of operating as innovation promoters, Project Managers, and Marketing Strategists.

3. Target participants and admission requirements

In view of the cross-disciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of the Master's programme, candidates holding any **Bachelor's degree** as well as **Specialist or Master's degrees** pursuant to the Italian Ministerial Decrees No. 509/1999 and No. 270/2004 may be admitted.

The Technical Scientific Committee reserves the right to decide on admission to the Master's programme on the basis of an assessment of the candidates' academic and professional background, verifying its consistency with the objectives and characteristics of the educational programme.

Candidates holding a **PhD degree**, obtained in any disciplinary field, may also apply. Admission with reservation is also possible for candidates who have not yet graduated, provided that they obtain the qualification required for admission by the starting date of the Master's programme, scheduled for **December 2026**.

4. Structure and organization of the Master's programme

The Master's programme will comprise a total of **1,500 hours** over a period of **12 months**, distributed as follows:

Activities	Hours
Online teaching activities and practical exercises	244
Individual study	956 (including 75 for the final examination)
Work Placement	300

Classes will normally consist of **10 hours a week**. They will be held **online on Friday and Saturday mornings**, through a dedicated platform, in order to allow participants to combine the Master's programme with ongoing academic studies or professional commitments. **Attendance is compulsory**: a maximum absence rate of **20% of the total number of hours** envisaged by the Master's programme is permitted. Lectures will be complemented by seminars and/or practical exercises.

The Master's programme enables participants to obtain a total of 60 ECTS. Students may be admitted to the Master's programme as **auditors**, subject to the approval of the Master's Director. Auditors who meet the admission requirements are required to submit a formal application for attendance (Annex 2), indicating the courses they wish to attend, for a maximum of four courses. The application form for attendance as an auditor, provided by the Master's administrative office, contains the payment arrangements established by the Master's Technical-Scientific Committee. Upon completion of attendance, the auditor will receive a **certificate of attendance** signed by the Master's Director; however, auditors may under no circumstances be admitted to the final assessment examination or be awarded academic credits.

5. Study Plan

The educational structure of the Master's programme is organized into **seven integrated modules**, according to the following distribution:

Course 1: Intercultural Communication, Sustainability & Innovation for Entrepreneurship

Module 1 - Innovation Management

Module 2 - Accounting Information System

Module 3 - Management Tools for Sustainability

Module 4 - Intercultural Communication

Course 2: Business Model Canvas

Module 1 - Business Model Innovation

Module 2 - Presentation Skills for Entrepreneurship

Module 3 - Digital Innovation and Transformation Management

Course 3: Lean Methodology

Module 1 - Modeling and Simulation of Mechanical Systems

Module 2 - Behavioral Operations Management

Module 3 - Start-up Strategy and Business Plan

Course 4: Intellectual Property & Compliance

Module 1 - European Intellectual Property Law

Module 2 - Data Protection Law

Module 3 - Human Resources Management

Course 5: Quantitative & Data Science

Module 1 - Statistical Learning

Module 2 - Data Science in the Factory of the Future

Module 3 - Multiple Criteria Decision Making

Course 6: Entrepreneurial Finance

Module 1 - Corporate Investment Banking

Module 2 - Foundations of Corporate Finance

Module 3 - Macroeconomic Theory and Financial Policy

Course 7: Entrepreneurial Economics

Module 1 - Experimental Methods in Economics

Module 2 - Econometric Approach

Module 3 - High-Tech Markets, Industrial Organization and Growth

6. Teaching venue and delivery mode

The Master's programme will be delivered **online** through the **MS Teams platform** in **synchronous mode** for all students.

7. Admission procedures

To participate in the selection process, applicants must submit their application **exclusively online** by accessing the website www.unict.it.

