

# Responses to UOU Questionnaires

Letter from the director



Ws Alicante / Tabarca Island.

**This article completes the trilogy of writings that began with "A New Learning Model for UOU," published in Letter from the Director UOU sj#05 (June 2023). In that article, the methodologies incorporated by the UOU network into our international architectural learning project were explained.**

**Following that, "3 Questionnaires for UOU" was published in Letter from the Director UOU sj#06 (December 2023). It was then the moment to assess our levels of excellence by proposing a series of three questionnaires aimed at gathering information on:**

**1. The knowledge and skills acquired by the participating students.**

**2. The attitudes developed by these students in comparison to those who do not participate in this project.**

**3. The attitudes developed by the teaching staff will also be evaluated.**

## RESULTS OBTAINED

Before analysing the responses, we must first consider the following:

- The questionnaire was voluntarily completed by two distinct groups:

a. Among students with international teaching exposure, 15 respondents, all from UA. However, only one is a local student; the rest are ERASMUS students, thus responding to the UOU methodology rather than the UA one.

b. Among students without international teaching exposure, 36 volunteers from the University of Federico II of Naples, organized through the Student Association. A Post-doc stay was conducted at Federico II in collaboration with Paola Scala to facilitate this.

- The questionnaires show overall student satisfaction with their universities, scoring 7/10 at Federico II and 8/10 at UOU. Therefore, one of the objectives of this work is to determine how to raise the satisfaction level by minimizing the detected deficiencies, which, in the context of inter-cultural teaching, are primarily focused on:

- On ACQUIRED ATTITUDES:

- Personal growth.
- Cultural awareness.
- Diversity and inclusion.
- Ethical considerations.
- Community engagement.
- Global perspective.

- On KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS ACQUISITION:

- Knowledge acquisition.
- Development of practical skills.
- Critical thinking and problem-solving.
- Preparation for a future career.

The analysis of the responses indicates a significant difference not only in their content but also in the more reflective attitude of students with international education. Some examples are as follows:

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## ON ACQUIRED ATTITUDES:

### \*INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

**a. \*\*Personal Growth\*\*** In what ways do you feel your time at UNIVERSITY of Universities has contributed to your personal growth and development? Can you provide an example?

- Social skills and communication in group work.
- My growth as a global citizen through contact with people of different nationalities and customs, improving my communication skills and understanding of different realities.
- I have become more patient, improved my language skills, and learned about new areas of architecture.
- I am now better at seeing the big picture and more open to alternative sources and formats.
- I was able to observe different understandings of architecture, customs, and approaches to group work.

**b. \*\*Cultural Awareness\*\*** How has UOU fostered cultural awareness and understanding among students? b. Have you had opportunities for cross-cultural interactions?

- Because we were always in contact with people from other cultures, both physically here and remotely, it broadens our cultural horizons and sometimes makes us empathize with their perspectives.
- I felt this most when I had the opportunity to interact with a student from Ankara, who has a culture different from mine, implying a different way of working and understanding things, which enriched my experience in this subject.
- The exchange of ideas with students requires cultural exchange, in which everyone can grow, which is positive.
- Seeing, listening to, and talking with people from different cultures has helped.
- Yes, now I know what I can do and have more understanding for other people and situations.

**c. \*\*Diversity and Inclusion\*\*** To what extent UOU promotes diversity and inclusion in the classroom?

- On a very important and positive level.
- The possibility of coming into contact with different cultures and working in groups.
- To a great extent, we were all able to generate ideas and link them together.

### \*WITHOUT INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

- Working in groups.
- No specific example.
- Living alone in another foreign country.

- No.
- I had some cultural awareness during Erasmus parties, but they did not influence my attitudes.

- Unfortunately, not really.

- No.

**d. \*\*Ethical Considerations\*\*** How has UOU influenced your understanding of ethical considerations in your academic and personal life? Can you share an experience that challenged your ethical thinking and decision-making?

- With the diversity of opinions, views, and working styles in each group I participated in, there were situations that taught me how to handle them in the future.
- A lot, shown me more aspects and perspectives to consider ethics + inclusion.
- Actually, I don't think there were situations that made me think about ethical issues, but coming into contact with cultures very different from mine, like Ankara, gave me a different perspective on things.
- In the workshop in Poland, I worked with disabilities and it became clear to me how many aspects of space are exclusionary.

