



IULM Talent & Creativity Challenge – 4th edition

The university is, by definition, a place of intellectual challenge. Learning involves testing yourself, expanding your horizons, and opening your mind.

The secret of our university lies in the continuous and intense dialogue between different sensibilities, between the economic and humanistic disciplines. Our university advocates that “know-how” and “knowledge” must go hand in hand. This is the key to our students' education, as we encourage them to develop critical and creative thinking, with a trained mindset prepared to grasp the transformations taking place around them.

With this in mind, for the fourth time, IULM is offering students the opportunity to put their talent and creativity to the test by participating in the IULM Talent & Creativity Challenge and submitting a creative product for one of the proposed categories. A jury of teachers and professionals will determine the winner for each category.

All students currently enrolled in a bachelor's, master's, or university master's degree programme, as well as those who have graduated since the July 2025 graduation session, are eligible to participate, either individually or in groups. Applications may be submitted in one category only.

This [link](#) provides details on how to upload projects, which can be done **from 4 March to 1 April 2026**.

The award ceremony will take place in the first week of May 2026.

If you have any questions, please email talent@iulm.it

The winners in each category will receive a cash prize, awarded at the sole discretion of the jury, taking into account the production effort involved in creating the required product.

1. Short film

Participants must submit a short film less than 10 minutes long, including opening and closing credits. All techniques (live action, animation, stop motion, hybrids) and any genre or language (fiction, documentary, docufiction, experimental, comedy, drama, etc.) are permitted, provided the work clearly expresses an authorial idea and maintains a complete form that matches its duration. For the 2026 edition, the short film should explore — in a free and personal way — the theme “Team”, chosen as the Word of the Year: team as community, alliance, group, collaboration, bond, mutual care, conflict, and coordination; but also as a set of roles, responsibilities, vulnerabilities, and shared goals. The theme may appear in the story through the interactions between characters or in the way the film portrays the idea of “doing things together”. The work must have been made after July 2024. Submission: the short film must be submitted in digital format (preferably .mp4 / H.264) in HD (1920×1080) or higher, with clear audio. Any dialogue in a language other than Italian must be accompanied by Italian subtitles

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Dr. Giuseppe Carrieri

2. Short Story

Participants must write a short story of no more than 20,000 characters (including spaces), which interprets the word of the year “Team” in a humorous way.

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Paolo Giovannetti

3. Commercial

Objective: To design and produce a commercial lasting no more than 60 seconds, whose theme is the celebration of the Olympic spirit.

The campaign, which we imagine commissioned by the IOC, aims to highlight the values embodied by the Olympic mission, with a particular emphasis on team spirit, its value, and the importance of facing sporting (and other) challenges together in a spirit of teamwork, collaboration and community. (Please note that “Team” is IULM's word of the year.)

Proposals should start with the concept and then be developed using any accessible device, beginning with a smartphone. Disclaimer: This campaign project is a simulation.

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Dr. Guido Cornara

4. Translation of a literary text

Participants must translate the following text into Italian, taken from the short story “Better Living Through Algorithms” by Naomi Kritzer, published in Clarkesworld Magazine:

https://clarkesworldmagazine.com/kritzer_05_23/

It was about a month later that Keith dropped by my desk with a worried look.

“I just got a security bulletin with some serious concerns about that app I recommended,” he said. “You should probably uninstall it. Here’s some information about wiping it from your phone.”

“Oh?” I said. “Well, that’s worrying. I’ll go do that right away.”

The article highlighted the privacy concerns about Abelique, which were, in fact, valid. The app had started out snooping through my online life but over time had instructed me to add more and more stuff—this week’s new feature was that if you took a short video of your closet, you’d get more specific outfit instructions, using all the stuff you owned but never wore because you just never thought to put it on. This feature was going to take some time to fully update, because the “feature” was in fact “other people, but good at clothes,” who were going to look at your stuff and make recommendations. Anyway, when an app wants access to your literal closet—to say that’s a privacy concern is maybe an understatement. But I very much doubted Keith was actually worried about my privacy. I was pretty sure word was getting out that this app was encouraging people not to spend their whole life at the office. I checked the community and it wasn’t just me: people’s bosses had suddenly swung from “everyone should use Abelique” to “no one should be using Abelique, it’s dangerous” in the blink of an eye. “No worries,” someone said, and passed