Once connected to the **University of Catania** homepage www.unict.it, applicants must click on "**Student Portal**" and follow the instructions provided below:

- Complete the **registration procedure** if you do **not** already possess a PIN, and subsequently log in to the system.
- In the **Student Portal**, access the “**Entrance Tests**” section, select “**Master’s Programmes**”, click on “**Admission Competition**”, and choose the title of the Master's programme for which you wish to apply.
- Complete the application form by entering all the information required by the system and upload the following documents:
 - A self-certification issued pursuant to the Italian D.P.R. 445 del 28/12/2000, indicating:
 - a) the academic qualification held, including the final grade, awarding institution, and date of award;
 - b) any additional qualifications relevant for the selection process and the formation of the ranking list, such as: doctoral degree, specialized training courses, scientific publications, professional experience related to the Master's programme topics, English language certification, and other university master's degrees.

- A copy of the “Declaration of Value” (for candidates who obtained abroad the university qualification required for admission and/or an official document allowing the assessment of the equivalence of their degree to the required qualification).
- A copy of a valid identity document, duly signed and clearly legible (identity card, driving licence, or passport).
- A curriculum vitae prepared according to the European CV (Europass) format.
- Copies of any supporting documents relating to the additional qualifications declared.

The information provided is essential for the selection process. Missing, incomplete, or false declarations will result in exclusion from the selection procedure and forfeiture of the right to participate, as determined by the Master's Technical-Scientific Committee.

The requirements set out in this Call for Applications must be fulfilled by the deadline for the submission of applications for admission.

Upon completion of the application procedure, a **Master's programme application fee of €40.00² (forty euros)** will be generated. The payment of this fee may be made through the **pagoPA®** system using one of the following methods:

- a. By accessing the **Student Portal**, selecting “**Fees and Contributions**”, clicking on “**Payments to be Made**”, and proceeding with the **online payment** option (“**Pay Now**” button), using one of the available payment methods, including credit, debit, or prepaid cards on major payment circuits (Visa, MasterCard, VPay, Maestro, CartaSi, etc.).
- b. Alternatively, applicants may print the **Payment Notice (“Payment Slip”)** and make the payment through payment service providers participating in the **pagoPA®** system using the channels they make available (for example: tabacconists affiliated with the Banca ITB network, Sisal and Lottomatica points, ATMs, smartphone apps, banks offering the service at branch counters, etc.). The list of authorized payment points is available at: <https://www.unict.it/elencopsp>. To make the payment, applicants must use either the **Payment Notice Number** or the **QR Code** shown on the payment notice
- c. . It is also possible to click on “**Send Payment Notice (Payment Slip) by Email**” and proceed as described in the previous point.

Alternatively, applicants may use their **online banking service** (after verifying that their payment provider participates in the pagoPA system) by following these steps:

- d. Access the payment section through the **CBILL** or **pagoPA** payment system;
- e. Select the University of Catania among the Companies’ list;
- f. Enter the **Payment Notice Number** and the amount due, then proceed with the payment.

Payments made through methods other than those specified above will not be accepted and will result in exclusion from the selection process.

Participation in the selection procedure is conditional upon the correct payment of the application fee by 11:59 p.m. on 6 November 2026.

² The application fee is non-refundable in the event of non-selection

8. Selection process and ranking list

The indispensable requirements for admission to the selection process are possession of one of the degrees specified under Section 3 of this Call for Applications and proficiency in the English language at B2 level.

The selection process and the ranking list will be based on the qualifications and experiences submitted with the application.

The following scores will be assigned to the qualifications and experiences presented in the application:

- **Degree grade: maximum 16 points:**
 - Degree grade up to **105/110: 12 points**;
 - Degree grade from **106/110 to 110/110: 16 points**.

For candidates holding a qualification awarded by institutions in other countries than Italy, the final grade will be converted according to the grading system adopted in the country where the qualification was obtained and on the basis of criteria comparable to the ECTS grading system. Thesis, Master's thesis, project work, or final report on topics related to the courses and objectives of the Master's programme: **up to 7 points**

- Additional academic qualifications (second degree, university master's degree, specialization courses, or other relevant qualifications): **up to 3 points**.
- Educational and professional experiences related to the Master's programme topics, including professional activities, internships, study visits for educational projects at other universities, research activities, and participation in conferences: **up to 5 points**.
- Participation in activities and initiatives promoted within the EUNICE Alliance, such as Hackathons, Start Cups, business competitions, challenges, and similar initiatives: **up to 5 points**.