**e. \*\*Community Engagement\*\*** How has UOU encouraged students to engage with the local community or participate in social responsibility initiatives? Have such experiences influenced your attitudes towards community engagement?

- All our workshops ended with a picnic and a community activity.
- In a workshop, we had the opportunity to interview local residents to find out what they thought about the initiative of planting a tree at the intersection.
- Through the projects we were working on in the streets, we were able to go out and interact with the inhabitants. Additionally, working in groups with local students.
- In every workshop, it was not only encouraged but also inspired and made me feel more comfortable with it.

**f. \*\*Global Perspective\*\*** To what extent do you think your UOU experience has given you a global perspective on issues and challenges? Has your participation broadened your global awareness?

- To a truly significant degree, as we were in contact with many different countries and people all the time.
- Communicating with people I don't know in a language that is not my native one has helped me communicate better.
- Each country has its own problems and challenges that we must consider in our overall thinking.
- I think to a considerable extent.
- Improved by 8/10.

- I really don't know.

- I don't know.

- Traveling.

- A little.

## REGARDING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACQUISITION:

### \*INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

**a. \*\*Acquisition of Knowledge\*\*** To what extent do you feel this intercultural experience has contributed to your knowledge in design? Can you provide an example?

- Not only did it contribute to my design skills, but also to my social skills, as we had to interact with people from all over the world.
- It was very inspiring to have a cultural exchange of ideas and completely different perspectives.
- Seeing other possible ways of viewing and practicing architecture.
- I believe my knowledge expanded significantly by observing and listening to the things presented to us. I encountered many opinions that enriched my understanding.

### \*WITHOUT INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

- I am eager to participate in every experience of this kind; I believe that having different viewpoints on the project can lead to a much better understanding of architecture, but mainly it can help us, as students, to find our way of interpreting architecture.

- I think an intercultural experience could enhance our knowledge in design, art, and other things.

**Can you provide an example of a workshop that has significantly improved your understanding of architecture?**

- A trip to Barcelona during a lab course.
- I don't know.
- I participated in the Porto Academy summer school workshop in 2023, which took place at the Mendrisio Academy.
- Studying abroad for a year in an Erasmus program.
- Villa Pennisi workshop in Musica.
- None.
- Nothing for now.
- Digital Naples with Tu Delft, but there are very few in which students can participate.

**b. \*\*Development of Practical Skills\*\*** How has UOU supported the development of practical skills relevant to your interests in architecture? Have you had opportunities for hands-on experiences, internships, or co-op programs?

- The new skills I developed were mainly through the AI workshop.
- Working in teams, making physical models (WS1/WS3b), and contacting local residents to get their opinion on a project (WS2b).
- I learned how free our work can be.
- In some workshops, we were working with models, so we were practicing our relationship with materiality. And we were also using AI and software that are really relevant to my interests in architecture.
- UOU is an opportunity to delve deeper and learn more about personal interests and architecture.

- Not at all.
- I have improved my skills personally; there should be courses on programs in the first year.
- I had very practical courses, mainly based on models.
- Through visits to museums and the city of Naples, because with guided tours, the student trains to recognize what he learns during the classes.
- 1/10.
- Not at all, except for a single guided tour that, due to time constraints, could not be deepened.

**c. \*\*Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving\*\*** Do you believe your time at UOU has improved your critical thinking skills? Can you recall a challenging problem or project that helped you develop problem-solving abilities?

- Yes, because you have to think outside the box for the workshops.
- Absolutely, just the fact that we have to be in touch with professors from all over the world immediately made us think more critically.
- Yes, it improved to reflect my own ideas and those of others, rethink group ideas, and be open to finding new solutions.
- It has created more questions for me to answer through my designs.
- Yes, it made me think about what kind of architecture really attracts me and what I want to produce and what kind of architect I want to be.
- Yes, thanks to discussions with professors at the university, but also professors from abroad.
- Yes, I think what I value most about improving my critical thinking is being able to have different cultural perspectives, which perhaps I didn't have before.
- Yes, especially taking action in public space.

**d. \*\*Preparation for a Future Career\*\*** Do you feel that the education and experiences at UNIVERSITY of Universities have adequately prepared you for your future career? Are there specific aspects of your UOU experience that you believe will be particularly valuable in your professional life?