along a bunch of options, including a whole fakeout app that was Abelique but with a different icon in case your boss insisted on checking your phone. I swapped over to an alternate icon that said it was a menstrual-cycle-tracking app, which would basically be the Keith equivalent of Kryptonite. He would definitely not look any closer. Then I grabbed a blank notebook and a drawing pencil, because we had a big department meeting, and one of the great things about sketching in meetings is that unless someone looks right over your shoulder, you're indistinguishable from someone who is diligently taking notes

Keith's worries were the start of a trend.

The "security bulletin" was followed by a series of increasingly paranoid news stories. None of them had figured out who was running it, and all of them used the adjective "shadowy" because that sounds like maybe monsters. Several of the articles included profiles of app users, which could have been fine, but one of them picked a formerly incarcerated person who was struggling with sobriety and found the app helpful because he'd become so reliant on an imposed routine while in prison. Another picked a woman who talked about how the app helped her "tune in to the vibrations of the universe"; the third presented an awkward composite rather than an actual human being. In other words, all those articles said, this app was for losers. New sign-ups screeched to a halt.

"Is anyone worried?" I asked in a thread on the artist board. "I don't want to lose this community."

"Every online community has an expiration date," someone said.

That was not reassuring! I'd hoped for someone to say that this one would stick around, in some form.

And possibly the "shadowy collective" was thinking the same thing, because it started steering me to in-person meetups of other Abelique users. We met at coffee shops and parks and swapped phone numbers so that if the app did go away, we could at least keep in touch. We also swapped materials: I'd tried a box of pastels but hated the way the dust got on my fingers, so I handed those off to someone who was eager to try them. Someone else asked, "Are you Linnea?" and handed me a compact travel watercolor set. "These are supposed to go to you," she said.

I laughed ruefully. The app had tried twice to get me to buy watercolors when I went back to the art store. I kept buying more colored pencils, instead. Watercolor was scary. "Why is the app so determined to get me to do watercolor?" I asked.

"You're probably looking at other people's watercolors a lot," said the person handing me the set. "Anyway, this is yours now, take it home and try it out."

I woke up the next morning, opened my blinds, started coffee, and sat down with the watercolors and the latest bouquet of flowers. Not surprisingly, all the colors ran together and left me with a mishmash, although it was kind of pretty in its own messy way. I took a picture and put it on the day's art thread. "You should check the news," said a pinned note at the top.

Overnight, the news coverage of Abelique had shifted. This time, it was because of Margo.

5. Audiovisual translation

Participants can select one of the following options:

*1) Create Italian subtitles for the documentary *The Grass Ceiling* (Iseult Howlett, 2019), available on *The Grass Ceiling | Screen Ireland Shorts Player*. The subtitles must be numbered, synchronised with the dialogue, and include in/out time codes. They should also follow all rules of condensation, segmentation, and formatting (italics, upper/lower case). The maximum number of characters per line is 40, including spaces; the reading speed is 15 characters per second. Save the file as an SRT (SubRip Subtitle) or TXT (text file).*

*2) Create a script for the overdubbing of the documentary *The Grass Ceiling* (Iseult Howlett, 2019), which is available on *The Grass Ceiling | Screen Ireland Shorts Player*, and produce a PDF file. The adaptation must include: a title page with the film's title and the name of the adaptor; a page with a synopsis and captions; and a page listing the voices (names or descriptions, e.g., *WOMAN 1*). Dialogue lines should be preceded by the character's name and a time code in minutes and seconds only (e.g., 02:35). Use the necessary indications (on-screen, off-screen, etc.), following the abbreviations of the Italian Association of Dialogue Adaptors (AIDAC National Contract, p. 11).*

Each page should contain no more than 20 lines and must be numbered.

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Mara Logaldo

6. Review

Participants should write a review of a novel, film or TV series released in the last 5 years that more or less centrally represents the theme of "Team". The text must be no longer than 2000 characters (including spaces) and sent in docx format.