In the event of a tie, priority will be given, in the following order, according to:

- degree grade;
- number of ECTS credits and weighted average grade obtained during the Master's degree programme;
- number of ECTS credits and weighted average grade obtained during the Bachelor's degree programme, for candidates expected to graduate by **30 November 2026**.

If candidates remain tied after application of the above criteria, the ranking order will be determined according to age, from the youngest to the oldest candidate (according to the Italian art. 2, comma 9, L. 16/06/1998 n. 191).

The ranking list of admitted candidates, drawn up in accordance with the criteria established by this Call for Applications, will be published by **13 November 2026** on the University website at: <http://www.unict.it/it/didattica/master-universitari>.

9. Participation fee for the Master's Programme

The Master's Programme is intended for graduates and young professionals interested in innovation, entrepreneurship, and startup management. In particular, applications are open to students and graduates from both EUNICE Alliance universities and universities outside the EUNICE Alliance, as well as professionals,

early-career researchers, and public administration employees, provided they meet the admission requirements set out in this Call for Applications.

The participation fee for the 60 ECTS Programme is **€2,656.00**, payable as follows:

- Upon enrolment **€356.00** (annual comprehensive student contribution) and **€500.00** as the first participation instalment;
- **€ 600,00** as the third participation instalment, due thirty days after the start of the programme;
- **€ 600,00** as the fourth participation instalment, due sixty days after the start of the programme;
- **€ 600,00** as the fourth participation instalment, due ninety days after the start of the programme.

Participation fees must be paid in full even in the event of withdrawal from the Master's Programme.

10. Scholarships and Financial Support

Based on the qualifications submitted during the admission process and in accordance with the provisions of this Call for Applications, candidates may apply for the available scholarships. With regard to the opportunities offered by the EUNICE European University Alliance, a total of **40 tuition fee waivers** are available to cover the Master's Programme participation fee. These waivers are allocated to students from the ten partner universities of the Alliance, with **four (4) scholarships assigned to each university**.

Accordingly, the University of Catania (UNICT) has four (4) tuition fee waivers available, reserved for candidates who, at the time of application, are either regularly enrolled at UNICT or have obtained a Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, or PhD from the University of Catania, and who meet the admission requirements set out in this Call for Applications.

Withdrawal and Recovery of the Benefit

The full waiver of the Master's Programme participation fee is granted on the condition that the beneficiary regularly attends the educational activities and completes the programme in compliance with the obligations established by this Call for Applications and by the Master's Programme regulations.

In the event of withdrawal, interruption of attendance, or any other cause of forfeiture attributable to the beneficiary, the financial benefit unduly received shall be revoked.

11. Enrolment

By **20 November 2026**, all candidates ranked in a position eligible for admission must confirm their enrolment in the Master's Programme and pay the relevant fee by following the procedure below:

- access the “Student Portal” online
- Log in using your credentials;
- From your personal homepage, click on “**Master**”, then select “**Enrolment Application**” and follow the instructions provided to complete the enrolment procedures.

Candidates awarded a scholarship will be exempt from paying both the Master's Programme participation fee and the University annual comprehensive contribution (€356.00), in accordance with the provisions of this Call for Applications.

Candidates admitted **without a scholarship** shall be required to pay the participation fees in full, as specified in **Section 10** of this Call for Applications, in accordance with the procedures and deadlines set out therein.

Upon completion of the enrolment procedure, candidates who are not awarded a scholarship will be charged the annual comprehensive university contribution of €356.00 and the first participation instalment of €500.00, both of which must be paid by **20 November 2026**. Payment must be made through the pagoPA® system, using one of the following methods:

- a) By accessing the **Student Portal**, applicants should select **“Fees and Contributions”** click on **“Payments Due”** and proceed with the **online payment** by selecting **“Pay Now”**. Payment may be made using any of the available methods, including credit, debit, or prepaid cards from major payment networks (Visa, MasterCard, VPay, Maestro, CartaSi, etc.).
- b) Alternatively, applicants may print the **Payment Notice** and make the payment through any payment service provider participating in the **pagoPA®** system using the channels made available by the provider (for example, authorized tobacconists operating through the Banca ITB network, Sisal and Lottomatica outlets, ATMs, smartphone applications, or participating bank branches). The list of payment service providers enabled to accept payments through pagoPA® is available at: <https://www.unict.it/elencopsp>. To complete the payment, applicants must use either the **Payment Notice Number**, the **QR Code**, or the **Barcodes** displayed on the Payment Notice.
- c) Applicants may also click on **“Send Payment Notice (Bollettino) by Email”** [*Invia avviso di pagamento (bollettino) in mail*] and proceed with the payment following the procedure described in point b) above.