- Confident about teamwork and how to communicate better.
- I think it helped me gain diverse opinions, experiences, and skills on my path to my professional future.
- Yes, I believe intercultural exchange is important for the future.
- Considering that the profession is changing and evolving, especially after Covid, this project model resembles reality more, working with people from all over.
- Yes, communication and cooperation with different types of people.
- Yes, teamwork, communication and dealing with people from different nationalities and backgrounds.

- Lack of clear examples.

- Negative.



## NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

In the current academic year, 2023-24, which is about to conclude, the proposed adjustments outlined in "A New Learning Model for UOU" have already been implemented. We have worked with a specific focus on incorporating the experiential nature of face-to-face interactions into online possibilities.

At the end of each workshop, we enjoyed a week of public engagement during which students presented the outcomes of the recently completed workshop. This "week of public engagement" has successfully disseminated the work of our students. Presentations took place both at the Santa Creu Hotel and the beach in Tabarca Island, the square by and the Auditorium of the Alicante Architects' Association, the Roof of the representative building of

Alicante University in the city of Alicante, the Drying House of the Las Cigarreras Cultural Centre, and even at a tram stop between our campus and the city.

Furthermore, continuing with the possibilities of having UOU colleagues present in Alicante as ERASMUS professors, during that additional week, we welcomed the visit of Franka Jagielak (Krakow) and Ferran Grau (Reus), as well as those participating in the BIP Erasmus program "Rural Areas Facing Climate Change".

This end of the year represents a hybrid balance between the best of the online international model and experiential face-to-face learning. Moreover, it confirms that the responses to the questionnaires reflect a necessary advancement in architectural education: In the ever-changing field of architecture, UNIVERSITY of Universities is committed to fostering an environment that not only meets the needs of today's global architects



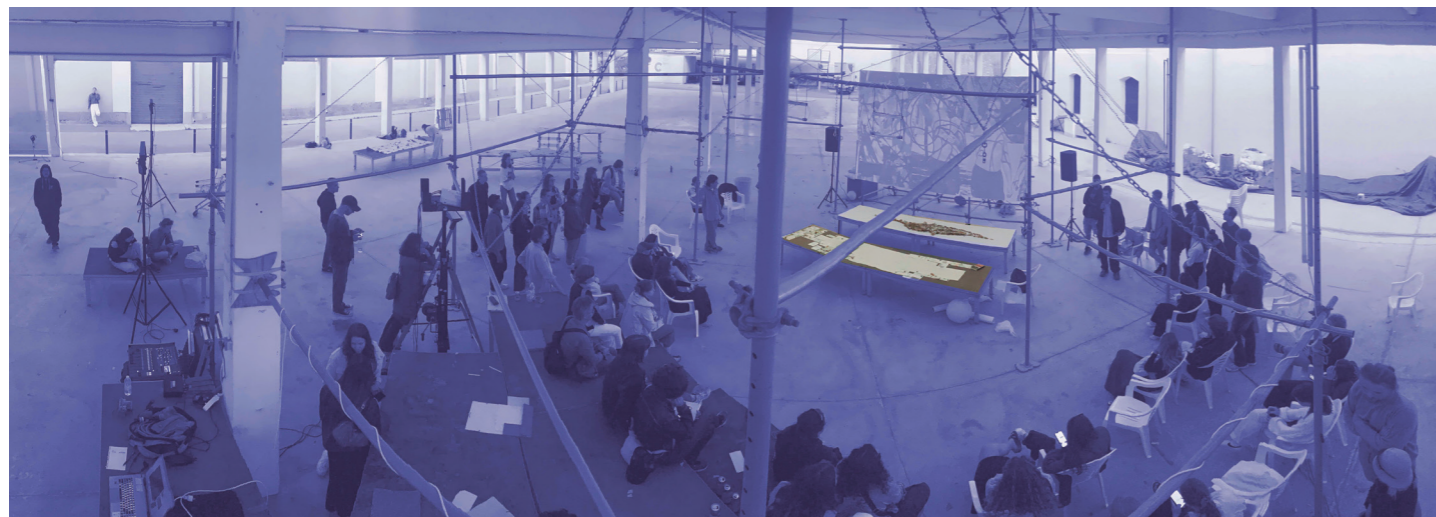
Ws Cracow / With Franka Jagielak at one Tram stop in Alicante.

but also anticipates the challenges of tomorrow. This is truly the response to the contemporary university's great challenge: To find the true place where knowledge is generated.

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