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Fabio Vittorini

7. Book trailer

Participants should produce a promotional video that encourages others to read a published narrative text, whether Italian or foreign, classic or contemporary. The video must be under 2 minutes in length. Any technique is allowed, as well as the choice of genre and style of expression. The book trailer must have been created after May 2025 and ideally relate to the Word of the Year, "Team".

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Fabio Vittorini

8. Photography

Participants are invited to take a photograph inspired by the Word of the Year 2026: "Team". The theme can be interpreted from a personal perspective, using any device, technique or expressive style. Photographs may be in colour or black and white and can be subject to post-production and graphic editing.

The use of artificial intelligence-based tools is permitted solely as an aid during the post-production phase of the image (e.g., retouching, optimisation, or modification of the original image). Images created entirely by artificial intelligence are not allowed: the original photograph must underpin the work.

Both horizontal and vertical shots will be accepted. There are no creative or stylistic restrictions in accordance with the above guidelines.

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Dr. Fabio Liggeri

9. Radio Format

Participants should submit an original audio series consisting of 6 to 10 episodes, each lasting between 15 and 30 minutes. The series must be in a radio or podcast format, either factual or fictional, and tell a story focused on the value of teamwork, collaboration, and collective dynamics. The style can be journalistic and related to current affairs, in-depth documentary style, or a fictional narrative inspired by real events, as long as the importance of the group, relationships, and shared skills in achieving objectives is clear. A written project of 3 to 10 pages is required, including a concept and description of the series and individual episodes, as well as the production—an audio file in mp3 or wav format—of the first episode or a 5 to 10-minute demo.

The concept, structure, voices, sound materials, and sound design will be assessed. Particular focus will be given to the presence and utilisation of storytelling elements typical of a purely audio medium.

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Dr. Gaia Varon

10. TV Format

The applicant (individual or group) should submit an idea for an entertainment programme featuring two or more teams, each comprising parents and children. N.B.: Each team must consist of parents and children; projects with homogeneous teams (Parents vs. Children) are not permitted.

The material to be submitted must consist of:

- the concept of the programme (max 200 words)*
- the genre of the programme (e.g. reality show, cooking show, game show...)*
- the theme on which the challenge between the teams is based (e.g. cooking, general knowledge, travel, everyday life, fashion, music...)*
- a description of the mechanism on which the competition between the teams is based*
- the ultimate goal of the challenge between teams*
- the format (number of episodes planned, duration of each episode)*

If you like, you can also create a video trailer for the programme, lasting up to 30 seconds.

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Daniela Cardini

11. Tourism Communication

Re-Imagine Tourism 2030 - Rethinking tourism beyond traditional models

Tourism is undergoing a radical transformation. Climate change, emerging social values, technological advances, shifting consumer behaviour, and new mobility options are reshaping how people travel, enjoy, and value their leisure time.

The traditional model - destination, transport, accommodation, and attraction - no longer sufficiently explains modern complexity.

If tourism were to be built from the ground up today, how would we plan it?

The challenge encourages students to go beyond traditional models and imagine tourism in 2030 as an experiential, relational, and transformative ecosystem that can generate positive impact and include new cultural and technological paradigms.

THE CHALLENGE

- *How can we reimagine tourism beyond the conventional idea of a destination?*
- *What experiences, services or business models can adapt to social, environmental, and technological changes?*
- *How can we design forms of tourism capable of generating positive environmental, social, and cultural impacts?*
- *What new communities, needs, or lifestyles could serve as the basis for developing radically innovative offerings?*

OBJECTIVE

- *Design and communicate a shared experience, service, or innovative business model that surpasses the traditional approach to tourism, aiming to foster relationships between tourists and host communities and generate a tangible positive impact (environmental, social, cultural).*

MACRO-THEMATIC AREAS

Students may select one of the following areas of development (to be clearly specified in the proposal):

a) Transformative tourism: Rethinking tourism as an experience focused on meaning and relationships, rather than on geographical location. Challenging the idea that travel must be linked to an iconic or traditional destination. Designing experiences where value is generated by temporary communities, shared interests, formats that can be replicated across multiple locations, or by integrating the physical and digital worlds.

b) Regenerative tourism: Developing tourism that not only minimises impact but also actively adds value to territories and communities. Moving beyond the idea of sustainability as merely reducing harm, it envisions experiences that tangibly contribute to environmental restoration, urban redevelopment, or social regeneration, with a focus on creating value for and with local communities.

c) Tourism for New Tribes: Creating experiences designed from the start for emerging communities with specific needs (e.g., digital nomads, neurodivergent individuals, workers experiencing burnout, the post-social generation, non-traditional families, etc.). Instead of adapting existing offerings, it involves designing from scratch for audiences that are often overlooked or rapidly changing, with models aligned to their lifestyles, values, and ways of relating.