Finally, applicants may also use their online banking service (Home Banking), provided that the payment institution participates in the pagoPA® system, by following the procedure below:

- d) Access the payments section through the **CBILL** or **pagoPA®** service;
- e) Select the **University of Catania** from the list of organizations;
- f) Enter the **Payment Notice Number (Numero Avviso)** and the amount due, then proceed with the payment.

Once the payment has been completed, applicants may obtain the payment receipt by accessing the **University of Catania pagoPA® Payment Portal** (<https://www.unict.it/portalepagamenti>) using their **Italian Tax Code (Codice Fiscale)** and **IUV code**.

The services provided by the University of Catania are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, both for payments initiated through the University administration and for payments made through participating Payment Service Providers.

PagoPA® is a public payment system based on rules, standards, and tools defined by the Agency for Digital Italy (AgID) and adopted by public administrations and participating Payment Service Providers. It enables individuals and businesses to make electronic payments to public administrations in a secure, reliable, simple, and fully transparent manner with regard to transaction fees. The initiative is promoted by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of Italy, and participation is mandatory for all public administrations.

Payments made using methods other than those indicated above will not be accepted and may result in exclusion from the admission procedure.

Failure to make the required payment by the deadline indicated above shall be considered a withdrawal from enrolment in the Master's Programme and will result in the loss of the right to admission. In such cases, the Scientific and Technical Committee will proceed with the ranking list and admit the next eligible candidate(s).

12. Students' Assessment

At the end of each course module, assessments will be carried out to verify the knowledge and skills acquired by students with reference to the topics covered.

At the conclusion of the Master's Programme, each student shall take a final exam consisting of the discussion of a project work, the main topics of which will be agreed upon with the Technical Scientific Committee of the Master's Programme.

Upon successful completion of the programme, and on the basis of the results achieved in the examinations for the various course modules, the final assessment, and the evaluation expressed by the Final Assessment Committee, students will be awarded the degree of **First-Level University Master's Programme in Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Startup Management (E-ELAB)**, corresponding to **60 university credits (CFU/ECTS equivalent)**.

13. Stage and Project Work

The Master's programme includes **300 hours of internship** to be carried out at companies, businesses, organizations, and institutions involved in innovation processes, entrepreneurial development, and digital transformation, where students will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the programme

The identification of host organizations for the internship may also take place through the **EIR Portal** (<https://internships.eunice-university.eu/>), which will allow students to identify and select companies, organizations, and institutions that are consistent with their interests and with the educational objectives of the Master's programme.

During the internship activities, participants will be supervised by managers and tutors from the host organizations, with the aim of promoting the practical application of the methodologies and tools acquired during the Master's programme and fostering the development of individual aptitudes related to innovation and entrepreneurial development processes.

The internship will be aimed at the completion of a **Project Work**, through which students will be able to apply in practice the competences acquired during the educational programme. The Project Work will constitute an applied project designed to document and showcase the skills developed throughout the Master's programme, highlighting the student's ability to translate the theoretical and methodological knowledge acquired into concrete and innovative proposals, solutions, and applications.

Upon request of the interested participant, the Master's Scientific Committee may recognize previously completed professional experience for the purpose of fulfilling the internship requirement included in the study plan, provided that such experience is duly documented and consistent with the educational objectives and purposes of the Master's programme.

14. Technical and Scientific Committee (TSC) of the Master's Programme

The Director of the Master's Programme is Prof. Agata Matarazzo of the Department of Economics and Business, University of Catania.