Required deliverable:

Concept Paper (max 3 pages), including:

- Identified challenge*
- Target audience*
- Value proposition*
- Description of the experience/service/business model*
- Impact (environmental, social, cultural – ESG logic)*
- Communication*
- Feasibility and development roadmap*

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Anna Scuttari

12. Exhibition Concept

Participants must prepare an exhibition project inspired by the Word of the Year: Team. The submission for evaluation should be compiled into a presentation dossier that includes: an exhibition title and concept, a selection of works on display (including authors, titles, dates, images, provenance, if relevant), exhibition layout, proposed space arrangement, details on the production and communication of the exhibition, a description of a public programme connected to the event, and other relevant information to understand the proposal.

The dossier must be accompanied by a visual or audiovisual file that presents and visualises the project.

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Anna Luigia De Simone

13. Marketing Campaign

TEAM UP! THE TEAM THAT COMMUNICATES “THE TEAM”

Challenge concept

Participants, divided into teams, must design a marketing campaign that promotes teamwork as a value, making the concept of Team (IULM Word of the Year) attractive, contemporary, and “shareable”.

The project will be assessed on two levels:

- a) The campaign (strategy + creativity + feasibility)*

b) The team's working approach (roles, collaboration, decisions, conflict management, method)

Campaign objectives

Today, the prevailing narrative promotes individual achievement: standing out, building your personal brand, and competing. However, in reality – and in marketing – the most reliable results occur when different people collaborate. The challenge is to craft a campaign that makes the value of teamwork and collective effort appealing and achievable, starting from a genuine social tension: the drive towards individualism and egocentrism.

Social tension (positioning scope)

We live in a culture that constantly promotes individual achievement: striving to be better, standing out, differentiating oneself, “getting noticed”. This pressure weakens collaboration and often makes it more ‘instrumental’: we only work together when necessary, not because we see it as a genuine value.

The result is a paradox: even within collective settings (universities, projects, communities), competition, distance, and isolation can be experienced instead of feelings of belonging and shared growth.

Targets to select from:

- *University students and young professionals (18–26)*
- *Campus communities (students, teachers, staff)*
- *An external community connected through various interests (sports, creators, volunteering, gaming, music)*

Creative constraints

The campaign must include a specific action that cannot be completed alone (e.g., missions in pairs or groups, co-created content, shared goals).

Required deliverables (campaign + teamwork report)

Part 1 — Marketing output

- *Idea + key message (1 sentence)*
- *Creative concept (tone of voice and visual style)*
- *Media/touchpoint plan (minimum of 3 channels)*
- *One pilot implementation of your choice:*

30–60" video

social carousel

OOH (out of home: billboards) / guerrilla concept

event activation (campus or city)

landing (draft web page or digital experience)

- *KPIs and how to measure them (2–4 indicators)*

Part 2 - Teamwork book (concise report on your team's work)

- *Roles and responsibilities (who did what and why)*
- *Working method (Gantt project, tools, decisions)*
- *Team rules (3–5 guiding principles)*
- *Critical moment: a conflict or disagreement and how you resolved it*
- *Micro-evidence of the process: a genuine record of the collaboration*

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Francesco Massara

14. Communication Project for a Fashion or Design Product

Candidates are invited to submit a communication project relating to a product or service in the fashion or design sector.

a) Type of project

The project may include either:

- *Poster/press advertisement*
- *Video for social media with a maximum duration of 30 seconds For the video:*

o 9:16 (vertical) or 1:1 format

o any language (subtitles recommended if there is dialogue)

The project must be accompanied by a written brief (maximum of 3 pages, 6,000 characters including spaces).