Name and Surname	Universities
Agata Matarazzo (Direttore)	University of Catania (UNICT)
Małgorzata Bączyńska	Poznan University of Technology (PUT)
Andrea Perez	University of Cantabria (UC)
Jonathan Bauweraerts	University of Mons (UMONS)
Mona Enell-Nilsson	University of Vaasa (UWASA)
Veronique Sanguinetti	Université Polytechnique Hauts-de-France (UPHF)
James Lees	Karlstad University (KAU)
Lúisa Augusto	Polytechnic University of Viseu (UPV)
Nikolaos Voros, Christos Antonopoulos	University of the Peloponnese (UoP)

15. Common Provisions and Information

For any further information or clarification, interested applicants may contact the Master's Programme Administrative Office by email at celab@unict.it or by telephone at +39 095 7307959.

16. Person Responsible for the Administrative Procedure

In accordance with the Italian Law No. 241/1990, responsibility for the administrative procedure relating to this Call for Applications is vested in Venera Fasone, Administrative Officer in charge of the Master's Programmes Office of the Didactic Area of the University of Catania, email: venera.fasone@unict.it.

In the event of any discrepancy or inconsistency, the Italian version of the E-ELAB Call for Applications shall prevail. The official Italian version is available for consultation at the following link: <https://www.unict.it/it/didattica/master-universitari/2026-2027/entrepreneurship-innovation-and-startup-management-e-elab>

ANNEX 1

INFORMATION ON AND ACCESS TO PERSONAL DATA

This Privacy Notice is provided pursuant to Articles 12, 13, and 14 of the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) and Article 13 of Legislative Decree No. 196/2003, with regard to the personal data processed by the University of Catania in the performance of its institutional activities.

1) IDENTITY AND CONTACT DETAILS OF THE DATA CONTROLLER

The Data Controller is the University of Catania, with registered office at Piazza Università, 2, 95131 Catani Italy. E-mail: rettorato@unict.it

2) CONTACT DETAILS OF THE DATA PROTECTION OFFICER

E-mail: rpd@unict.it

Certified E-mail (PEC): rpd@pec.unict.it

3) LEGAL BASIS AND PURPOSES OF PROCESSING

In compliance with the principles of lawfulness, fairness, transparency, adequacy, relevance, necessity, and accuracy referred to in Article 5 of the GDPR, the University of Catania, acting as Data Controller, shall process the personal data voluntarily provided at the time of application, enrolment, and throughout the educational programme for purposes related to the performance of its institutional tasks carried out in the public interest.

4) SPECIAL CATEGORIES OF DATA

For institutional purposes, and where appropriate, special categories of personal data, such as data revealing racial or ethnic origin, health status, judicial data, and data concerning sexual life, may be collected and processed at the request of the data subject, in cases provided for by law and required for institutional purposes.

5) SCOPE OF DISCLOSURE AND CATEGORIES OF RECIPIENTS

The University authorizes the processing of personal data by its staff and collaborators where such processing is necessary in relation to their duties and responsibilities. The Data Controller may disclose personal data to third parties whose activities are necessary for the achievement of institutional purposes, or where disclosure is required by European Union legislation, national laws, or regulations.

6) TRANSFER OF DATA ABROAD

The Data Controller may transfer personal data to countries outside the European Union where such transfer is necessary for the achievement of institutional purposes, in compliance with the conditions and safeguards set out in Articles 45 and 46 of the GDPR.

7) DATA RETENTION PERIOD

Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the principles laid down in Article 5(1)(e) of Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Data relating to students' academic careers shall be retained in accordance with the archiving obligations established by applicable legislation.

8) PROVISION OF DATA

The provision of personal data required for institutional services is mandatory. Failure to provide such data will make it impossible to carry out the procedures necessary for establishing the relevant relationship and delivering the requested services.

9) RIGHTS OF THE DATA SUBJECT AND EXERCISE OF RIGHTS

Pursuant to Articles 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 21 of the GDPR, data subjects have the right to request from the University of Catania, as Data Controller, access to their personal data, rectification, erasure where applicable, restriction of processing, and to object to processing in the cases provided for by law.

10) COMPLAINTS

Data subjects have the right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority, in particular with the Italian Data Protection Authority.

11) CHANGES TO THIS PRIVACY NOTICE

This Privacy Notice may be subject to amendments and updates.