b) Mandatory structure of the brief

The brief should cover the following points:

o Presentation of the product/service

Brief description of the subject of the communication and the competitive context of reference.

o Communication problem

What strategic need is the project intended to address? (launch, repositioning, target expansion, etc.)

o Target analysis

Definition of the target audience and its socio-cultural and consumption characteristics.

o Creative concept

Generative concept of the project and its verbal-visual translation.

o Format and distribution channels

Reasons for selecting the format (print or video) and media channels identified, referring to the behaviour of the target audience.

o Any brand ambassadors, influencers, or content creators

Strategic rationale behind the choice and alignment with positioning.

o Storytelling

Description of any narrative structure adopted and its communicative function.

o Value universe

Identification of the brand/product value system and how it is expressed in the proposal.

o Desired positioning

Indication of positioning (luxury, premium, mass market or other) and strategic rationale.

c) Thematic orientation

Projects that showcase the following will be assessed favourably:

- *awareness of modern changes in the fashion-media system;*
- *ability to combine aesthetic and strategic aspects;*
- *attention to emerging themes (digital hybridisation, sustainability, cultural identity, etc.), if relevant to the project.*

d) Assessment criteria

The jury will assess the projects based on the following criteria:

- *Overall strategic coherence (concept–target–positioning)*
- *Originality and creative strength*
- *Verbal-visual and executive qualities*
- *Relevance to the fashion/design sector*
- *Clarity and validity of the argument in the brief*

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Mauro Ferraresi

15. Sustainable Eco Project for IULM

Ideas that transform. Change starts from us.

OVERVIEW

Sustainability is not something we build alone. It grows through listening, collaboration, and the willingness to work together toward a shared goal.

Teaming up means taking responsibility together, combining different skills and perspectives, and turning ideas into real impact.

The Talent & Creativity Challenge 2026 invites you to design an innovative and practical initiative that can be launched or implemented by 2026 to improve environmental, social, or cultural sustainability at IULM.

Your project should make a visible difference in everyday campus life — whether in spaces, services, relationships, behaviors, or community engagement — and help position IULM as a model of sustainable innovation at national and international level.

This is your opportunity to move from awareness to action.

Evaluation Criteria

1. Practical Innovation & Feasibility

- *Your project should propose concrete and realistic solutions that improve daily practices on campus in environmental and/or social sustainability.*
- *Ideas that include collaboration with start-ups, companies, public institutions, or NGOs working on sustainability will be positively valued.*
- *Creativity is important — but so is feasibility.*

2. Impact (and, where possible, Measurability)

- *Clearly explain the issue you want to address and why it matters.*
- *Define specific objectives and expected results.*
- *Show how your initiative can create tangible change.*
- *If possible, include simple and realistic indicators to measure its impact.*

3. Promotion & Community Engagement

- *Explain how you will involve other students, faculty, staff, or the local community.*
- *Strong projects go beyond an idea — they activate people.*
- *Think about communication, participation, and how your initiative can create a shared sense of responsibility.*

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Federica Ricceri

16. Start-Up Project

Participants must submit a project for a new business, including a business plan, under sustainable conditions that follow the best practices indicated by ESG parameters. This should specifically address communication, the cultural and creative industries typical of Made in Italy, tourism, and the enjoyment of cultural heritage, even when working in teams with students or talents not affiliated with IULM.

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Angelo Miglietta

17. AI applications for inclusion

Participants must create an application (app, web platform, totem or another type of interface) designed to assist students with their university studies.

Participants must submit a presentation or paper that includes the following aspects: - scenario analysis and any relevant benchmarks.

- Definition of the need and pain points that the designed solution will address; modelling of the application, including the various AI components that may be used.

- Benefits for students from the solution to improve their study activities - estimate of the complexity of implementation and any issues to be addressed (organisational, managerial, regulatory, etc.)

- Rough estimate of implementation times and costs

COORDINATOR and PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Guido Di Fraia

18. Theatre

Participants are required to submit a theatre direction plan based on a text of their choice.

The direction plan must include: the script of the play, director's notes, set design, lighting plan, costumes, and any music.

COORDINATOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE JURY: Prof. Valentina Garavaglia